Nevada State Improvement Plan for Education 2013-14

Nevada State Board of Education
and
Nevada State Board for Career and Technical Education

Adopted January 25, 2013

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&
NEVADA STATE BOARD FOR CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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i. Introduction

This state education improvement plan is approved by and transmitted to the Nevada Legislature by the State Board of Education. This plan is a statutorily specified report per NRS 385.34691. It provides detail for intended 2013 Nevada Department of Education actions and suggests actions to be undertaken over the following four years.

To provide context and facilitate comparisons, this report includes data relative to student achievement in the state. This document also describes the Department's and Governor's proposed 2013 education legislative priorities., This report provides related information regarding the newly formed State Board of Education, a managerially reformed Nevada Department of Education, and sets forth education goals and associated measurements.

The above-listed components of this report shine a light on current education performance in the state, set a path for the future, and serve to guide the NDE, in collaboration with the legislature and other partners, to pursue the vision of *Success Through Learning.* This vision is achieved through the mission to elevate student achievement by ensuring opportunity, facilitating learning, and promoting excellence.

In order to frame these actions, four levers are identified:

1. Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability
2. Human Capital Enhancement
3. Responsible Competition and Choice, and
4. Managerial Excellence and Systems Integrity

The steps the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) will take across the coming five years are aligned to these levers. Current priories are described in detail in Section F and the array of activities to be undertaken across the following four years are provided in detail in Appendix 2.

A. State Board of Education

As of 2013, Nevada has a newly formed State Board of Education. This Board is a product of Senate Bill 197, enacted in the 2011 legislative session.

The Board is empowered to set standards and adopt regulations regarding Preschool-grade 12 Nevada education. In addition, it has the capacity to identify and amplify significant education issues, facilitate cooperation between the State Education Department and other agencies, both private and public, provide important information to the Legislature and the public, and to advise the Governor, Department of Education, and the State Superintendent.

The Board has seven voting members. The majority of the voting members are popularly elected, one from each of Nevada's four congressional districts. Additionally, the Governor, including his own nominee, appoints three voting members - two from names put forward, separately, by the State Senate and Assembly. Gubernatorial appointed voting members are required to have geographic dispersion, and to represent the perspectives of Nevada business, teachers, and public school parents.

In addition, to voting members, there are four non-voting ex officio members appointed by the Governor. These four members are required by law to include a sitting local school superintendent, a sitting school board member, a higher education official, and a public school student.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction serves as the Secretary to the Board, and has no voting authority. NDE staff members provide administrative support to the Board. New Board Bylaws and Procedures have been developed and are available at the Board's website (http://www.doe.nv.gov/State_Board_of_Education/). When finalized, the board meeting schedule and anticipated board major meeting discussion topics will also be available online for public.

B. State Education Department

The 2011 state legislation that created a new State Board of Education also reformed organizational arrangements for the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). The department is now integrated into the Executive Branch and the superintendent of public instruction is appointed by, and reports to, the Governor, rather than to an independently elected State Board of Education. The superintendent is a member of the Governor's Cabinet.

These governance arrangements portend an integrated approach for addressing statewide problems in education and related areas such as improving teaching and learning and overseeing the distribution of funds to schools, instruction in correctional institutions, energy conservation, child nutrition, school safety, employment training, and educational programs for Nevada's indigent children and families.

The NDE has no official higher education responsibilities. Such reside with a constitutionally separate State Board of Regents. However, the higher education chancellor and the superintendent of public instruction are in frequent communication, and their staff members actively cooperate on cross cutting issues such as high school to college transitions, education system accountability and Pre K-Grade 12 curricular and testing issues that have higher education implications.

Nevada has approximately 650 public schools serving approximately 440,000 students, which include conventional public schools as well as state and district authorized charter schools. Clark and Washoe Counties account for 82 percent of the state's students. Remaining students are distributed over fifteen smaller enrollment districts Thirteen thousand students are enrolled in state sponsored charter schools.

Nevada's Education Department is small when compared to that of most states, with 145 employees, based principally in the state capital, Carson City. A small contingent of staff also operate from a Las Vegas-based office, many of whom concentrate on teacher licensure. Additional staff in the southern office provide services for special education, school improvement, curriculum, career and adult education, and auditing.

The superintendent of public instruction is responsible for the management of the NDE. He is assisted in this regard by the efforts of two deputy superintendents, one overseeing teaching and learning and another responsible for fiscal matters, and business and support services. Each of these segments is subdivided into offices with specialized responsibilities. (An organizational chart is appended.) The department cooperates with the independent Nevada Public Charter School Authority and provides support for four stand-alone legislatively authorized education commissions.

The NDE does not itself directly operate schools. Its influence is through activities such as setting standards, distributing state and federal funding, operating a state assessment system, managing statewide school performance accountability, licensing professional education personnel and supporting an educator effectiveness system, encouraging innovation, competition and choice, overseeing the development and operation of data systems, and setting high standards for its own internal management and the management of schools.

