NEVADA'S PROMISE

excellence, rigor, and equity

Nevada's Promise: Call to Action

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

State of Education in Nevada

- Nevada has the **lowest** graduation rate in the nation at **41.8%**.
- Nevada's **African-American and Hispanic students** have consistently lower graduation rates than their counterparts.
- Nevada's post-secondary education enrollment rates of **39.2%** are the **second lowest** in the nation.
- Nevada ranks **last** in the nation for students graduating from college in four years.
- Per pupil spending in Nevada is **26%** lower than the national average.
- Nevada spends **2.9%** of its taxable resources on education, making Nevada the **second lowest** in the nation in education spending.

*Based on data from Education Week's *Chance for Success* and EPE Research Center, Diplomas Count 2010: Graduation by the Numbers (2010).

State of the Economy in Nevada

- Nevada's **14.5%** unemployment rate is the highest in the country.
- Nevada ranks **last** in the nation in jobs available for college graduates.
- Nevada ranks **third** in the nation in employing high school drop-outs.
- Nevada personal income fell more rapidly in 2009 than in any other state.
- Nevada spends **15%** more per capita than any other state on incarceration.
- Nevada's budget deficit is estimated to be **$2.9 billion**.
- Nevada's population is declining for the first time since **1920**.

*Based on data from U.S. Census Bureau.

Education is the Key to our Economic Future

If Nevada's high schools graduated all of their students ready for college, Nevada would:

- Recoup nearly **$6.2 billion** in lost lifetime earnings.
- Save more than **$230.1 million** in health care costs.
- Save almost **$25.8 million** a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.
- Incur **$78.4 million** each year in crime-related savings (if the male high school graduation rate increased by a mere 5%).

*Based on data from Alliance for Excellent Education (2010) at www.all4ed.org/files/Nevada.pdf.

Education is the Key to our Economic Future

Reducing the number of high school dropouts in Las Vegas by 50% would result in:

- **$92 million** more in combined earnings in the average year.
- **$67 million** in increased spending in the average year.
- **$25 million** in additional investments during the average year.
- **600** new jobs as a result of increased spending and investments.
- **$120 million** projected increase in gross regional product by the midpoint of the graduates' careers.
- **$250 million** increase in home sales by the midpoint of the graduates' careers.
- **$10 million** more on vehicle purchases in the average year.
- **$7 million** increase in state and local tax revenue during the average year.
- **28%** of these new graduates would likely continue to pursue some type of post-secondary education.

*Based on data from Alliance for Excellent Education (2011) at www.all4ed.org/publication_material/EconMSA.

Education is the Key to our Economic Future

Reducing the number of high school dropouts in Reno-Sparks by 50% would result in:

- **$26 million** more in combined earnings in the average year.
- **$19 million** in increased spending in the average year.
- **$7 million** in additional investments during the average year.
- **200** new jobs as a result of increased spending and investments.
- **$34 million** projected increase in gross regional product by the midpoint of the graduates' careers.
- **$64 million** increase in home sales by the midpoint of the graduates' careers.
- **$2.3 million** more on vehicle purchases in the average year.
- **$1.8 million** increase in state and local tax revenue during the average year.
- **32%** of these new graduates would likely continue to pursue some type of post-secondary education.

*Based on data from Alliance for Excellent Education (2011) at www.all4ed.org/publication_material/EconMSA.

"A child born in Nevada has the least chance of success than a child born anywhere in the United States."

– Quality Counts 2010: Fresh Course, Swift Current Education Research Center

Nevada Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force

- Established by Governor Gibbons to provide state leadership and coordination of **Nevada's Race to the Top application** and to facilitate discourse and **consensus for overall reform** of public education.

- Review Nevada's education infrastructure and recommend long-term P-20 reform designed to improve student achievement and diversify its economy.

- Encourage public and private involvement and facilitate statewide dialogue on education reform.

- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders.
  - More than 200 stakeholders including the Nevada Department of Education and State Board; Board of Trustees (of all 17 Nevada school districts); Nevada State Education Association; Nevada Parent Teacher Association; political, civic and business leaders; school principals; teachers; and parents.

- Develop legislative and regulatory recommendations.

Race to the Top Federal Grant Application

- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided $4.35 billion for the Race to the Top Fund, a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward states that were creating the conditions for education innovation and reform.

- Nevada was eligible for a maximum amount of $175 million in Race to the Top funds.

- The Race to the Top grants rewarded states that demonstrated success in raising student achievement and had the best plans to accelerate their reforms in the future.

- Between Phase 1 and 2 of the Race to the Top competition, a total of 12 states were awarded grant funding.

Race to the Top Scoring Analysis

Nevada's 24th place finish in the Race to the Top competition does not tell the whole story. Once contextualized, Nevada performed well against all odds, but more importantly against states with the competitive advantage of applying for and receiving detailed feedback from Phase 1.

- Nevada's final score of **381.2** ranks 24 out of the 36 states that applied.
- Among the ten grant recipients, Massachusetts scored the highest with **471** points and Ohio scored the lowest with **440.8** points.
- Nevada scored **76%** of all points while the average for all states was 78%.
- Among the grant recipients, the average was **90.4%** .
- **Eighteen** of the 19 states that were chosen as finalists in Phase 2 had the advantage of having submitted applications in Phase 1.
- **Fourteen** of those 18 finalists were also finalists in Phase 1.

Nevada's Scores by Section

- Section A: State Success Factors – **87%,** average was 77%.
- Section B: Standards and Assessments – **95%**, average was 92%.
- Section C: Data Systems to Improve Instruction – **81%**, average was 80%.
- Section D: Great Teachers and Leaders – **61%**, average was 71%.
- Section E: Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools – **90%**, average was 85%.
- Section F: General Selection Criteria – **70%**, average was 72%.
- Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) – **Zero points**, 75% of states had all 15 points.

Major Strengths

The strengths in Nevada's Race to the Top application are largely attributable to the cooperation on behalf of the school districts and local associations as well as wide support and deep commitments from a wide range of stakeholders. The U.S. Department of Education viewed these as good signs that *Nevada's Promise* would translate into broad statewide impact, allowing Nevada the potential to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals.

•**Section A: State Success Factors** received praise for being "a comprehensive and coherent agenda," "clearly articulated," "reasonable," "clear and credible," "powerful in its simplicity," "a new vision for transforming education," "a smart approach to situate education reform in the broader context of economic and workforce development," "clear and compelling" and "a high quality plan."

•**Section B: Standards and Assessments** outperformed any other section of *Nevada's Promise.* Nevada's consortium-signing commitment was well received by the reviewers and consistent with the Race to the Top reform goals.

•**Section E: Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools** received consistently high marks and praise from each reviewer, prompting one reviewer to write: "the state seems to have a high-quality plan for identifying its lowest-achieving school and its dropout factories."

Major Deficiencies

The deficiencies in Nevada's Race to the Top application are largely attributable to the absence of certain historical components within the educational system that have long been the challenge. The constructive and comprehensive feedback both validates the well-received and compelling proposals as well as substantiates the claims to rectify the deficiencies through legislative action.

•**Section D: Great Teachers and Leaders** was consistently penalized and critiqued because the Race to the Top criterion specifically addresses the legal, statutory or regulatory provisions currently in place. Reviewers cited that it is imperative that the legislature continue showing strong support for education reform by amending state laws where necessary and codifying those proposed in *Nevada's Promise,* namely alternative routes to licensure, uniform measures of teacher and principal effectiveness, equitable distribution of educators and effective preparation programs.

•**Section F: General Selection Criteria** received consistently low marks because of statutory barriers regarding charter schools, including the state's prohibition on converting public schools to charter schools and providing charter schools with funding for facilities, facilities acquisition or the ability to share in bonds.

