

P-20W COUNCIL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Legislature created the P-16 Advisory Council in 2007 through Senate Bill 239 (Chapter 522, *Statutes of Nevada*) and these provisions were incorporated into the *Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS)* as Chapter 400. The name of the Council was changed in 2013 to the P-20W Advisory Council. The Council consists of 11 members appointed by the Governor and the Legislature. The Chancellor of the System, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Director of the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation serve as ex officio nonvoting members of the Council. The statute includes a declaration stating that matters relating to education are vitally important to the future of the State of Nevada, its economy, and the general welfare of its residents; and that the Legislature, the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada, the State Board of Education, and the Executive Branch of the State Government work together as partners in developing a needed public agenda to advance education in this State.

On July 10, 2015, Governor Brian Sandoval issued Executive Order 2015-11 directing the Council to continue its work with the statewide longitudinal data system, called the Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System (NPWR), and to make recommendations to ensure the successful transition of children between different levels of education in the P-20 pipeline and that the instruction of students throughout Nevada's education system is aligned with the needs and expectations of institutions of higher education and employers in this State. The Council was permitted to meet as often as necessary to develop its recommendations and was required to submit periodic reports of its activities and this final report. A copy of the Executive Order is included in this report as *Attachment A*.

In this report, the P-20W Council makes recommendations in three areas: 1) recommendations related to NPWR, 2) recommendations related to transitions in early education, and 3) recommendations related to transitions from high school to college and/or the workforce.

Summary of Activities

The Council had not met between 2013 and 2015 and a number of appointments were vacant. From March of 2015 to July of 2015, these vacancies were filled. A list of Council members can be found in *Attachment B*. The Council met five times between July 2015 and March 2016 with meetings videoconferenced between the State Capitol in Carson City and the Grant Sawyer Building in Las Vegas. Meetings were properly noticed according to the Open Meeting Law. All meeting materials, including agendas, minutes, and presentation materials can be found at <http://p16.nv.gov>.

Caryn Swobe was elected chair of the Council and Marilyn Dondero Loop was elected vice-chair. Brian Mitchell represented the Office of the Governor and served as staff to the Council. Together, Mr. Mitchell, Ms. Swobe and Ms. Dondero Loop developed meeting agendas.

At the July 15, 2015 meeting, representatives from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), and the Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR) presented to the Council on the status of Nevada's statewide longitudinal data

system, called NPWR. Previous work done by the Council had guided the development of NPWR and NDE presented that testing was nearly complete and NPWR would go live later that month. The Council directed NDE, NSHE, and DETR to create a shared research agenda that would prioritize research topics of interest to the State and present it at the next Council meeting for approval.

At the October 2, 2015 meeting, representatives from NDE, NSHE, and DETR presented the research agenda and it was approved unanimously by the Council. The research agenda approved by the Council can be found in *Attachment C*. Since October, NPWR researchers have made significant progress and have published several reports which can be found at <http://npwr.nv.gov>.

Also in October, the Council decided to form two subcommittees to develop specific recommendations for this report. The first subcommittee, chaired by Caryn Swobe, was charged with creating recommendations regarding stakeholder outreach. The second subcommittee (P-3 subcommittee), chaired by Dr. Kimberly Regan, was charged with researching and providing recommendations on ways to improve transitions from early grades (preschool through third grade) to later grades and set a strong foundation for early learners. The stakeholders subcommittee met once to form its recommendations and the P-3 subcommittee met twice. The subcommittees presented to the Council at its December meeting and the Council considered the recommendations in greater detail in January. Additional recommendations were presented to the Council in January regarding transitions from later grades to college and career which are also included in this report. At its March meeting, the Council finalized recommendations for this report.

Additional details regarding the Council's meetings and the work of the subcommittees can be found in the quarterly reports submitted to the Office of the Governor and the meeting minutes, located on Council's website: <http://p16.nv.gov>.

Recommendations

The P-20W Council makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations Related to NPWR

In order for our State's economy to flourish, we must prepare a qualified workforce, starting before Kindergarten and culminating in postsecondary training. To assist Nevada policymakers in education, government, and business make informed decisions, the state created NPWR. NPWR is a state of the art research tool funded by a US Department of Education grant that allows researchers to monitor and analyze trends and outcomes across our education and workforce system. Currently, NPWR is a collaboration between NDE, NSHE, and DETR. NPWR is built on a federated system; each agency maintains control over its data and only shares with NPWR data that has been approved. A significant amount of research went into designing NPWR's federated model which is designed to ensure the complete anonymity of all Nevadans and the privacy and security of all data within the system.

The data and reports that have been generated thus far have shed light on topics such as the workforce supply and demand by occupation in Nevada, the average wage by industry, the most common degree by industry, continuation into postsecondary education by district, completion rates and time to degree

by program of study, and employment of NSHE graduates by industry including annual wages one year following graduation, amongst other reports. Additional reports are forthcoming. Reports can be used by a variety of stakeholders. For example, school districts can see which course sequences in high school lead to less remediation in college and adjust student pathways, or colleges can look the workforce supply and demand for a given industry in order to better design course and degree offerings.

