



Integrated Implementation of Nevada Literacy & Intervention Programs

Executive Summary

The Nevada Legislature and Governor Brian Sandoval took bold steps during the 2015 Legislative session to make targeted investments to improve student achievement. Three of the major programs approved include Read by 3 (\$27 million), Zoom Schools (\$100 million), and Victory Schools (\$50 million). Each of these programs has a different emphasis: Read by 3 aims to ensure that all students read proficiently by grade 3; Zoom Schools target English Language Learners (ELLs); and Victory Schools focus on students living in poverty. However, these programs also share overlapping goals and will serve similar populations.

Guiding Principles

To maximize the impact on student achievement, the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities recommends that policies implemented by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), State Board of Education, and governing boards of school districts and charter schools follow five guiding principles:

1. Emphasize integrated implementation: The three programs should be viewed as integrated components of a comprehensive intervention strategy that utilizes all of the funding sources available at each school.
2. Align goals and metrics to the State Improvement Plan and the Nevada State Literacy Plan: These plans have been approved by the State Board of Education and should be used to ensure that all of Nevada's schools are working towards the same statewide policy goals.
3. Provide flexibility in use of funds: Policies and regulations approved by NDE and the State Board of Education should provide flexibility to school districts and charter schools in the use of funds to meet the unique needs of each school and to achieve program goals.
4. Minimize duplication of effort: Needs assessments and plans should be integrated into existing efforts. Uniform interim and summative assessments should be used to evaluate progress under all three programs.
5. Emphasize accountability across all levels: Accountability is integral to success at all levels, including schools, local governing boards, and the State.

Recommendations

Using these guiding principles, this policy brief provides specific recommendations for policies being developed to implement these three initiatives. Key decisions for each program include determining:

- Read by 3: (1) how to integrate and align literacy plans into existing efforts; (2) how to standardize early literacy assessments; (3) how to prioritize funding for learning strategist positions; (4) how to define learning strategist duties and provide them with professional development; (5) how to create statewide outcome measures; and (6) how to implement third grade retention policies.
- Zoom Schools: (1) how to integrate funds into existing planning processes; (2) how to maximize flexibility of funds; (3) how to use funds for recruitment and retention of teachers; and (4) how to determine performance outcomes and provide support to help schools meet these outcomes.

- Victory Schools: (1) how to integrate needs assessments and plans into existing efforts; (2) how to coordinate administration of Victory Schools with Zoom Schools and Read by 3; (3) how to maximize flexibility of funds; (4) how to use funds for recruitment and retention of teachers; and (5) how to define measurable objectives, evaluate performance, and impose sanctions.

Implementation Challenges Ahead

There are several key challenges that school districts, charter schools, and NDE will face as implementation of these initiatives moves forward.

1. Short implementation timeline: School districts and charter schools face very short implementation timelines which makes it difficult to conduct in-depth needs assessments, critically evaluate why some past investments have not been successful, and design quality programs. It is also challenging to make investments that will be sustainable since funding for Zoom and Victory schools may not continue at the same level in future years.
2. Capacity to implement changes: Existing staff at school districts and charter schools have varying levels of capacity to implement transformative change. It will also likely be challenging for school districts and charter schools to implement plans in a timely manner due to inadequate staffing pipelines and limited availability of contract services.
3. Learning strategist impact on General Fund: There is limited Read by 3 grant funding available to fund the required learning strategist position at each elementary school. Because Federal funds cannot be used for this position due to supplanting restrictions, there could be a significant impact on the General Fund of school districts and charter schools.
4. State capacity for oversight: NDE has not previously provided oversight that emphasizes outcomes over compliance. The Department will need to build this capacity to ensure programs are implemented successfully.

How will the public know if these programs are successful?

Accountability is a central theme of these initiatives, with an independent evaluation required for each program. However, actually determining whether these programs have been successful will be challenging. First, the evaluation will only measure the impact of the first school year of these programs because results are needed by February 2017 when the next Legislative session begins. Some schools may not be able to implement initiatives at the beginning of the school year, so the results may not reflect the impact of a full year of interventions. In addition, many interventions will take several years to show an impact and this timeline does not allow schools to show longitudinal results.

Second, the independent evaluations will be challenging due to the lack of baseline data. Because of testing problems, 2015 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) data is not available for reading and mathematics. However, baseline data is available for assessments of English language proficiency (WIDA assessments). Interim assessments can be used to assess gains in reading and math throughout the year but it is difficult to compare these results to prior years because the same assessments have not been used consistently from year to year. Interim assessment results will need to be compared to schools with similar demographics that did not receive funding in order to determine whether the interventions made a positive difference.

Ultimately, student achievement data from one year will be helpful to understand the impact of these initiatives, but longitudinal data tracking student performance on the SBAC will be more indicative of long term academic gains.



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Introduction

Nevada's K-12 educational outcomes have persistently lagged behind other states. In 2013, Nevada's fourth and eighth grade students performed significantly lower than the national average in math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).¹ The 2015 Legislative Session was marked by efforts to increase funding for targeted K-12 education reforms with accountability measures.

Three major K-12 initiatives approved include: Read by 3 (SB391), Zoom Schools (SB405), and Victory Schools (SB432).² These three programs share many common goals and target similar populations. This policy brief recommends a framework for implementing these efforts in a comprehensive and integrated manner to maximize the impact on student achievement.

1. Programs Have Common Goals and Overlapping Populations

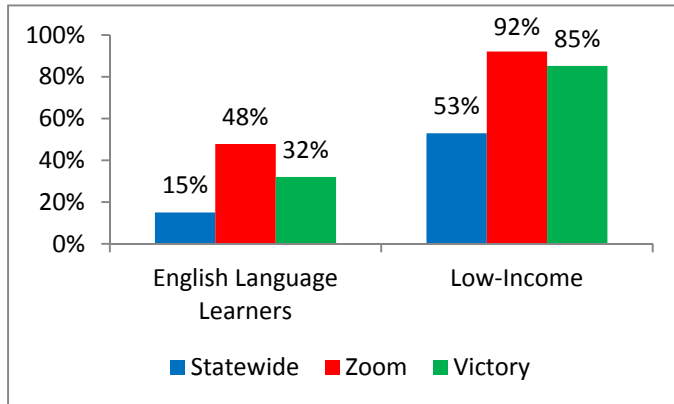
Read by 3, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools were each created to address different issues: Read by 3 aims to ensure that all students read proficiently by grade 3; Zoom Schools target English Language Learners (ELLs); and Victory Schools focus on students living in poverty. Upon closer examination, these programs share common goals, target overlapping populations, and can be viewed as elements of a comprehensive plan to improve student achievement in Nevada.

A common goal running through all three of these initiatives is to help students achieve reading proficiency by the end of grade 3:

- Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is the central goal of Read by 3. In addition, the plan required by the initiative must address the reading proficiency of ELLs;
- The reading skills centers required by the Zoom School program must provide instructional intervention to enable students to overcome literacy problems and language acquisition barriers by the completion of grade 3; and
- One of the three goals of the Victory Schools program is to ensure each pupil reads at or above the level of the average pupil before completing third grade.

Zoom Schools and Victory Schools also share a common goal to improve academic outcomes for underperforming students in middle and high school. The Zoom Schools legislation requires four middle or high schools to be identified that have the highest levels of ELLs and the lowest academic performance: three schools in the Clark County School District (CCSD) and one school in the Washoe County School District (WCSD). The legislation for Victory Schools outlines two overall goals for middle and high school students: (1) being prepared to engage in rigorous high school curriculum after completion of eighth grade; and (2) graduating from high school with skills and attributes necessary to immediately succeed in college or a career. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) has designated five middle schools and four high schools as Victory Schools.