•**Competitive Preference Priority 2: Emphasis on STEM** received zero points because reviewers cited the lack of a quality and coordinated plan. While several STEM-related activities are individually listed, reviewers cited that they do not collectively reflect a broad and comprehensive STEM agenda.

Excellence, Rigor, and Equity

Nevada has **436,000** students who are depending on us to deliver *Nevada's Promise*:

- Every school will be led by an effective principal.
- Every classroom will be led by an effective teacher.
- Every student will graduate.

Consensus for Overall Reform

Nevada's Promise addresses broad-based reform through five core reform areas:

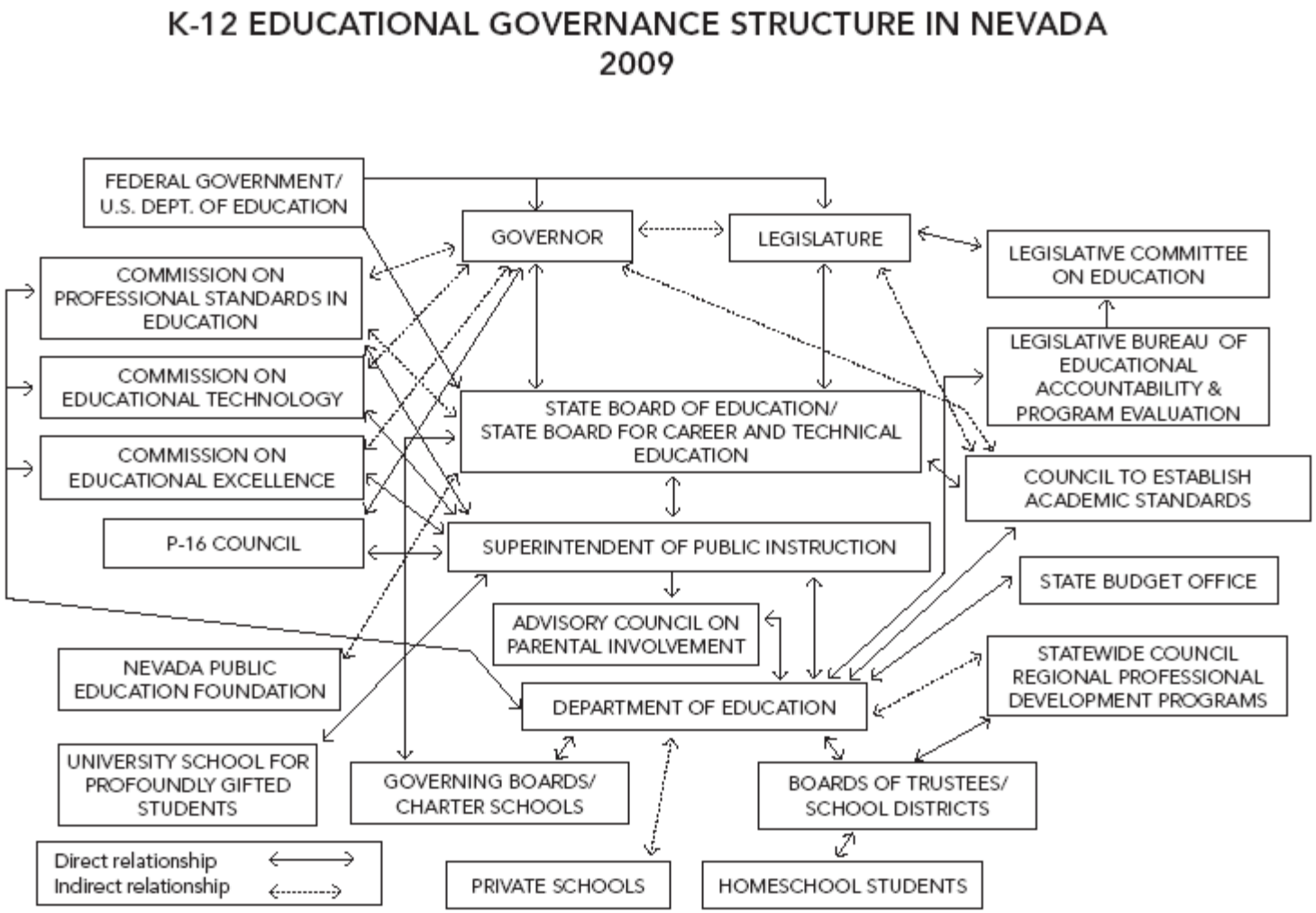
- Adopting a common set of college and career-readiness **standards** and an **assessment** system to measure success in learning those standards.
- Establishing **data systems** that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction.
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining **great teachers and principals**, especially where they are needed most.
- **Turning around the lowest-achieving schools**.
- Creating a high-quality plan that offers a rigorous course of study to prepare more students for advanced study and careers in **STEM**.