While the existing reports are a great success, they are also incomplete. Workforce reports now only measure results of students who graduate from Nevada high schools, move through NSHE, and then enter the workforce. However, many students graduate from Nevada high schools and attend one of Nevada's many private colleges and universities. Other students graduate from high school and move straight into the workforce, bypassing higher education altogether. Still other high school graduates receive workforce skills training and an industry-recognized credential or certificate from a non-NSHE training provider. In order to paint a more accurate picture and better prepare and predict Nevada's workforce, NPWR must be expanded to include data beyond the three state agencies.

First, the P-20W Council recommends the adoption of a policy to facilitate the inclusion of research questions related to early learning in NPWR's research agenda. Given the importance of early literacy to the Governor's education agenda, reports generated from these questions will inform decision making and ensure early learning instruction is high quality and that students' transitions to the kind of learning required in later grades is successful. *Attachment D* contains specific recommendations regarding the early learning research questions to be added to NPWR's research agenda and the existing pre-K data that should be added to NPWR.

Second, the P-20W Council recommends that as future research questions are developed that require additional information, state agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) collaborate with NPWR in the same way that NDE, NSHE and DETR do currently.

Third, the P-20W Council recommends that NPWR continue its engagement with private colleges and universities, and DETR to facilitate the inclusion of data for students who do not pass through NSHE.

Fourth, the P-20W Council recommends that the Governor and Legislature include an NPWR Coordinator position in DETR's next budget. Improved stakeholder engagement and the development of a process to engage the wide variety of public and non-public stakeholders of each NPWR report was identified by the Stakeholders Subcommittee of the Council as an area of focus. NPWR's reports only have value to the extent the public and other stakeholders are aware of and utilize them. Yet, staff at NDE, NSHE, and DETR who currently manage NPWR all do so in addition to other responsibilities and the contractor at NDE that built NPWR is paid for with federal funds that will soon expire. NPWR needs a dedicated staff person who would be responsible for the following tasks:

- Coordinate and oversee the efforts of the state agencies contributing data to NPWR;
- Interface with the public, including soliciting public input on the research agenda, managing research requests, directing stakeholder outreach, and conducting NPWR demonstrations;
- Produce reports; and
- Oversee efforts to include other agency and non-state data into NPWR.

Additionally, the P-20W Council recommends that the Governor and Legislature include a policy position in the next budget of the Office of the Governor. This position would include the following responsibilities:

- Promote effective P-3 governance;
- Work with the NPWR Coordinator on stakeholder outreach, research requests and research development;
- Analyze NPWR and other available data to draw conclusions that may lead to policy recommendations; and
- Develop policy recommendations based on NPWR reports.

Fifth, the P-20W Council recommends that an interagency working group made up of State agencies contributing data to NPWR be created to oversee the continued development of NPWR. The Council recommends further that this interagency working group be given final authority to set the research agenda for NPWR and conduct said research. Initial members should include the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Chancellor of NSHE, and the Director of DETR, or their designees and the working group should be staffed by the Coordinator discussed above. As additional State agencies contribute data to NPWR, their Directors should be added as full members of the working group. The working group should provide regular opportunities for the public to comment on the research agenda.

Recommendations Related to Transitions in Early Education

In Nevada, like many states, the programs that support children on their trajectory towards academic, social, and emotional success from birth to third grade are disconnected. The New America Foundation (2015) ranked Nevada as “crawling,” the lowest of three possible ranks Crawling, Toddling, or Walking, when evaluating early childhood policies in the state based on progress towards achieving 65 policy indicators in seven areas. Evidence portrays increased barriers for children who experience poverty, are identified as Children in Transition, are English Language Learners, are identified as eligible for special education, are minority, immigrant, or who’s families experience one risk factors such as parental incarceration or death. In addition, P-3 programs may be fragmented due to inconsistent funding streams and governance to oversee these programs across agencies (Daily, 2014).

“Improving the economy, strengthening the middle class and reducing the deficit are national priorities. Solving these challenges starts with investing in America’s greatest resource: its people. Quality early learning and development programs for disadvantaged children can foster valuable skills, strengthen our workforce, grow our economy, and reduce social spending.” There are at least four major benefits of investing in early childhood development: prevent the achievement gap; improve health outcomes; boost earnings; and makes dollars and sense (7-10% per annum) through outcomes in education, health, sociability, economic productivity, and reduced crime (Heckman, 2015).

Considering the economic perspective, a program constitutes a worthy social investment if the total benefits exceed the costs. One Harvard study (2007) yielded a range of cost-benefit analysis ranging from 2:1 to 17:1, depending on the program (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007). ECE cost-benefit calculations result from returns to government savings (such as decreases in special education/remediation costs, welfare payments, and increases in income tax revenues); to

society via decreased incarceration and crime-related costs; and returns to participants (such as increased earnings) (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007).