Figure 1: Comparison of Special Populations for State, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools

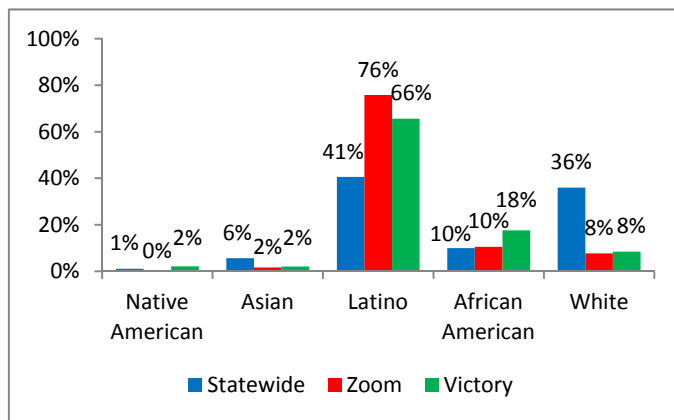


Source: NDE Nevada Report Card 2013-14

There is significant overlap in the populations served by schools that have been identified as Zoom Schools and Victory Schools.³ Figure 1 reveals that both programs serve higher percentages of ELLs than the statewide average, even though only Zoom Schools are targeted at ELLs. Similarly, the low-income student population for both programs exceeds the statewide average, even though only Victory Schools focus on poverty. The figure shows that Zoom Schools actually have higher rates of low-income students than Victory Schools.

The schools that will receive Read by 3 funds have not yet been determined, but these schools will also likely include significant populations of ELL and low-income students.

Figure 2: Comparison of Race/Ethnicity for State, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools



Source: NDE Nevada Report Card 2013-14

The percentage of Latino students is markedly higher than the statewide average for both Zoom and Victory Schools (see Figure 2). In contrast, the percentage of white students is far lower than the statewide average for both Zoom Schools and Victory Schools. There are also some key differences in the populations served by these programs. Victory Schools have larger percentages of African American and Native American students than Zoom Schools and the state as a whole.

2. Guiding Principles for Implementation

Given the overlapping goals and populations served by these three initiatives, the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities recommends five principles to guide implementation of policies being developed by NDE, the State Board of Education, and the governing boards of school districts and charter schools:

- **Emphasize integrated implementation:** The three programs should be viewed as integrated components of a comprehensive intervention strategy that utilizes all of the funding sources available at each school, including Federal Title I funds and private donations. In lieu of concentrating on how schools can use available funds, planning efforts at each school should first focus on analyzing needs and determining which strategies would best meet those needs. The second step should be analyzing how available funding sources could be used to implement these strategies. School districts should also minimize creation of silos, which can occur when each program is segregated under a different

department or administrator and staff do not communicate or collaborate effectively. Instead, school districts should place all three programs under one point of contact to allow schools to collaborate and share ideas and services.

- Align goals and metrics to the State Improvement Plan and the Nevada State Literacy Plan: The Nevada State Board of Education has adopted statewide policy goals through the State Improvement Plan and Nevada State Literacy Plan.⁴ The metrics and objectives designed by NDE, school districts, and charter schools for these programs should align to these existing State plans. For example, at the elementary school level, reading proficiently by grade 3 should be the overall policy goal across all three programs. For middle school, the overall goal for Zoom Schools and Victory Schools should be that all students enter high school with the skills necessary to succeed. Lastly, high schools funded under these programs should have a goal of ensuring students graduate college and career ready.
- Provide flexibility in use of funds: Policies and regulations approved by NDE and the State Board of Education should provide flexibility to school districts and charter schools in the use of State grant funds to meet the unique needs of each school and to achieve program goals. Given that some school districts are facing General Fund shortfalls, State grant funds should also be allowed to backfill certain existing costs. NDE should balance this flexibility with accountability to ensure funds are being used for authorized uses. Schools should also ensure that Federal supplement, not supplant requirements are met.
- Minimize duplication of effort: These programs create new planning and evaluation requirements. To minimize duplication of effort, NDE should integrate any new needs assessments and planning processes into existing efforts required under the Federal Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan, District Performance Plan, and School Performance Plan. In addition, needs assessments should draw from work completed through other initiatives such as the City of Las Vegas' Downtown Achieves. To track progress across the three programs, the assessments used within each school district should be standardized for grades K-2. For grades 3-8, progress can be measured using State interim and summative assessments from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). For high school, schools can use a combination of districtwide interim assessments; end of course exams, and the ACT.
- Emphasize accountability across all levels: Accountability is a common theme across these initiatives, with an independent evaluation required for each program. Accountability should also extend to NDE and the State Board of Education, and should include review of how well the State provided oversight and technical assistance to school districts and charter schools receiving funds.

To implement Read by 3, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools in time for the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, numerous actions will need to be taken by NDE, the State Board of Education, and the governing boards of school districts and charter schools. NDE has begun to release policy guidance on each program, which is available on its website.⁵ The sections that follow provide recommendations for implementation of each program based on these guiding principles.

3. Read by 3 Implementation

Program Summary: Read by 3 sets the overall policy for improving early literacy throughout Nevada. It seeks to ensure that all students across the State can read proficiently by the end of grade 3. This bill requires each school district and charter school to develop a plan to improve literacy in grades K-3. The plan must include a program to improve the reading proficiency of ELLs. The bill also requires early identification and intervention for students with reading deficiencies. In addition, it emphasizes professional development by requiring each elementary school to designate a learning strategist to train teachers on best practices for instruction of struggling readers. Students who do not meet designated performance criteria by the end of third grade will be retained unless they meet certain exceptions. The State budget includes \$4.9 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and \$22.3 million in FY 2017. The bill goes into effect on July 1, 2015 but the provisions related to retention go into effect on July 1, 2019 and will affect students who enter kindergarten in the fall of 2016.

Recommendations for implementation include:

- a. Incorporate the literacy plan into existing plans: (School Districts and Charter Schools) To ensure that the required literacy plan fits into each school district and charter school's overall instructional goals and strategies, the literacy plan should be incorporated into the state-required District/School Performance Plan and/or the LEA Plan required by the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
- b. Align literacy plans to the Nevada State Literacy Plan: (School Districts and Charter Schools) Each literacy plan should be aligned to the Nevada State Literacy Plan, which the State Board of Education approved in draft form in April 2015.⁶ The Nevada State Literacy Plan includes information on best practices for elementary school literacy, as well as self-assessment tools focusing on five key areas: (1) leadership and sustainability; (2) data-driven and standards-based instructional intervention; (3) literacy assessment systems; (4) professional learning; and (5) family and community engagement. It also includes strategies for assisting ELLs.
- c. 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.
- d. Phase-in adoption of a single statewide assessment for early identification of reading deficiencies in grades K-2: (State Board) Schools currently use a variety of formative and interim assessments to identify students with reading deficiencies in grades K-2. Beginning in FY 2016, all schools will have access to the SBAC interim assessments for grades 3-8. In order to have uniform and comparable data statewide, the long-term goal should be to have a single statewide assessment for grades K-2. Without this, it will be difficult to compare results across school districts and charter schools. Because school districts and charter schools have existing and pending contracts for interim assessments, a statewide K-2 assessment will need to be phased in over time. The State Board can adopt a list of assessment options for use during the 2015-2017 biennium. This list can expire in two years so Nevada can move to a statewide assessment for the 2017-18 school year. To compare outcomes across programs, the K-2 assessment chosen by each district

should also be the same assessment used to evaluate progress at Zoom Schools and Victory Schools.