C. Vision 2020

What follows is a characterization of a "desired destination" for Nevada's schools. This idealized education system serves as a roadmap for the state's education improvement initiatives. It is a roadmap that provides criteria for assessing if a proposed reform idea advances the schooling of Nevada students or is possibly a distraction. It is a roadmap that guides Nevada's professional educators toward achieving measurable goals specified in the following section of this Plan.

- Governance arrangements enable schools to reflect citizen preferences with fidelity and the principle of "subsidiarity," adheres. This means decisions are made at the lowest operational level (classrooms and schools) unless the weight of relevant argument suggests a higher organizational level (district or state) be engaged.

- Schools are places of extraordinary physical safety, psychological comfort, aesthetic satisfaction, and personal attraction for students and their families.

- The quality of a child's schooling is not a function of wealth, other than the wealth of the state as a whole.

- The formal curriculum of schools at once embodies world-class intellectual rigor and is inherently of interest to students.

- The informal curriculum of schools displays fairness, and promotes virtues such as civility, cooperation and long term planning and delayed gratification.

- The quality of schooling and related services ensures there is no systematic relationship between academic performance and extraneous conditions such as students' race, gender, neighborhood, socioeconomic status or nationality.

- Teachers and administrators are products of rigorous training and effective selection and induction, remunerated and incented in a manner comparable to other professionals, and recipients of high community regard.

- Every Nevada public school student receives instruction from highly effective classroom teachers. Teachers and administrators have access to fair and reliable evaluations and organizational support to develop professional careers.

- Where appropriate, households are provided with suitable options for the schooling of their child, options as to location, type of school, subject majors, instructional formats, and career and college aspirations.

- Measurement of a student's academic progress is undertaken in a systematic and non-intrusive manner simultaneously serving instruction, providing feedback to teachers and administrators, and facilitating accountability for educators' results. Measurement motivates students and teachers to improve

- Educators are eternally vigilant to ensure that school resources are deployed in a manner that maximizes return on investment. This includes but it not limited to a constant search for more effective and efficient instructional procedures, including technology.

- Comprehensive longitudinal data systems provide opportunities for continuous system accountability and individual educator and student improvement.

D. Goals

The following goals lend themselves to reliable and regular measurement. These measurements will be the subject of annual progress reports.

1. Elevate achievement so that all students graduate college and career ready.

   Indicators:
   - Nevada public school students perform at nationally measured academic achievement levels
   - High school graduation rates, college enrollment figures, career employment and wage levels place the state at or above median performance rates for all states in the nation

2. Improve equity in schooling so all students have the opportunity for success.

   Indicator:
   - The gap on national test scores between Nevada's economically advantaged and disadvantaged students is equal to or smaller than any other state in the nation

3. Ensure Nevada's students are educated by effective teachers and administrators.

   Indicator:
   - Quality of the educator workforce is equal to or higher than national averages.

4. Support and expand innovative programs and educational choices that improve learning.

   Indicators:
   - Parents and students can choose from an array of publically provided conventional and charter schools, flexible school financing, and web based educational opportunities equal to or greater than those in any other state
   - Parents, when surveyed, express high levels of satisfaction with and acknowledge the availability of school choice and of multiple opportunities to be engaged with their children's schooling.

5. Increase productivity and return on investment.

   Indicator:
   - Economic measures of school operational productivity are equal to or greater than national averages.

6. Strengthen the public's regard for the state's education system through a strategic partnership of the education department, state board and governor.

   Indicator:
   - Nevada public schools, state department, and professional educators are regarded highly by peers and the public throughout the state and nation.

• E. Indicators of Past Performance

Appendix 1 contains an array of student and educator data. Trends across the past four years are presented with regard to a number of indicators, many of which are directly noted in Section D as important in assessing progress toward targeted goals. As the Department shifts to the Executive Branch and as the newly configured State Board of Education convenes, these data are best considered baseline data for this new era of educational leadership.

Data are presented in Appendix 1 for the following:

- ✓ Student Demographics
- ✓ Student Attendance Rates
- ✓ Per Pupil Expenditures
- ✓ Student Proficiency, including Subpopulation Performance, for:
  - ⇒ English Language Arts
  - ⇒ Mathematics
  - ⇒ Science
- ✓ Student Discipline
- ✓ Student Retention
- ✓ College & Career Readiness, including:
  - ⇒ High School Proficiency Exam Passage Rates
  - ⇒ Credit Deficiency Rates
  - ⇒ Graduation Rates
  - ⇒ Dropout Rates
  - ⇒ High School Completion Rates
  - ⇒ ACT Results
  - ⇒ SAT Student Results
- ✓ Teacher Attendance Rates
- ✓ Highly Qualified Teachers
- ✓ Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals
- ✓ Substitute Teachers
- ✓ Student-Teacher Ratios

It should be noted that data are provided with regard to teacher status in meeting the highly qualified requirements because the new Nevada Educator Performance Framework is yet to be implemented. Over time, as the new performance evaluation and support system yields data on educator effectiveness, this Plan will provide such information.