In Nevada, the Department of Education was recently charged with oversight of P-3 policy and the Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for developing a P-3 plan for approval by the State Board. However, many other entities play important roles in the delivery of education to early learners. For example, DHHS is responsible for the licensure of preschools and other groups including Early Childhood Advisory Committee and local educational agencies (LEAs) are involved in the licensure of teachers and the education of students.

First, the P-20W Council recommends the Governor invite all public and private groups involved in early learning to actively participate in the development of the Nevada Department of Education's P-3 plan, which will be presented to the State Board of Education by the Superintendent. The Council also recommends the report drafted by its P-3 Subcommittee be used as a resource as this plan is developed. The Subcommittee report, which contains 11 specific recommendations and additional information, is included as *Attachment E*.

Second, the P-20W Council recommends the State Board of Education adopt a single, comprehensive kindergarten entrance assessment (KEA) for use statewide, and consult with Nevada's LEAs regarding a timeline for transition so as to not add to the assessment burden of students. A single, comprehensive KEA would allow the State to improve early learning professional development, provide a reliable, uniform measure of accountability for preschools, promote improved communication and family engagement, increase parental awareness of how their child compares to peers beyond the immediate classroom, and provide kindergarten teachers the information they need to personalize instruction to incoming students design student-specific interventions when needed. NPWR can be a useful resource for policymakers at the local and state levels.

Recommendations Related to Transitions from high school to college and/or career

College and career readiness is the unifying goal which many education and workforce policies strive to achieve. From strong early childhood education, intervention programs and high academic standards and expectations to high quality career and technical programs and college preparation, all serve to develop the foundational skills to become ready for college and career. The policies and programs developed to reach this necessary objective adapt over time to the changing economic, social, and global environment. Nevada has focused much of its initial attention on college readiness by prioritizing reducing remediation in college and increasing student attainment of advanced diplomas, AP proficiency, SAT/ACT completion, and college completion. In recent years, Nevada has shown commitment to improving career readiness after recent focus on preparing students for post-secondary success. The following are recommendations to increase the value of career readiness programs and measure their effectiveness in preparing Nevada students for their futures.

First, the P-20W Advisory Council recommends that the State Board of Education/Nevada Department of Education incorporate career readiness measures in the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) for high schools. Currently, career readiness is undervalued in the NSPF. While college and career readiness is a listed performance indicator for Nevada high schools, the measurements only

evaluate schools on their ability to prepare students for college including percent of students in Nevada colleges requiring remediation, percent of students earning an advanced diploma, AP proficiency, and ACT/SAT participation. In order to incentivize high schools to prioritize career readiness, career readiness measures need to be included in school ratings and accountability systems. Career readiness measures may include: attainment of diplomas and industry credentials, course of study completion, achievement measured via assessment, experiential/work-based learning completion, and other measurements of career readiness.

Second, the P-20W Advisory Council recommends that the State Board of Education/Nevada Department of Education adapt graduation requirements and scholarship criteria to increase the value of career pathways and encourage student enrollment and program completion. The state should consider awarding completion of high-demand career pathways with heavier weights on GPA in a similar fashion that honors and AP courses are weighted to incentivize students to enroll and complete college readiness pathways. Increased weights and values on course completion should encourage more students to enroll in CTE courses of study and continue through completion, reducing the drop off from the first course to the final course in a career pathway program.

The development of scholarships could also be a useful tool to incentivize students to enroll and complete career pathways, especially in courses and programs high-demand fields. Much like the Teach Nevada Scholarships that were established to combat the teacher pipeline crisis, the state can create scholarships as a tool to entice more student enrollment and completion in programs that will feed into career pathways, economic sectors, and fields deemed high priority and high demand.

Third, the P-20W Advisory Council recommends that the State Board of Education/Nevada Department of Education use NPWR as an additional tool to evaluate CTE programs and diplomas effectiveness in making students career ready. In connection with the previous recommendation to pull data from other state agencies, it is important to link student data from the K-12 system to career in order to effectively evaluate career pathway programs. Specifically, the State will want to know how many and what students complete career pathway programs and how are those students fare in life beyond high school.

When identifiers are established to link a student's K-12 information to DETR information, research questions should be developed to determine if students who complete CTE courses of study have meaningful outcomes in employment beyond high school. This data will allow the state and districts to determine if certain career pathway programs are effective and if they should be expanded or scaled down/phased out.

Examples of research questions for evaluation could include linking CTE course of study completion to meaningful employment in area of study (especially in high-demand fields), continuation and advancement of study in post-secondary institutions, attainment of industry recognized credentials, etc. The state may also choose to research the impact of CTE course study completion on college readiness standards as well, including rate of remediation, post-secondary GPA, post-secondary degree/credential attainment, and whether students use the CTE college credit at qualifying post-secondary institutions.