- e. Track and publish statewide English Language Learner Assessment data: (Department of Education) All three programs will address ELLs so it is important to measure the language acquisition growth of this population. All school districts and charter schools currently utilize WIDA assessments. The WIDA MODEL assessment is used as a screening tool to identify ELL students. Later in the school year, WIDA ACCESS is used to measure English language proficiency across the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There are six performance levels: entering, beginning, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching. Detailed ACCESS results are not currently published.⁷ However, NDE is considering creating a website to begin tracking growth in English language proficiency using data from ACCESS. Publishing this data would increase transparency and provide enhanced statewide focus on ELL outcomes. It would also provide more focus on long-term ELLs and literacy gaps. Due to privacy laws, it would not be possible, however, to provide school-level data in areas with small ELL populations.
- f. Prioritize implementation of Learning Strategists in underperforming schools: (State Board) Given limited availability of funds for the Read by 3 grant, the State Board should prioritize funding for schools with the lowest schoolwide reading proficiency levels that do not have access to other State funding sources such as Zoom Schools and Victory Schools. The State budget includes \$4.9 million in FY 2016 and \$22.3 million in FY 2017 for the Read by 3 initiative. The Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) indicated in its budget closing documents that NDE plans to provide grants to approximately 30 schools in FY 2016 and 145 schools in FY 2017 to fund learning strategists and other activities eligible under the grant.⁸

Because Read by 3 grant funding is very limited, the cost of learning strategists will largely be borne by other State and local funds. This will be a significant impact on the General Fund of school districts and charter schools. While school districts could designate an existing teacher to perform the duties of a learning strategist, it would be difficult for a teacher to fulfill the requirements in the bill and teach a full day of regular classes. The duties of this position are to train and assist teachers to provide intensive instruction in reading. The legislation also specifically requires this position to provide professional development to each teacher in grades K-4. To ensure that the professional development provided by learning strategists is job-embedded and sustained, each learning strategist would either need to be a separate position or the designated teacher would require significant course relief that would need to be backfilled by another teacher. The statewide costs of the learning strategists will be significant. As of FY 2014, there were 400 elementary schools in Nevada. Assuming average teacher salary and benefits of \$76,908 for FY 2016 per NDE, the cost to place a learning strategist at each school would be \$30.8 million while the cost to place one learning strategist at every two schools would be \$15.4 million.

To partially address this funding shortfall, schools could potentially use other funding sources for learning strategists but schools would need to be cautious in using Federal funds. Zoom School and Victory School funds could be used for this position since these funding sources can be used

for professional development. Use of Federal Title I funds is more problematic due to supplanting restrictions. Some school districts currently use Title I funds for positions that train and assist teachers to provide intensive instruction in reading. Federal guidance indicates that once a service is required by State law, it is considered a mandate and Title I funds can no longer be used.⁹ Accordingly, NDE advises that only State and local funds be used to cover the costs of learning strategists required under Read by 3.¹⁰ Federal funds can be used for additional learning strategists beyond what is legislatively required.

Schools also currently use the Federal Striving Readers grant to fund positions similar to learning strategists. These positions can be supplemental to the State-required learning strategist but cannot be used to meet the State mandate. This grant will expire at the end of FY 2016. Many of these schools would likely be prioritized for Read by 3 funds since they have low reading proficiency rates.

- g. Align the duties and responsibilities of learning strategists with the Nevada State Literacy Plan: (State Board) The State Board is also required to define the duties and responsibilities of learning strategists. These duties should be flexible enough to accommodate the job descriptions for similar positions in different districts and should be aligned to the Nevada State Literacy Plan.¹¹ As recommended in this plan, professional learning should be based on analysis of student literacy data and should also include explicit instruction on comprehension strategies, identification and use of text structures, rich discussion around text, purposeful text selection, and student engagement and motivation.¹² Learning strategists should also receive professional development on actions to implement the WIDA standards for ELLs.¹³
- h. Utilize the Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) to provide professional development to learning strategists: (State Board) The Read by 3 legislation requires the State Board to prescribe training that a learning strategist must complete. To quickly create a coordinated statewide professional development program, the State Board could require that the initial training be provided by the RPDPs, which have staff trained in this area and already have an infrastructure in place to reach the entire State, including both urban and rural areas. To enhance capacity to meet this demand, the RPDPs could partner with local institutions of higher education and utilize online resources created by other states such as Colorado.¹⁴ In addition, NDE could provide oversight over development of this curriculum to ensure it aligns with the Nevada State Literacy Plan. Given limited availability of Read by 3 grant funding, the State Board could require that RPDPs utilize their existing funds for this purpose.
- i. Create uniform statewide measurable objectives for evaluation: (Department of Education) School districts and charter schools that receive funds are required to set measurable performance objectives based on aggregated pupil achievement data and submit a report to NDE with the results by July 1, 2016. In addition, NDE will hire an independent consultant to evaluate the program. To ensure that all grantees are evaluated against the same standards, the Department of Education should define measurable objectives for the short and long term that are aligned to the State Improvement Plan. For instance, Objective 1.2 of the State Improvement Plan seeks to increase the percentage of third graders who are at or above grade level in reading from 61.1 percent to 82 percent in 2020 (subject to change based on future SBAC results). Since

the evaluation will be based on only one year of data, NDE can develop measures to evaluate progress towards this goal. In addition, because this is the first year of the program and grantees may not have comparable prior-year assessment data, the evaluator should compare the results of the funded schools with a list of comparison schools with similar demographics.

- j. Develop and implement parent notification procedures and family engagement initiatives: (School Districts and Charter Schools) As required by the bill, school districts and charter schools must develop notification procedures for parents of students with reading deficiencies. Schools with access to supplemental funding from programs such as Title I, Zoom Schools, or Victory Schools should also go beyond this mandate to implement family engagement initiatives to help families learn how to work with struggling readers and ELLs. Schools can draw from the best practices for parent engagement identified in the Nevada State Literacy Plan. Retention of third grade students will apply to students entering kindergarten in Fall 2016, so school districts and charter schools should also begin developing information to share with families so they have a clear understanding of the new requirements.
- k. Develop policies related to retention before Fall 2016: (State Board) The retention provisions in the Read by 3 legislation do not go into effect until July 1, 2019. Since the first class of students subject to retention in third grade will be kindergarten students who enter school in the Fall of 2016, regulations should be drafted by the end of the 2015-16 school year so that expectations are clear for students and educators at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. One key provision that will be decided by the State Board is the passing score on the State criterion-referenced examination, which is currently the SBAC. It will likely take several years of experience with the SBAC before scores stabilize. Accordingly, scores from the 2016, 2017, and 2018 SBAC can be used to determine the passing score. The State Board will also need to address the timing of availability of score information for purposes of retention. Currently, test scores are not available until the summer. To enable schools to make retention decisions, test data will need to be available prior to the end of the school year, with sufficient time for schools to determine whether to grant good cause exemptions.

4. Zoom Schools Implementation

Program Summary: In 2013, the Legislature provided \$25 million per year for programs targeted towards ELLs.¹⁵ This marked the first time the Nevada Legislature had invested supplemental State funds for this population. The legislation required CCSD and WCSD to designate schools with high levels of ELLs and low achievement as Zoom Schools. These schools were required to provide pre-kindergarten, full-day kindergarten, reading skills centers, and extended year programs. Zoom grants also supported ELL programs in rural school districts and charter schools. For the 2015-2017 biennium, the Legislature doubled the State's investment from \$25 million to \$50 million per year, expanded the uses of funds, and extended the program to secondary schools. The bill allows schools to use up to two percent of the allocation for professional development, family engagement, and recruitment/retention incentives for teachers. The bill also requires the State Board of Education to prescribe statewide performance levels and outcome indicators, and requires a third-party evaluation of the program.