Additionally noteworthy are two legislative requirements for which the State does not currently have the capacity to provide information. The first is an analysis of the degree to which students enrolled in public middle schools and junior high schools enter public high schools with the skills necessary to succeed in high school. A proxy for this indicator is the proficiency of students in 8th grade Criterion-referenced tests in core content areas. Secondly, NRS Chapter 385 requires inclusion of data on reengaged youth who have successfully completed high school. It is understood that reengaged youth are those who dropped out of school and returned. Local districts do not uniformly capture this information, and sufficient capacity does not exist in the statewide longitudinal data system to report against this indicator. Efforts will be made over time to collect and report these important data.

F. Levers by Which the NDE Improves Education

Many organizations have direct control over relevant means of production. They have substantial control over personnel and the flow of resources. For example, if an automobile firm determined it could maximize profits by making pickup trucks rather than sedans, it would make a series of decisions to shut down one type of assembly, reallocate resources to a different production scheme, and begin the manufacture of trucks.

Even a local school district, presumably "manufacturing" knowledgeable citizens and members of the labor force, can decide to reallocate resources, toward, for example, a different math curriculum, a new means of training teachers, or a new grade configuration.

A state board of education and an education department have few such direct levers for improving education. The Nevada State Education Board and Department of Education has only limited influence about who is hired to teach in classrooms, salary levels, principals' job descriptions, local budget development, and other important variables associated with student performance.

In general, the NDE must strive to improve education by influencing the actions of others. Specifically, the State Education Department, not itself directly operating schools, must engage in efforts to induce local school officials and educators to take actions that are thought to be in the best interests of students, parents, and the state as a whole.

None of the above is to suggest that the Nevada Department of Education is without authority or influence. To the contrary, the State has many opportunities to improve education. If not operating directly to manage schools, the NDE must be particularly thoughtful regarding its exercise of power. What are the opportunities and the boundaries to its legitimate authority? What levers, be they advocacy (the bully pulpit), admonitions, or regulations can it engage to render schools more effective? The query is not rhetorical. Literally thousands of practical state decisions and local school district actions can flow from the answers to these questions.

Four major categories of action have the potential to motivate substantial and consistent student learning gains in Nevada. There is no assertion here that these are the only levers. The contention is that, given history and the current operating context, the following actions levers are the most productive currently.

The first, and most inclusive is regulation, exercising influence through establishment of *"Standards, Assessments, Curriculum, and Accountability."* Helping schools implement Common Core State Standards and other content, along with corresponding assessments will ensure an appropriate curriculum for all students. By setting performance expectations for schools, measuring the extent to which students, classrooms, schools and districts meet expectations, publicizing performance results, rewarding success, calling attention to deficiencies, and providing remedial support to principals, teachers and students, the NDE can leverage change.

A second set of change levers is embodied in the *"Enhancement of Human Capital."* Effective teachers are the most powerful element of instruction. Effective principals are also crucial. For example, fairly and accurately assessing educator effectiveness and using results to support growth and improvement can raise the level of educator capacity in Nevada. Likewise, by establishing reasonable licensing regulations, thereby determining legally who can be an educator in Nevada, it is eventually possible to further elevate the level of teacher and administrator talent in public schools.

A third lever or vector for change is *"Responsible Competition and Choice."* Parents and students deserve to choose from among responsible alternatives. Appropriately structured competition can lead to productive change and improvement. The Department is not a completely independent agent in this regard. Nevada has a separately authorized state level Charter School Authority. However, through productive cooperation, the NDE and Charter School Authority can expand the range of charter operations throughout the state. In addition, the NDE can seek creative ways to enhance choice in conventional public schools through means such as Tax Credit Scholarships and expanding digital learning opportunities.

A fourth change vector is pursuit of *"Managerial Excellence and Systems Integrity."* This path involves ensuring that the Nevada Department of Education is itself well managed so as to serve as a model to local education agencies throughout the state. This means that the work of all Department employees must be strategically aligned and focused on the same mission. And since the State Education Department's success ultimately depends on educators in schools, this strategic alignment must extend to the schools as well. Management integrity for budgeting, personnel management, and data quality assurance are critical to this process.

This is no easy undertaking. As the significance of education has expanded for Nevadans generally, particularly for purposes of enhancing individual and collective economic well-being, management challenges have become daunting. Nevada spends almost $5 billion annually in state, local, and federal funding on its schools. State funds are generated and distributed by a remarkably arcane formula with many moving and difficult to calculate formula components not necessarily aligned with current education needs or costs. In addition, the NDE is the recipient and distributer of literally hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants. This kaleidoscopic picture begs for better integration.

The following section of the improvement plan explains specific actions that the Nevada State Board of Education and Department of Education intend to pursue in 2013, to render more schools effective. The above-described four levers serve to organize these actions. In each section, 2013 Department and Gubernatorial proposed initiatives are placed in textboxes for ease of identification.

G. 2013 State Improvement Actions

The following narrative provides a summary description of NDE action areas for 2013. Some of these action areas are continuations of ongoing efforts. Others are 2013 Department and gubernatorial initiatives to be newly launched, with 77th Biennium legislative approval and recommended additional education funding.

1. Standards, Curriculum, Assessments, and Accountability

1a. *Standards and Curriculum: The "Common Core"*

The Nevada Department of Education is currently engaged with multiple national organizations, Nevada stakeholders, local school districts, and the Nevada System of Higher Education in the full-scale implementation of a new and more rigorous public school curriculum. These "Common Core State Standards" target 21st century learning for English Language Arts and Mathematics and require integration of these content areas across other curricular domains as well.