Objectives

By 2014, *Nevada's Promise* calls for (data based on 2009 results):

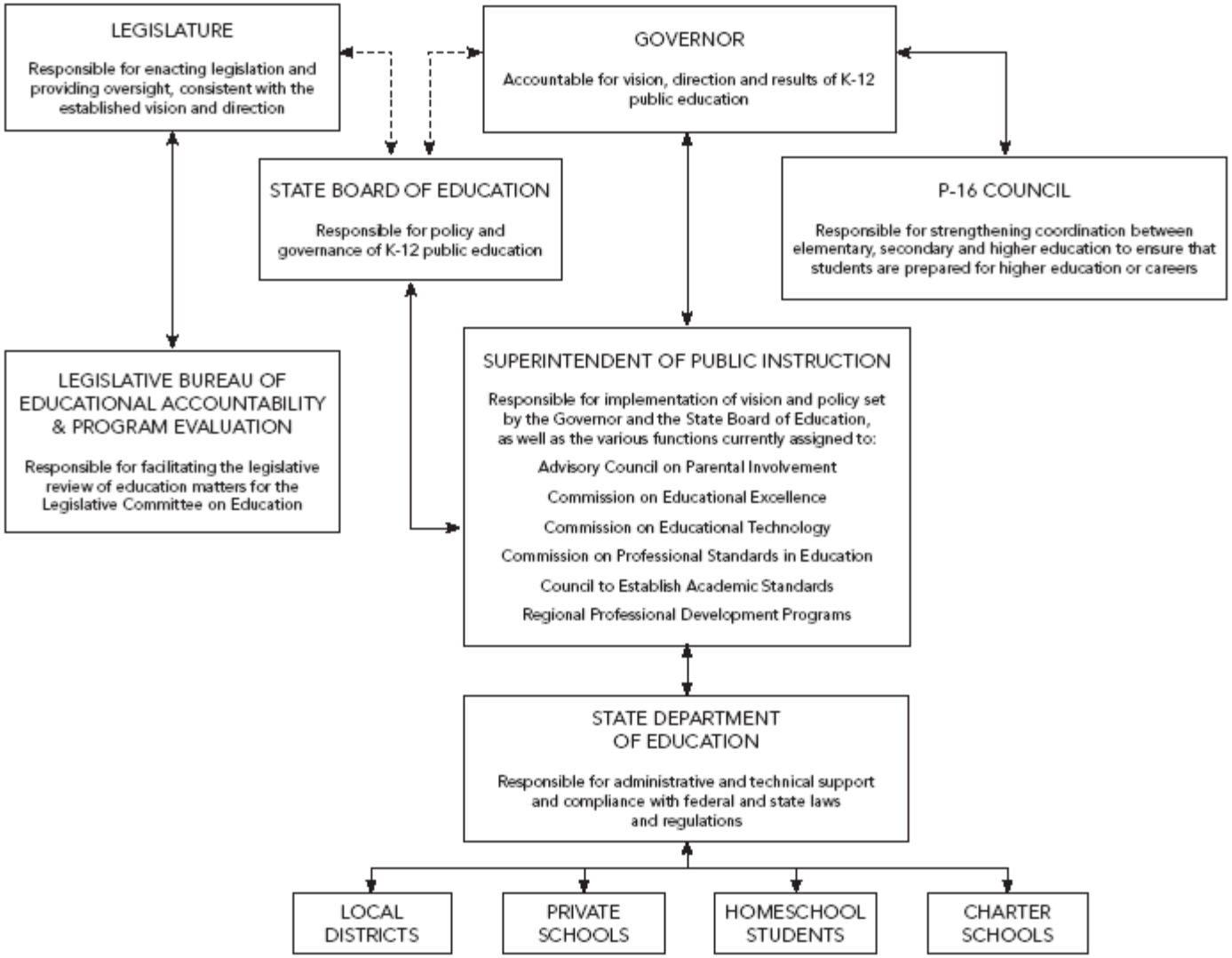
- Increasing the graduation rate to **85%**.
- Reducing the existing achievement gap by **50%** for African-American and Hispanic students.
- Increasing post-secondary enrollment rates by **50%**.
- Increasing student proficiency in **fourth and eighth-grade math**.
- Increasing student proficiency in **fourth and eighth-grade reading**.