A total of 37 Zoom Schools have been identified so far for the 2015-2017 biennium. CCSD has identified 29 schools and WCSD has identified 8 schools. WCSD will identify additional Zoom Schools by August 1,

2015. Zoom Schools have been historically low-performing and there have been various other efforts to improve student achievement at these schools (see glossary in Appendix A). For example, seven of the 37 schools have been placed in an Acceleration Zone in WCSD, one school in CCSD is part of Las Vegas Downtown Achieves, and one school in CCSD is an Empowerment School (see Appendix B). There has also been a substantial investment of Federal funds in these schools (see Appendix B). All Zoom Schools received Title I funding in FY 2015, three have received School Improvement Grants, and 11 have received Striving Readers grant funds. In addition, 13 of these schools are on NDE's list of underperforming schools because they have been identified as Focus Schools, Priority Schools, or have one star under the Nevada School Performance Framework.

Recommendations for implementation include:

- a. Integrate Zoom funding into the existing school planning process: (School Districts and Charter Schools) School districts and charter schools receiving Zoom funds should engage in a comprehensive needs assessment and planning process that takes into account goals and objectives identified in the State Improvement Plan and the goals of the Read by 3 initiative. This process should include a critical review of how other funding sources such as Title I and Striving Readers have been used in the past and how all funding sources can be utilized to create a comprehensive intervention plan for struggling students. This analysis should inform the plan that school districts and charter schools are required to submit to receive Zoom funds as well as the existing School Performance Plan. Schools and districts currently have varying levels of capacity to conduct this analysis.
- b. Develop guidance that allows for flexible use of funds: (Department of Education) The NDE has the authority to interpret how Zoom funding can be used. It is important for NDE to be flexible in its determinations so that school districts and charter schools can best respond to the unique needs of each school using evidence-based practices. Flexibility is also needed since some school districts have been required to make budget reductions in their General Funds. In exchange for this flexibility, NDE should place a high priority on accountability by ensuring that funds are being used for authorized purposes. Guidance on use of funds should be posted on NDE's website so that interpretation is consistent across the State. Key areas that should be clarified include:
 - Pre-kindergarten: Clarify that Zoom School funds can be used to fund pre-kindergarten programs previously funded with Title I funds or other grant funds.
 - Kindergarten: Clarify whether Zoom Funds may be used to pay for the district/charter school's share of full-day kindergarten costs. As of the 2015-2017 biennium, school districts and charter schools are required to use a portion of their basic support guarantee for full-day kindergarten and the State full-day kindergarten program covers the remaining cost;
 - Reading Skills Centers: Clarify that reading skills centers can be administered either as interventions outside of the regular classroom (pull-out programs) as is done in CCSD, or as interventions inside the regular classroom (push-in programs) as is done in WCSD;
 - Facilities: Allow funds to be used for portables to expand pre-kindergarten programs or to reduce class sizes for full-day kindergarten;
 - Transportation: Allow funds to be used for transportation costs for after school programs and intersession/ extended-year programs; and
 - Administration: Define what administrative costs can be charged to the Zoom program, including costs for assessments, technical assistance to schools, and evaluation.

- c. Focus recruitment and retention strategies on reducing educator equity gaps and providing both compensation and non-compensation incentives: (State Board) The Zoom Schools legislation requires the State Board to prescribe a list of recruitment and retention incentives for school districts and charter schools to offer teachers and other licensed educational personnel. Incentives approved by the State Board should focus on two key goals: (1) decreasing equity gaps in teacher experience levels between high poverty schools and other schools as recommended in NDE's Nevada Educator Equity Plan; and (2) providing both compensation and non-compensation based incentives.

Data reviewed by NDE as part of the Nevada Educator Equity Plan showed that the percentage of inexperienced teachers in their first year of teaching was greatest at Nevada's highest poverty schools in FY 2014.¹⁶ In addition, data from CCSD shows that it has been difficult to retain staff at Zoom Schools. In May 2015, after teachers completed the voluntary transfer process, there were 111 vacancies at the 16 Zoom Schools.¹⁷ Research reveals that financial incentives alone will not help retain quality teachers. For example, in studies of incentives offered in Massachusetts and North Carolina, "researchers concluded that even when bonuses succeeded in drawing teachers to the poorest schools, such incentives could not compensate for the lack of support they encountered in these schools, which in turn contributed to the departure of many of these teachers."¹⁸

Financial incentives should be capped at 10 percent of base pay, to be consistent with the pay for performance program recently approved in AB483.¹⁹ Based on research of best practices, compensation incentives could include:²⁰

- An increase in base pay for post-probationary teachers who are rated as highly effective under the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF);
- Extra pay for highly effective teachers who are willing to become mentors to new teachers;
- Extra pay for highly effective teachers who are willing to lead Professional Learning Communities;
- Loan forgiveness for teachers rated as highly effective;
- Payment of tuition for an endorsement to Teach English as a Second Language (TESL) or a bilingual endorsement;
- Tuition for administrators to attend leadership courses; and
- Scholarships for paraprofessionals to attend teacher preparation programs.

Drawing on evidence-based practices, non-compensation incentives could include:²¹

- Mentoring for new teachers;
- Training on cultural competency;
- Job-embedded professional development on teaching ELLs and other struggling students; and
- Allowing teachers to visit other model classrooms with ELLs and other at risk students.

- d. Create uniform performance levels and outcome indicators and utilize the same K-2 assessments used for Read by 3: (Department of Education) When the Zoom program was initiated in 2013, a statewide evaluation plan was not put in place. While internal evaluations showed academic

growth during the school year, school districts used different assessments to determine growth and it was not possible to compare student achievement at Zoom Schools with students in similar schools or with students who attended the same school in the prior year. The legislation approved in 2015 seeks to standardize evaluation of these programs. It requires NDE to create performance levels and outcome indicators to measure effectiveness of programs and services funded by the grant. Two evaluations are required, a district-generated evaluation and an independent evaluation.

To determine whether schools have met these performance levels in grades K-2, NDE should use data from the same interim assessments used for the Read by 3 initiative and should align the performance goals with the State Improvement Plan. For grades 3-8, NDE should use interim and summative assessment data from the SBAC. End of course exams, ACT results, and districtwide interim assessments can be used at the high school level. Because this program is focused on ELLs, data from the WIDA ACCESS assessment should also be used to measure growth. It will be difficult to establish a performance baseline for FY 2015 because a variety of assessments were used in the past and there will be no SBAC data in FY 2015 due to testing problems. Therefore, it will be important to establish a list of comparable schools to measure effectiveness of the program.

- e. Provide technical support to schools that do not meet performance measures (State Board and Department of Education) The Zoom legislation allows the State Board to prescribe criteria and procedures for taking corrective action against grantees that do not meet program requirements or prescribed performance levels. The State budget includes two positions at NDE to work with Zoom Schools. Staff should take a proactive role in monitoring and oversight. If a school does not meet the performance measures after the first year of the program, NDE should provide technical support to the school district or charter school to analyze how Zoom funds were used in the context of the overall School Performance Plan. This technical assistance should include a review of whether the plan targeted root causes, how well the plan was implemented, and what barriers or challenges arose. NDE should also assist the district or charter school in revising its School Performance Plan(s), recommending professional development, creating interim performance goals, and monitoring progress towards these goals.