This more rigorous curriculum has been adopted by an overwhelming majority of states throughout the nation. The Common Core ensures a strong foundation in critical skills for all of Nevada's children and will be completely implemented by the 2015-2016 school year.

Implementation of the new curriculum will necessitate enhancing the state's professional development capacity for Nevada teachers and administrators. Toward this end, budgetary and legislative requests have been proposed to transfer the three existing "Regional Professional Development Programs" under NDE authority to focus scarce resources on the successful implementation of Common Core State Standards and the complementary rollout of the Nevada Educator Performance Framework.

There are two other Common Core related endeavors, ensuring the new curriculum is made appropriately available to limited English proficient and special education students. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

1b. *Standards and Curriculum: Credentials of Value for Career Education*

The Department of Education will continue to implement means to ensure students who successfully complete requisite Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs exit high school with recognized credentials of value. These career and technical credentials will eventually be performance based. Students will be able to prove their various technical skills to employers, not simply attest that they took appropriate courses. For the moment, however, the NDE move to align courses and pencil and paper examinations with the acquisition of career and technical skills is a progressive move placing Nevada ahead of virtually all other states. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

1c. *Reading by Grade Three*

Literacy is crucial to life long success. One learns to read and then one is capable of reading to learn. Several states have established third grade reading proficiency as a threshold for entrance to the fourth grade. Nevada will follow suit. A crucial initial step is to ensure that sufficient measurement is in place to enable schools to gauge the progress of students in grades K-2. This measurement is part of a proposed comprehensive assessment plan addressed below. The "Read by Three" initiative will be coordinated with the English Language Learning initiative described immediately below. (Gubernatorial 2013 initiative.)

1d. *English Language Learning*

Increased attention and added resources will be provided to early grade English Language Learners (ELLs). Nevada school districts will receive NDE assistance in undertaking an appraisal of their current procedures for ELL students, and then be eligible for added funding to improve instruction of Limited English Proficient students. (Gubernatorial 2013 initiative)

1e. *Expanding Kindergarten*

Formal instruction regarding matters such as reading and mathematics is assisted substantially, particularly for children from low-income households, by access to full day kindergarten. Provisions in the Governor's 2013 budget request funding that facilitates substantial expansion of local school district Kindergarten facilities and programs. (Gubernatorial 2013 initiative)

1f. *Growing STEM Capacity*

A commitment exists to operationalize initiatives concentrating on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The NDE is committed to partnering with stakeholders to better support current STEM initiatives in play across the state, and to scale up successful programs. Paired with the Common Core, ELL Read by three, and other initiatives, such efforts will help to ensure that Nevada students graduate ready for challenging careers in STEM fields. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

1g. *Assessment*

Beginning in 2014, Nevada will be implementing a new and more comprehensive set of student performance examinations, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests. These new assessments rely heavily upon computers for their classroom administration and provide timely feedback that can be used to improve instruction. Pencil and paper "bubble in" tests will be vastly diminished.

Relying upon new digital technology will permit performance feedback to students, teachers, and parents in a much more timely and useful manner. Tests will be individualized and "adaptive." This means they will not persist in posing questions to which a student does not know answers, and, if a student answers questions easily, will rapidly branch into new knowledge areas and accelerate in rigor. Each student will be challenged at his or her level so that assessment themselves will encourage more learning.

Many of the changes in testing will require legislative approval. The "Nevada Education Assessment Summit" was held on December 3-4, 2012. The purpose of this endeavor was to construct ideas and practical plans for Nevada's next generation assessment system. Detailed options for how the state can move forward will be presented in early 2013 in a "Nevada State Superintendent's Report on 21st Century Student Performance Testing." This report will serve as a basis for statewide discussion and detailed planning, from which gubernatorial and legislative efforts may ensue in the 2013 and 2015 sessions.

New testing procedures will also necessitate improved Internet capacity in Nevada's rural and frontier school districts. Appraisal efforts have begun and will continue in 2013 to determine district capacity to implement needed technical upgrades and their costs. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

1h. *Accountability Initiatives*

August 2012 approval from the U.S. Department of Education to alter previous ESEA accountability requirements permits detailed planning for the roll out of a comprehensive "Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF)." Appearing publicly in 2013, this statewide system relies upon standardized testing and other student achievement data to rate all conventional and charter schools on an ascending five-star scale, with more stars representing elevated school performance. Widespread informational efforts are now underway to explain this system to professional educators, the media, and the general public. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

1i. *Targeted Support for Diverse Learners*

Measuring school and district performance is important. However, it does not sufficiently create the necessary conditions for improvement, particularly in the lowest achieving schools. Accordingly, heightened efforts are being undertaken by the NDE to provide targeted support to schools identified as "Priority" and "Focus" Schools. Notably, these schools have low graduation rates at the high school level and across all grade spans, have tremendous challenges with the performance of student subpopulations (e.g., students with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and living in poverty). Hence, much attention is focused on building the necessary infrastructures to support school turnaround through efforts including professional development, data systems enhancement, and resource reallocation, among others. (NDE 2013 Initiative)