Nevada's Promise: The Solution



Nevada's Promise: The Solution

K-12 EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE IN NEVADA



Legislative Actions Required for Reform

Governance

- Restructure K-12 public education governance with an appointed state board of education and superintendent of public instruction, and a realignment of the various commissions and councils. The ultimate responsibility for education rests with the governor, as the CEO of the state.

- Appointed chief state school officer would become member of governor's cabinet.

- Appointed state board of education; staggered three-year terms, appointed by the following:
  - Governor appoints one.
  - Governor appoints second from slate submitted by Senate majority leader.
  - Governor appoints third from slate submitted by speaker of the Assembly.

- Reduce standing, education-related councils and commissions.

Legislative Actions Required for Reform

Alternative Routes to Licensure for Teachers and Principals

- Revise and augment the current alternative paths to licensure for teachers and principals.
- Authorize an Accelerated Alternative Route to Licensure (A2RL) pathway to produce effective educators for high-poverty schools and high-need areas.

Teacher and Principal Evaluations

- Provide strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement *Nevada's Promise*, such as the Teachers and Leaders Council.
- Design and implement a statewide system to differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness using measures of student growth.
- Revise binary evaluation system for teachers and administrators.
- Include teacher evaluations in determination of administrator effectiveness.
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation rubric for teachers and principals.

Legislative Actions Required for Reform (Continued)

Effective and Equitable Resource Allocation

- Determine career ladder opportunities for effective teachers to mentor and support teachers or relocate to serve in urban and rural high-needs schools.
- Use teacher and principal evaluations to inform key decisions (pay-for-performance).
- Use teacher and principal evaluations to inform key decisions (tenure).
- Use teacher and principal evaluations to inform key decisions (termination).

Charter Schools

- Create the Nevada Charter School Institute.
- Fund charter schools equitably, particularly funding for facilities, facilities acquisition or the ability to share in bonds.
- Establish provision for the conversion of long-term, under-performing traditional public schools to charter schools and for the conversion of long-term, under-performing charter schools to traditional public schools.

Administrative Actions Required for Reform

- Adoption of the Common Core State Standards (accomplished).
- Enhance and expand the statewide longitudinal data system to include student achievement growth data, indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness, and links to teacher preparation programs from post-secondary institutions.
- Comply with the twelfth, and remaining, element prescribed in the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science Act (America COMPETES Act)—student-level college readiness test scores.
- Establish a STEM Coalition to effect long-term impacts in STEM, P–20 education and job training for Nevada (in progress).
- Improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs.
- Promote early childhood outcomes.
- Expand the Nevada Growth Model for Achievement to all students K–12.
- Improve student performance through collaboration with key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, principals, employee associations, district administrators, state officials, community leaders and legislators.

For more information about *Nevada's Promise*, the state of education in Nevada and the Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force, please visit

www.nevadaspromise.org