5. Victory Schools Implementation

Program Summary: The Victory Schools program seeks to improve outcomes for low-performing schools in low-income areas. The goals of the program are to ensure that each student served achieves reading proficiency by the end of third grade, is prepared for high school by the end of eighth grade, and graduates from high school with skills necessary to succeed in college or a career. This program is similar to Zoom Schools but includes a more expansive list of eligible uses of funds and requires the school to conduct a needs assessment and submit a plan to receive funds. The governing boards of school districts and charter schools with Victory Schools are required to determine the appropriate means to determine effectiveness and NDE is required to contract out for a third-party evaluation of the program. The State can require Victory Schools that demonstrate unsatisfactory performance to take corrective action and can withhold money if unsatisfactory pupil achievement continues.

Many of the 35 schools identified for the Victory Schools program have been low-performing for many years and have been subject to myriad efforts to improve student achievement (see Appendix C). For example, 16 of the 19 Victory Schools in CCSD have been targeted by one or more of the following local initiatives: Turnaround Zone, Prime 6, My Brother's Keeper, Downtown Achieves, and Empowerment Schools. There has also been a substantial investment of Federal funds in these schools. All Victory Schools received Title I funding in FY 2015, two have received School Improvement Grants, and 12 have received Striving Readers grant funds. In addition, 14 of these schools are on NDE's list of underperforming schools because they have been identified as Focus Schools, Priority Schools, or have one star under the Nevada School Performance Framework.

Recommendations for implementation include:

- a. Integrate needs assessment and plan into existing efforts: (School Districts and Charter Schools)
The timeline to conduct a needs assessment and create a plan is very short, with a preliminary plan due August 15, 2015 and a final plan due September 15, 2015. The short timeline will make it challenging to develop a quality plan. All Nevada schools currently undertake needs assessments as part of the School Performance Plan. Some Victory Schools have also completed comprehensive needs assessments and plans through initiatives such as Downtown Achieves and My Brother's Keeper. The needs assessment and plan should draw on work previously completed through these efforts. It should also examine all funding sources available and critically analyze available data to determine what strategies have and have not been successful. The focus of the plan should be on determining how to best meet the needs of students and then reviewing what funding sources are available to meet these needs. The final Victory School Plan should be integrated into the School Performance Plan.

Given the short planning timeframe, large school districts should identify a menu of services that could be provided to Victory Schools and identify whether services could be provided with additional staff or whether they would need to be provided by contractors. For contract services, districts and charter schools should determine whether existing contracts could be expanded to provide more services or whether the services would need to be competitively bid.
- b. Coordinate administration of Victory Schools with Zoom Schools and Read by 3: (School Districts and Charter Schools) Administration of Victory Schools, Zoom Schools, and Read by 3 should be viewed holistically due to the interrelated nature of these programs. In a small district, the three programs could be under one administrator. In a larger district, there could be a single point of contact with authority to direct work across zones and departments. If Victory Schools and Zoom schools are divided into separate zones, the administrators could be housed in the same building and could be encouraged to collaborate, share resources, and share lessons learned. For example, if some of the Victory Schools choose to implement reading skills centers, they could draw on the infrastructure built by Zoom Schools, including curriculum and professional development. Staff managing reading skills centers could be co-funded by Zoom Schools and Victory Schools. Innovative ideas and new instructional approaches should also be shared across programs. For example, Victory Schools in CCSD could experiment with implementing the reading skills center as a push-in program or an extended-day program.

- c. Develop guidance that allows for flexible use of funds: (Department of Education) The list of eligible uses for Victory Schools is more expansive than for Zoom Schools. As with Zoom Schools, NDE has the authority to interpret how funds are used. NDE should provide flexibility in use of funds while also maintaining accountability to ensure funds are used for authorized purposes. Guidance on use of funds should be posted on NDE's website so that interpretation is consistent across the State. Key areas that should be clarified include:
- Pre-kindergarten: Clarify that Victory School funds can be used to fund Pre-kindergarten programs previously funded with Title I funds or other grant funds.
 - Kindergarten: Clarify whether schools can use Victory School funds to pay for the district's share of the cost for full-day kindergarten programs. As of the 2015-2017 biennium, school districts are required to use a portion of their basic support guarantee for full-day kindergarten and the State full-day kindergarten program covers the remaining cost;
 - Reading Skills Centers: Clarify that reading skills centers can be administered as either pull-out programs or push-in programs;
 - Facilities: Allow funds to be used for portables to expand pre-kindergarten programs or to reduce class sizes for full-day kindergarten;
 - Transportation: Allow funds to be used for transportation costs for after school programs and intersession/ extended-year programs;
 - Evidence-based social programs: Provide examples of evidence-based social, psychological, and health services that would be permitted under the grant;
 - School climate and culture: Provide examples of programs that can improve school climate and culture; and
 - Administration: Define what administrative costs can be charged to the Victory Schools program, including costs for assessments, technical assistance to schools, and evaluation.
- d. Focus recruitment and retention strategies on reducing educator equity gaps and providing both compensation and non-compensation incentives: (State Board) The focus of recruitment and retention incentives should be similar to the recommendation above for Zoom Schools since there is a significant overlap in the population served by the two programs. Incentives approved by the State Board should focus on two key goals: (1) decreasing equity gaps in teacher experience levels between high poverty schools and other schools as recommended in the Nevada Educator Equity Plan; and (2) providing both compensation and non-compensation recruitment and retention incentives. See section 4.c. under Zoom Schools for a specific list of incentives.
- e. Define statewide and local measurable objectives: (School Districts and Charter Schools) Because the plan for each Victory School will be unique, the legislation places the responsibility for defining measurable objectives with school districts and charter schools instead of the State. It is important for NDE to be able to compare outcomes across Nevada and across programs. Therefore, at a minimum, school districts and charter schools should adopt the same measurable objectives and assessments used by the State for Zoom Schools and Read by 3. The State can ensure that these objectives align to the goals stated in the Victory Schools legislation, which are reading proficiently by the end of third grade, being prepared for high school by the end of eighth grade, and graduating from high school with skills necessary to succeed in college or a career.

School districts and charter schools can also develop objectives that are tied to each unique plan. For example, a school could use resiliency assessments to identify root causes of student academic and behavior problems and measure the impact of services provided.

- f. Create timelines and mechanisms to evaluate school performance and impose sanctions: (State Board and Department of Education) Responsibility for evaluating Victory Schools rests primarily with NDE. The Victory Schools legislation requires the Department of Education to contract with an independent evaluator to determine the effectiveness of the program. School districts and charter schools must submit an annual report each November on services and expenditures, but this report does not contain outcome data.

The legislation gives the State Board the ability to take corrective action if pupil achievement and school performance are unsatisfactory. If inadequate performance continues, the State Board can direct NDE to withhold disbursement of additional funds. To ensure fairness across schools, the State Board should use the uniform metrics recommended above and set performance levels that are considered unsatisfactory for elementary, middle, and high schools. Schools should be informed of these objectives prior to final submission of their plans so the goals can be incorporated.

The State Board should also develop a uniform timeline for evaluating performance, taking corrective action, and withholding funds. To provide actionable data in a timely manner, the third-party evaluation should be based on the first year of the program. Since there will not be baseline data in the first year of the program, NDE can develop a list of comparison schools with similar demographics for the evaluation. If a school does not meet the performance measures after the first year of the program, NDE should take corrective action by analyzing the school's plan, how well it was implemented, and what barriers or challenges arose. NDE should also assist the district/school to revise its plan, create interim performance goals, and monitor progress towards these goals. Performance should be reevaluated after the end of the second school year to determine whether future funds should be withheld.

6. State Monitoring and Oversight

Accountability is a major theme running through the legislation creating Read by 3, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools. Traditionally, NDE's oversight of school funding has focused on compliance. NDE has an opportunity to take a more innovative approach and focus on outcomes. This will be challenging because NDE has not traditionally had the capacity or authority to take on this oversight role.