1j. *Assessing School Readiness*

The NDE will cooperate with early education advocates to implement an Inventory of Development and Early Childhood Data System project. The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, in collaboration with the NDE, will continue to lead this effort, which has identified two major priorities for implementation:

a) Adoption of a common Kindergarten Inventory of Development statewide (Silver State KIDs) that measures each child's developmental status upon entering kindergarten; and

b) Development of a coordinated data system that aligns Pre-K to 12 data (and beyond) in order to improve understanding about which early childhood policies, strategies, services and supports are the most likely to improve school readiness, in order to facilitate expansion and replication of effective and proven early childhood practices throughout Nevada. (2013 NDE Initiative)

1k. *Promoting Family Engagement*

The NDE recognizes that family engagement is a major factor for student success, and remains committed to growing opportunities across the state to support active involvement of parents and other family members in children's schooling. Continued collaboration with the Parent Involvement Advisory Council will enable the NDE to partner with individuals who are passionate about family engagement and with organizations that can assist the state in identifying and scaling up evidenced-based practices in this regard. A particular area of focus includes collaboration to expand the recognition and implementation of family engagement strategies identified by the national PTA, including assisting the Teachers and Leaders Council to collaborate meaningfully with the Parent Involvement Council toward this end. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

2. Enhancement Human Capital

Four near term steps are envisioned as enhancing the quality of human capital attracted into education in Nevada.

2a *Personnel Performance*

Nevada has approximately 22,500 publicly employed professional educators. Some substantial portion of these individuals are unquestionably able, and Nevada should celebrate and grow their contributions and commitment. Some portion, of the education workforce, probably small, is insufficiently effective. These individuals should receive remediation and, if they do not improve, be dismissed. Regrettably, distinguishing and disentangling the former effective teacher from the latter ineffective teacher category is presently not reliably possible.

The deliberative efforts to date of the legislatively empowered Teachers and Leaders Council hold the potential for correcting this unfortunate and ambiguous situation. The TLC has created the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, a composite matrix, anchored in measures of teacher and administrator professional performance. These arrangements will enable Nevada, in time, to construct a professional career ladder for the state's educators and, thereby, attract even larger numbers of able individuals into education. However, successful implementation of this set of recommendations is technically and organizationally daunting, fraught with special interest pitfalls that, to date, no other state has fully surmounted.

A two-year validation phase is necessary sufficiently to implement the Nevada Educator Performance Framework. (NDE and Gubernatorial Initiative)

2b. *Teach For America (TFA)*

TFA provides an unusual infusion of teacher talent into the Clark County School District. This pool of able teachers is thereafter often available for influential school leadership roles. Efforts are targeted to expand the number of TFA teachers able to teach in the most poverty and achievement impacted schools in Las Vegas. (Gubernatorial Initiative)

2c. *Professional Development*

Multiple steps toward Professional Development expansion will be taken with funding requested of the Legislature. This will include professional development to facilitate implementation of the Common Core curriculum, the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, the Nevada School Performance Framework, changes in assessments, and enhanced instruction in reading for elementary students and for English language learners. A portion of these extended professional development efforts will take place with requested additional funding. Another portion will be through requested transfer of currently operating Regional Professional Development Programs under NDE leadership. (NDE and Gubernatorial Initiative)

2d. *Educator Licensure*

Presently, Nevada licensing requirements are indifferent to empirical findings regarding teacher and administrator effectiveness. To begin to resolve this deficiency, a Human Capital Enhancement Summit will be convened in 2014 and will grapple with issues such as educator licensure, career ladder formations, educator pay, pensions and fringe benefits. Proposals for a comprehensive statewide human capital strategy will be the product of this endeavor, which will likely spark regulatory changes as well as legislative action in the 2015 session. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

3. Responsible Competition and Choice

Responsible competition offers the prospect of improving school performance. The NDE proposes several avenues by which responsible competition can be expanded. These involve (1) an expansion in the number of high quality charter schools, (2) additional opportunities to reengage high school students through the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program, (3) added high school course and graduation options, and (4) a pilot level Tax Credit funded Scholarship program for low-income students.

3a. *Charter School Expansion.*

Cooperation between the State Charter School Authority and NDE remains strong and responsible Charter School expansion is underway. In 2012, the State Public Charter School Authority received 14 applications to form new charter schools. Only five of these requests were granted because of the increased rigor of the school application process under the capable leadership of the Authority. Efforts are underway to enable potential charter operators to better understand the complexities of high quality school establishment and implementation and, thereafter, to be able to submit higher quality proposals that will result in quality and lasting charter school opportunities for students. Also, NDE will support the Clark County School District initiative to permit conversion of consistently failing public schools to charter schools. (Public Charter School Authority Initiative)

3b. *Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)*

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) is a national program supplying intense counseling and individualized support to high school juniors and seniors at risk of dropping out. The NDE is cooperating with the Governor's Office to ensure implementation of the JAG program at eight Nevada high schools. An overarching advisory council, including industry and other employer representatives, has been formed and includes representation by the NDE. Legislative proposals include funding for JAG expansion to 17 additional high schools. The Nevada Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation is an essential partner in these endeavors and the NDE Career and Technical Education Director collaborates on a related DETR panel. (Gubernatorial Initiative)