NDE is required to contract for an independent evaluation of each program and also has budget authority for two positions to oversee each program. These positions can be responsible for providing ongoing technical assistance, monitoring progress, and prescribing corrective actions as part of a continual cycle of improvement. They can also analyze outcomes across the three programs.

Since NDE only has two positions for each program, it should focus its intervention efforts at the LEA level, which is the school district or charter school authorizer. The LEA in turn should be responsible for working directly with schools under its purview.

Recommendations for implementation include:

- a. Provide constructive feedback on plans: (Department of Education) NDE should critically evaluate plans submitted by school districts and charter schools for the three programs to determine whether the plans address root causes of poor academic performance and whether the schools will have adequate staff and resources to successfully implement the plans. NDE can also review prior-year plans to assess what promising efforts are in place and what efforts have been unsuccessful. For the most persistently struggling schools, NDE could conduct site visits and interview focus groups of school leaders, teachers, and parents. Based on this review, NDE should provide constructive feedback and recommend any changes necessary.
- b. Prescribe corrective measures to school districts based on data after the first year of the biennium: (Department of Education) Using data from the first year of the three programs, NDE should identify schools that are not meeting performance goals and prescribe corrective actions that must be implemented by school districts and charter schools. NDE may also require that plans and metrics be adjusted. NDE could also provide training to LEAs on how to effectively use data to make changes at the instructional level.
- c. Analyze outcomes across Read by 3, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools in the required reports to the State Board and Legislature: (Department of Education) For the Read by 3 and Zoom School programs, NDE is required to prepare a report using the results of the evaluation and other data and submit it to the State Board and the Legislative Committee on Education. For the Victory Schools program, the independent evaluation will be transmitted directly to the State Board and Legislature and there will not be a separate report from NDE. As part of its reports on each program to the State Board and Legislature, NDE should analyze outcomes across the three programs. For example, the Read by 3 report should compare K-3 reading proficiency for schools receiving funding from Read by 3, Zoom Schools and Victory Schools. NDE should compare these results to schools with similar demographics that did not receive funding. Similarly, for middle and high schools, the Zoom School report could compare outcomes on the same measures for Zoom Schools and Victory Schools and compare results to other schools with similar demographics.
- d. Ensure there is independent review of the quality of NDE's implementation and oversight: (Legislative Committee on Education) Implementation of Read by 3, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools will be a significant challenge for NDE given that it has not previously had this level of responsibility for oversight. The independent evaluations should also focus on the quality of technical assistance and oversight provided by NDE. The Legislative Committee on Education should review this information prior to the 2017 Legislative Session.

Conclusion

The programs approved during the Nevada 2015 Legislative session provide an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate how targeted State investments can have a positive impact on student achievement. The Read by 3 initiative will provide longitudinal data on the impact of early literacy interventions. In addition, the experiences of Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools will help drive future discussion on how to implement a weighted funding formula that targets ELLs and at risk students.

To implement these initiatives successfully, this policy brief recommends that decisionmakers follow five guiding principles: (1) emphasize integrated implementation; (2) align goals and metrics to the State Improvement Plan and the Nevada State Literacy Plan; (3) provide flexibility in use of funds; (4) minimize duplication of effort; and (5) emphasize accountability across all levels. Using these principles will help ensure that schools are all striving to meet the same overarching goals while providing flexibility to respond to local needs.

There are several key challenges that school districts, charter schools, and NDE will face as implementation of these initiatives moves forward.

1. Short implementation timeline: School districts and charter schools face very short implementation timelines which makes it difficult to conduct in-depth needs assessments, critically evaluate why some past investments have not been successful, and design quality programs. It is also challenging to make investments that will be sustainable since funding for Zoom and Victory schools may not continue at the same level in future years.
2. Capacity to implement changes: Existing staff at school districts and charter schools have varying levels of capacity to implement transformative change. It will also likely be challenging for school districts and charter schools to implement plans in a timely manner due to inadequate staffing pipelines and limited availability of contract services.
3. Learning strategist impact on General Fund: There is limited Read by 3 grant funding available to fund the required learning strategist position at each elementary school. Because Federal funds cannot be used for this position due to supplanting restrictions, there will likely be a significant impact on the General Fund of school districts and charter schools.
4. State capacity for oversight: NDE has not previously provided oversight that emphasizes outcomes over compliance. The Department will need to build this capacity to ensure programs are implemented successfully.

If the interventions implemented through Read by 3, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools are not successful, the State has two new tools to provide more intensive interventions: (1) turnaround schools (SB92) creates a process for systemic changes at underperforming schools; and (2) the Achievement School District (AB448) allows underperforming schools to be converted to charter schools. Strategic use of resources could help prevent the need to use one of these more extensive interventions.

Ultimately, strong leadership and collaboration will be necessary at all levels to achieve success. Teachers will need to embrace evidence-based strategies, become adept at using data to guide instruction, and feel empowered to become instructional innovators and leaders. School administrators will need to create cultures of high expectations and ensure that reforms are being implemented with fidelity. District administrators will need to clearly articulate goals and ensure that resources, technical assistance, and monitoring are in place to achieve these goals. Lastly, NDE and the State Board of Education will need to build capacity and develop a collaborative relationship with school districts and charter schools that emphasizes outcomes over compliance.

Appendix A: Glossary of School Intervention Programs and Terms

Appendix B: Interventions at Zoom Schools

Appendix C: Interventions at Victory Schools

About the Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities



The Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, bipartisan, think-do tank focused on independent, 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. The Guinn Center does not take institutional positions on policy issues.

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¹ National Center for Education Statistics. The Nation's Report Card. 2013 Mathematics and Reading
http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/state-performance

² SB391, Chapter 334, Statutes of Nevada 2015; SB405, Chapter 335, Statutes of Nevada 2015; and SB432, Chapter 389, Statutes of Nevada 2015

³ CCSD has identified Zoom Schools for the 2015-2017 biennium. WCSD will identify additional Zoom Schools by August 1, 2015.

⁴ Nevada Department of Education. State Improvement Plan 2015.

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/State_Board_of_Education/State_Improvement_Plan\(STIP\)/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/State_Board_of_Education/State_Improvement_Plan(STIP)/) and Nevada Department of Education. Draft Nevada State Literacy Plan (April 15, 2015)

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/State_Board_of_Education/2015/April/DRAFTNevadaStateLiteracyPlan/

⁵ Nevada Department of Education. Legislative Implementation Report.

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

⁶ Department of Education. Draft Nevada State Literacy Plan (April 15, 2015)

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/State_Board_of_Education/2015/April/DRAFTNevadaStateLiteracyPlan/

⁷ The only publicly available ACCESS results are the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) required by Title III.

AMAO 1 is 50% of ELs taking the ACCESS for at least the second time score a .5 Proficiency Level increase. AMAO 2 is 12% of ELs taking the ACCESS meet the exit criteria scores of 5.0 Composite and 5.0 Literacy.

⁸ Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau. Senate Committee on Finance and Assembly Committee on Ways and Means CLOSING LIST #3. Department of Education. May 16, 2015.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015/ExhibitDocument/OpenExhibitDocument?exhibitId=16412&fileDownloadName=Joint%20Full%20May%202016.pdf>

⁹ U.S. Department of Education. Non-Regulatory Guidance. Title I Fiscal Issues: Maintenance of Effort, Comparability, Supplement not Supplant, Carryover, Consolidating Funds in Schoolwide Programs, Grantback Requirements. Revised February 2008.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/fiscalguid.pdf>

¹⁰ Conversation with Dr. Steve Canavero and Janie Lowe, Nevada Department of Education. July 2, 2015.