3c. *Tax Credit Scholarships*

Expanded opportunities for choice in education have the potential to improve productivity and equity of opportunity for low-income students who have not typically had education choice options in the past. A legislative request for formation of a Scholarship Agency has been made that would direct up to $5 million in voluntarily redirected corporate tax proceeds to be used by a newly formed Scholarship Agency to provide private school tuition for low income students. (Gubernatorial Initiative)

4. Managerial Excellence and Systems Integrity

4a. *NDE Internal Management*

Revitalization of the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) is seventy percent complete. Changes include construction of an updated Mission and Vision Statement, definition of NDE activated statewide education change strategies, specification of measurable performance goals, recruitment and appointment of a new management team (9 of 12 NDE Leadership Team members were appointed in 2012) construction of a new NDE website, internal personnel and budgetary approvals are being tightened and clarified, and provisions are being made to expand the role of supervision and performance feedback, including formal evaluations of all employees in 2013. In addition, reforms are underway with procedures for budgeting, grants and contract management. A critical component of this priority is to improve communication within the Department and with our external stakeholders. (NDE Initiative)

4b. *Performance-Based Budgeting*

The department is fully engaged with implementation of the Governor's statewide implementation of a priorities and performance-based budgeting process. This process involves defining core functions, major objectives, and activities that are funded to achieve the objectives. For each activity, measures are identified for baseline performance and goals for future performance. The process of guiding budgets based on measurable results is aligned with internal human resource management practices that focus employee evaluation on the attainment of measurable results and is intended to strategically align staff capacity and resources to increase the state's ability to improve educational outcomes for Nevada's children. (Gubernatorial Initiative)

4c. *Comprehensive Longitudinal Data System*

Continued planning is occurring for and several technical contracts have been let for the enhancement and maintenance of a cross-agency comprehensive state longitudinal data system that will provide key educational data from pre-kindergarten through college and career. A key part of this is ensuring the quality and continued operation and upgrade of the K-12 longitudinal data system. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

4d. *Communication and Outreach*

Extending communication and engagement with local school district leaders (school board members and superintendents) and other takeholders from local districts continues. State Superintendent and key NDE top-level administrators have personally visited all seventeen local districts, including visits to more than 100 schools. Outreach to local districts and schools remains a priority for 2013 and beyond, including visiting schools that have been identified for excellence as well as those that are struggling to reach targeted goals. (Department has requested a Public Information Officer and a web master for enhanced and timely communication.) (NDE and Gubernatorial Initiative)

4e. *Interdepartmental Cooperative Endeavors*

One of the several advantages in moving the NDE fully into the Executive Branch is the opportunity to coordinate statewide programs. The Department of Education is participating in several interdepartmental collaborative efforts. Here are examples. In a joint endeavor with the Department of Corrections and the four school districts providing adult education in correctional facilities clear strategies being constructed to provide educational services to inmates closest to release. Collaboration is underway with the Department of Energy to ensure Nevada public

schools are energy efficient. Together, the NDE and DETR are shaping the above-mentioned JAG program for high school students. HHS and NDE are exploring added educational opportunities for children in private psychiatric placements. Homeland Security and NDE are expanding efforts to ensure that security is optimized in each of Nevada's 650 schools. The National Guard is assisting in efforts to renovate the elementary school on the Nellis Air Force Base. Explorations are underway to determine cooperative opportunities with the Department of Business and Industry to improve Department performance. (NDE Initiative)

4f. *School Finance Formula Redesign*

The Nevada Legislature has requested, through the Governor's Office, that the NDE generate alternative school finance distribution formulae for Nevada. Existing funding procedures are clumsy, outmoded, overly complicated, inefficient, and lacking in transparency. New hires provide the Department with the expertise to design modern alternatives. Mechanisms are now being constructed to plan a September 2013 School Finance Summit to create goals to guide the design of a new financial distribution formula alternative for legislative consideration in 2015. (NDE and Gubernatorial Initiative)

4g. *Funding for Adult Education Programs*

The NDE is developing performance-based funding formulas for Adult Basic Education and Adult High School programs. The NDE is also developing a strong request for proposals process, wherein yearly federal funding will require adherence to rigorous applications. The NDE's adult education program, along with its sister program Career and Technical Education, are working to better align grant objectives and priorities with state economic-development and workforce-development strategies. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

4h. *Commission Consolidation*

It is critical that all of the state's education reform efforts be coordinated and concentrated on achieving the same, and not competing, goals. The Department's legislative requests include consolidation of several remaining commissions and including their functions within the purview of the State Board of education. These include the Commission on Education Technology, the Commission on Professional Standards, the Council to Establish Academic Standards and the Commission on Educational Excellence. This initiative saves money. (Gubernatorial Initiative)

4i. *Child Nutrition*

The Office of Child Nutrition and School Health (OCNSH) will continue with the implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act to improve the quality of meals, assist children in developing healthy behaviors, ensuring that all eligible children have access to the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program and evaluate the implementation of local school wellness policies. The office will continue to collaborate with district staff and community partners to increase participation in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs. (Ongoing NDE Initiative))

4j. *Teaching and Learning Program Administration and Systems Monitoring*

NDE staff in the offices of Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum; Career, Technical and Adult Education; and Educational Opportunity administer nearly 20 federal and state programs. Each of these programs requires the NDE to design and implement comprehensive monitoring systems, meet data collection and reporting obligations, and to provide rich technical assistance to stakeholders including educators, families, and the public.

Internal structures will be enhanced in 2013 to promote cross-disciplinary collaboration that increases efficiency and effectiveness both within the NDE and in Nevada school and district offices. Additionally, such internal collaboration will enable staff to deliver technical assistance and professional development in ways that effectively support adult learning and that are efficient and effective for consumers. (Ongoing NDE Initiative)

H. Appendices

1. Indicators of Past Performance:
   Analyses of Student and Educator Data

2. Five-Year Action Plans

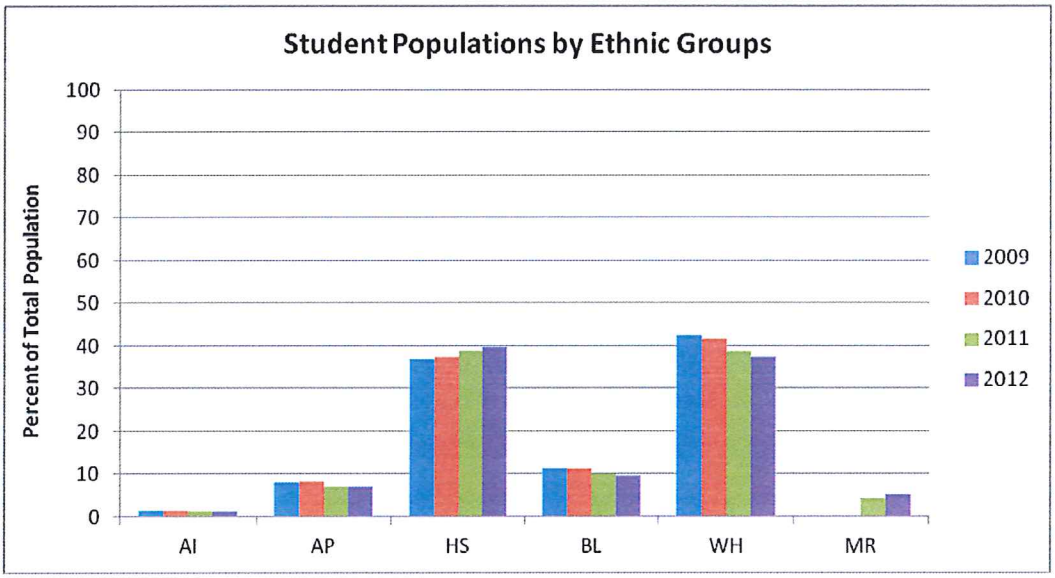
3. Nevada Department of Education Organizational Chart

Appendix 1.
Indicators of Past Performance: Analyses of Student and Educator Data

Analysis of Student Data

Student Population

During the 2011-2012 school year, 439,277 students were enrolled in Nevada public schools. This was an increase of approximately 2,200 students from the previous year. As shown in the figure below, the Hispanic student population has increased the most, from 37% in 2009 to 40% in 2012. In contrast, the White population has decreased by 42% to 37% from 2009 to 2012. 437,057



Student Attendance Rates

The attendance rate for the 2011-12 school year was 94.9%, similar to the past four years. The Asian student population has the highest attendance rate at 97.1% and the IEP student population has the lowest at 93.4%.