¹¹ Department of Education. Draft Nevada State Literacy Plan (April 15, 2015)

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/State_Board_of_Education/2015/April/DRAFTNevadaStateLiteracyPlan/

¹² Ibid p. 76

¹³ Ibid p. 75

¹⁴ Colorado Department of Education. READ Act Professional Development Opportunities.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/professionaldevelopmentopportunities>

¹⁵ SB504, Chapter 515, Statutes of Nevada 2013

¹⁶ Nevada Department of Education. Nevada Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators (June 2015):

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Educator_Effectiveness/Educator_Develop_Support/Nevada_Equity_Plan/Documents/NVEducatorEquityPlan_FINALJune_2015/

¹⁷ Clark County School District. Transfer Vacancies. May 13, 2015.

¹⁸ David, J. *What Research Says About ... / Teacher Recruitment Incentives*. Educational Leadership. April 2008. Volume 65, Number 7. Poverty and Learning. Pages 84-86. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr08/vol65/num07/Teacher-Recruitment-Incentives.aspx>

¹⁹ AB483, Chapter 540, Statutes of Nevada 2015

²⁰ Goe, L. Recruiting and Retaining Highly Effective Teachers: What Works and How Do You Know? National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. April 5, 2010.

http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/Presentation_TeacherRecruitmentAndRetention_toWesternRegionalSIGConference_April_6_2011.pdf, Allen, B. Eight Questions on Teacher Recruitment and Retention: What does the Research Say? Education

Commission of the States (September 2005)

<http://www.ecs.org/html/educationIssues/TeachingQuality/TRRreport/home/TeacherRecruitmentRetention.pdf>, and Hammer, P et.

al. Rural Teacher Recruitment and Retention Practices: A Review of the Research Literature, National Survey of Rural Superintendents, and Case Studies of Programs in Virginia. Appalachia Educational Laboratory (December 2005)

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED489143.pdf>

²¹ Ibid

Glossary of School Intervention Programs and Terms

- **Clark County School District (CCSD) Turnaround Zone:** CCSD created the Turnaround Zone in 2011 for schools with persistently low academic achievement. There are currently 16 schools in the Turnaround Zone.¹ Schools in the zone target the following areas: clear and shared focus; high standards and expectations for all students; effective school leadership; high level of communication and collaboration; curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with state standards; frequent monitoring of learning and teaching; focused professional development; supportive learning environment; and a high level of family and community engagement. After three years of intensive support, schools in the Turnaround Zone will be reviewed for gradual release to their geographic performance zone.
- **Washoe County School District (WCSD) Acceleration Zone:** WCSD created the Acceleration Zone in 2013 to target underperforming schools.² Schools that have been identified as Priority or Focus Schools, have one or two stars on the district accountability framework, or have been identified by the Superintendent can be placed in the Acceleration Zone. There are currently 13 schools in the Acceleration Zone.³ Significant effort is placed on planning and implementation of successful practices, including curriculum, resources, personnel (professional development), school climate, and monitoring. Schools remain in the zone for three years. If significant gains have not been made after three years, further actions will be taken.
- **Clark County School District Prime 6:** The Prime 6 initiative began in 1994 as a voluntary integration program targeting schools in West Las Vegas.⁴ The purpose is to enhance learning opportunities in culturally and racially diverse school settings and increase school choice options. There are six traditional elementary schools and three magnet schools in the Prime 6 program. Kindergarten students living near these schools attend the local area school. For first through fifth grades, students in West Las Vegas and other parts of CCSD are eligible for admission to the magnet schools. Additional funding is provided to increase the instructional day, decrease class sizes, provide learning strategists, provide campus monitors and teaching assistants, and offer enrichment opportunities.
- **Las Vegas Downtown Achieves:** Downtown Achieves is a collective impact effort facilitated by multiple government, non-profit, and private sector partners that began in 2013.⁵ The effort now includes 11 schools located in downtown Las Vegas that are part of a feeder pattern of elementary, middle, and high schools. The effort seeks to transform children's lives and school operations, and ensure every student is college and career ready. Success will be defined through a variety of tools that gauge efforts in the sectors of education, health and human services, arts and culture, natural and built environment, and jobs/economy.
- **Clark County School District Empowerment Schools:** The Empowerment School model began in 2006 and is designed to improve learning and student performance through a collaborative partnership that includes students, parents, community members and the school staff. There are currently 28 Empowerment Schools. Decisions regarding governance, instruction, budget, staffing, staff incentives and schedule/calendar are made at the school level. The Public Education Foundation identifies potential partners and matches them with an Empowerment School to leverage resources and strengthen the social, emotional, and academic growth of every student.

- **Las Vegas My Brother's Keeper:** This initiative is a collaborative effort between the City of Las Vegas and Nevada Partners, Inc., a community-based, non-profit organization, that grew out of an Executive Order signed by President Barack Obama in 2014 to address the persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color, with an emphasis on African-American boys.⁶ Similar to Las Vegas Downtown Achieves, this effort uses a collective impact model to create change. The target area includes six schools in West Las Vegas. The goals of the initiative are: all children will be ready for kindergarten and reading at grade level by grade 3; young people will graduate from high school ready for college and career; and the "school to prison" pipeline will be eliminated.
- **Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act:** Title I is the largest source of Federal education funds. It is a compensatory education program that provides supplemental funds to low-income schools. The intent and purpose of the program is to help students at risk of not meeting the State's challenging achievement standards. Title I funds a variety of services, including preschool, professional development, intervention programs, and technology. In FY 2015, there were 350 Title I schools in Nevada.⁷
- **School Improvement Grant (SIG):** The Federal SIG program provides funding to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) with underperforming schools that have both the greatest need and demonstrate the strongest commitment to use the funds to significantly raise the achievement of their students.⁸ SIG funds are used to implement one of six rigorous school intervention models – Turnaround Model, Transformation Model, Restart Model, School Closure, Evidence-Based Whole School Reform Model, and Early Learning Model. Since FY 2011, there have been 20 SIG schools in Nevada.
- **Striving Readers:** This Federal grant aims to improve literacy from birth through 12th grade.⁹ Subgrants have been awarded to four school districts: Clark, Douglas, Nye, and Washoe. A total of 104 schools have participated in the program. Funds are used to provide teachers with statewide intensive, individualized, cross-discipline literacy instruction, diverse professional development activities, training, technical assistance, networking, and peer coaching and support. The last year of the grant is FY 2016.
- **State Underperforming Schools List:** In January 2015, the Nevada Department of Education identified 78 underperforming schools.¹⁰ This list includes schools that earned one star on the Nevada School Performance Framework, Focus Schools, and Priority Schools.
 - The Nevada School Performance Framework ranks schools with one to five stars. One star schools have the lowest number of index points under the framework.
 - Focus Schools are those with the greatest achievement gaps for students with Individualized Education Plans, students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch, and English Language Learners.
 - Priority Schools represent the lowest 5 percent of schools in academic proficiency and growth, as well as high schools that have graduation rates of less than 60 percent.

¹ Clark County School District. Turnaround Zone. <http://www.ccsdturnaroundzone.net/>

² Washoe County School District. 2013-2014 Acceleration Zone of Schools. <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Interim/77th2013/Exhibits/Education/E022514U-1.pdf>

³ Washoe County School District. Acceleration Zone. <http://washoeschools.schoolwires.net/Page/668>

⁴ Clark County School District. CCSD Prime 6 Program: Executive Summary: <http://www.jomackeymagnet.org/pdf/resource/P6%20Powerpoint%20for%20Magnet%20Schools.pdf> and Terriquez, V. et al. Expanding Student Opportunities: Prime 6 Program Review Clark County School District Las Vegas, Nevada. UCLA Civil Rights Project (2009) <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/expanding-student-opportunities-prime-6-program-review-clark-county-school-district-las-vegas-nevada/terriquez-expanding-student-opportunities-2009.pdf>

⁵ City of Las Vegas. Las Vegas Downtown Achieves. <http://downtownachieves.org/our-schools/> and <http://downtownachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Downtown-Achieves-August-8-Summary-2.pdf>

⁶ City of Las Vegas. Las Vegas My Brother's Keeper Plan (2015) http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/cs/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=BROTHERS_KEEPER_COMM_PLAN&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased

⁷ Nevada Department of Education. FY 2015 Title I Schools List http://www.doe.nv.gov/Title_I/

⁸ Nevada Department of Education. School Improvement Grant. http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/School_Improvement_Grant/

⁹ Nevada Department of Education. Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy. http://www.doe.nv.gov/Striving_Readers/

¹⁰ Nevada Department of Education. Statement from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dale Erquiaga regarding Governor Sandoval's Education Proposals and Underperforming Schools. (January 16, 2015) http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/SchoolImprovement/UnderperformingSchools_List.pdf

Interventions at Zoom Schools

Appendix B

District Name	School Name	Enrollment 2013-14	Starts 2013-14	% Proficient Math 2013-14	% Proficient Reading 2013-14	Turnaround/Acceleration Zone	Downtown Achieves	Empowerment Schools	Title I 2014-15	School Improvement Grant (SIG)	Striving Readers (Phase 1, 2, 3)	State Underperforming Schools List
Clark	Cambeiro ES	599	1	32.8	36.2				1			1 star
Clark	Cortez ES	893	2	47	43.9				1			Focus
Clark	Craig ES	812	2	46.9	43.3				1		1	Focus
Clark	Detwiler ES	673	3	57.8	55.9				1			Focus
Clark	Diaz ES	769	2	56	48.5				1			Focus
Clark	Earl Ira ES	886	2	45.6	50				1		1	Focus
Clark	Herron ES	880	3	72.6	54.5				1		1	Focus
Clark	Lunt ES	614	2	42.8	43.5				1			Focus
Clark	Martinez ES	618	3	54.4	56.2				1			Focus
Clark	Paradise ES	646	2	44.7	49.4				1			Focus
Clark	Petersen ES	828	1	42.5	36.4				1			Priority
Clark	Ronzone ES	955	3	61.6	56.7				1			Focus
Clark	Squires ES	790	2	53.8	49				1			Focus
Clark	Tate ES	705	2	54.7	46.4				1		1	Focus
Clark	Warren ES	675	2	56	43.1			1	1			Focus
Clark	Williams Tom ES	951	1	49.4	39.9				1			Focus
Clark*	Dailey ES	686	3	59	57.2				1		2	
Clark*	Edwards ES	666	2	50.5	59.5				1		2	
Clark*	Global Community HS	185	1	18.8	12.5				1			1 star
Clark*	Hewetson ES	955	3	70.9	68.2				1			
Clark*	Lynch ES	763	3	66.1	62.1				1			
Clark*	Moore ES	656	2	47.9	51.2				1		2	Focus
Clark*	Orr MS	895	2	23.7	32.5				1			
Clark*	Pitman ES	620	2	57.6	49.1				1			
Clark*	Robison MS	1133	2	25.2	41.3				1		2	Focus
Clark*	Rowe ES	657	2	53.1	54.1				1		2	
Clark*	Stanford ES	625	2	55.9	56.8				1			
Clark*	Twin Lakes ES	682	3	51.6	59.7		1		1			
Clark*	Ward Gene ES	684	3	57.6	59.4				1		2	
Washoe	Anderson ES	441	4	67.2	59.1	1			1			
Washoe	Cannan ES	781	2	49.8	38.3				1		2	
Washoe	Corbett ES	480	3	58	57	1			1		1	Focus
Washoe	Duncan G. ES	439	2	53.7	41.7	1			1		1	
Washoe	Loder ES	567	2	60.7	51.1	1			1		1	
Washoe	Mathews ES	651	2	54	47.4	1			1			
Washoe	Sun Valley ES	648	2	45.6	49.1	1			1			
Washoe	Veterans Mem ES	404	2	53.9	55.2	1			1		1	
Total	37		2			7	1	1	37	3	11	13

*CCSD Zoom Schools identified for 2015-2017 biennium. WCSD has not identified new Zoom Schools as of this writing.

Interventions at Victory Schools

Appendix C

District Name	School Name	Enrollment 2013-14	Stars 2013-14	% Proficient Math 2013-14	% Proficient Reading 2013-14	Turnaround/ Acceleration Zone	Prime 6	My Brother's Keeper	Downtown Achieves	Empowerment Schools	Title I 2014-15	School Improvement Grant (SIG)	Striving Readers (Phase 1, 2, 3)	State Underperforming School's List
Clark	Agassi ES	482	2	59.6	62.6						1		1	
Clark	Booker ES	524	2	44.2	57.4		1	1		1	1		2	
Clark	Desert Rose HS	364	1	18.8	46.7						1		1 star	
Clark	Fitzgerald ES	428	1	27.7	24.3		1	1			1		3	Priority
Clark	Hollingsworth ES	678	2	45.9	37.4				1		1		1	
Clark	Innovations ES	542	1	38.6	43.2						1		1	Priority
Clark	Jeffers ES	839	2	68.9	55.5					1	1		1	
Clark	Kelly ES	294	1	31.9	30.5		1	1		1	1		1	Priority
Clark	Lake ES	974	2	61.1	62.1				1		1		3	
Clark	Long ES	846	2	48.9	52						1		1	
Clark	Lowman ES	740	1	31.8	40.9		1				1		1	Priority
Clark	Manch ES	728	2	49	44.7		1				1		1	
Clark	McCall ES	416	2	52.7	47.7			1			1		1	
Clark	Monaco MS	1,291	2	25.1	31.9						1		1	Priority
Clark	Reid ES	21	1	42.9	42.9						1		1 star	
Clark	Smith MS	931	2	22.8	34.2						1		1	Focus
Clark	Snyder ES	876	2	62.2	61.2					1	1		1	
Clark	Sunrise Acres ES	778	2	60.4	52.6		1				1		2	
Clark	Valley HS	2,863	2	68.7	69				1		1		1	Priority
Clark	Vegas Verdes ES	485	2	48.3	48.8		1				1		1	
Clark	West Prep Acad	455	2	47.1	47.9			1			1		2	
Clark	West Prep Sec	999	2	17.9	29.8			1			1		2	Priority
Clark	Williams Wendell ES	326	2	59.5	56.2		1	1			1		1	
Clark	Woodley ES	748	2	58.3	55.3						1		1	
Elko	Owyhee ES	174	1	28.9	43.4						1		1	Focus
Elko	Owyhee HS	58	2	**	**						1		1	
Elko	West Wendover ES	605	2	41.3	40.7						1		1	
Elko	West Wendover MS	189	2	26.6	34.5						1		1	
Humboldt	McDermitt ES	67	1	25.8	41.9						1		1	Focus
Humboldt	McDermitt MS	22	2	15.8	36.8						1		1	
Nye	Amargosa Vly ES	97	1	26.2	31						1		1	Priority
Washoe	Bailey Charter ES	267	2	41.5	37.6						1		1	
Washoe	Booth ES	432	2	57.2	46.8		1				1		1	
Washoe	Hug HS	1,351	2	65	73.8						1		2	Priority
Washoe	Nathez ES	182	2	52.1	58.9						1		1	
Total		21,072				5	5	6	3	6	35	2	12	14