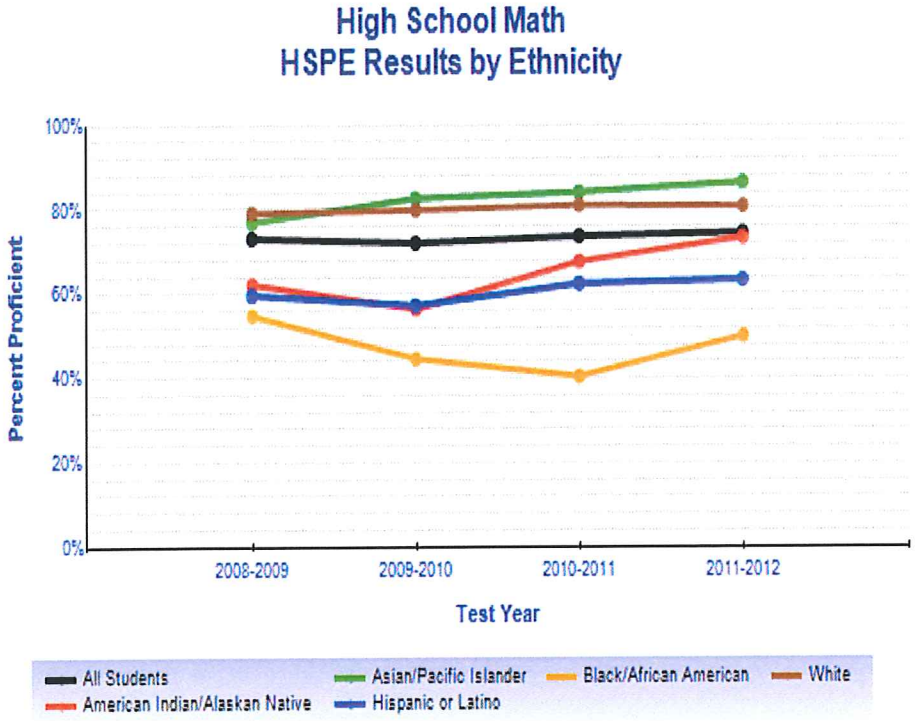
Per Pupil Expenditures

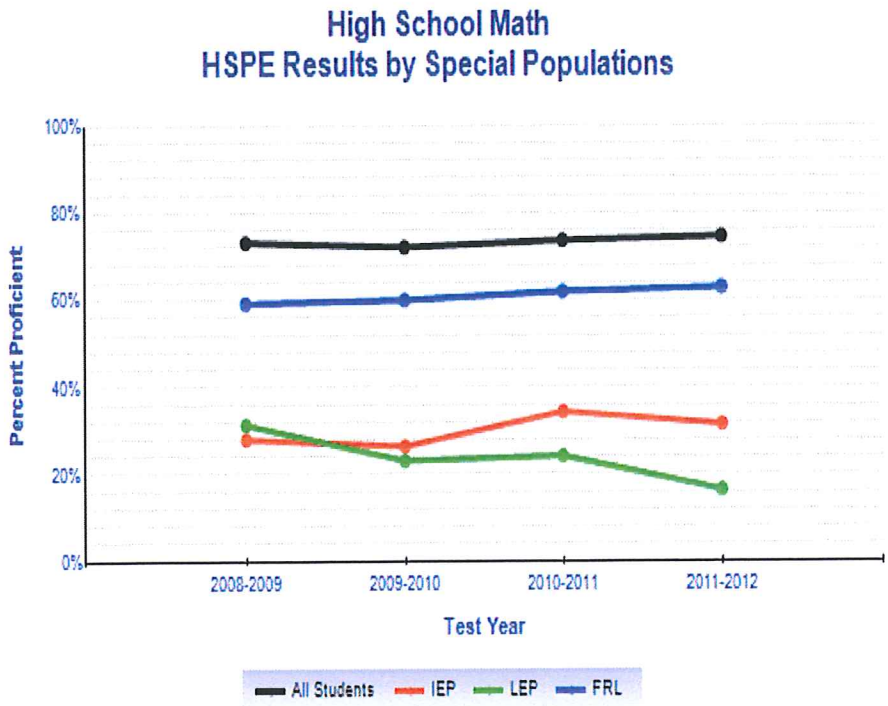
The per pupil expenditure reported for the 2010-11 school year was $7,716, a drop of approximately $800 from the previous year.

Mathematics Achievement

High School Performance Summary:

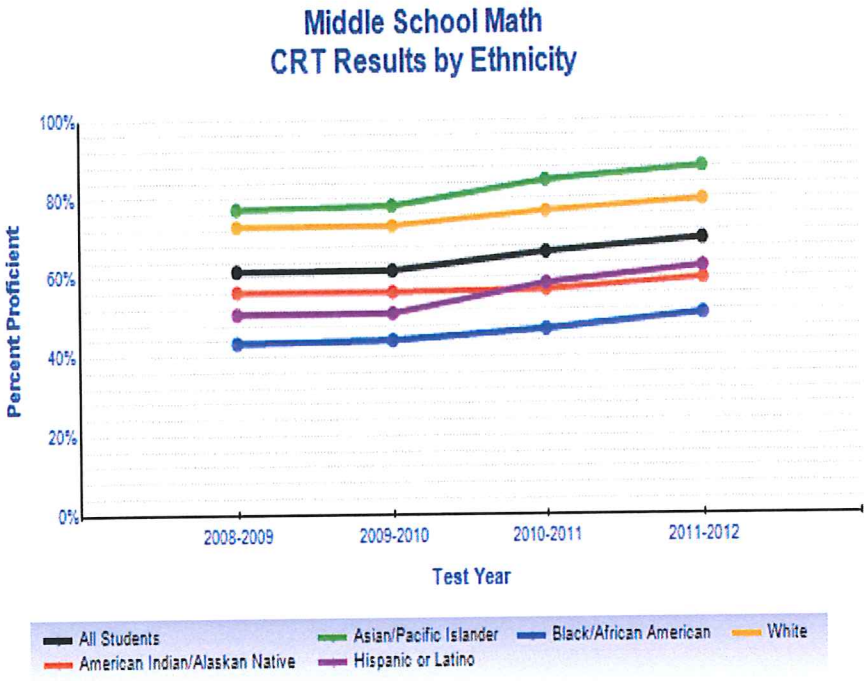
- The performance of All Students increased by approximately 3 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.
- The American Indian and Asian student groups had the greatest increase, with an increase of over 6 percentage points in four years.
- The LEP student group had a decrease of over 12 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.

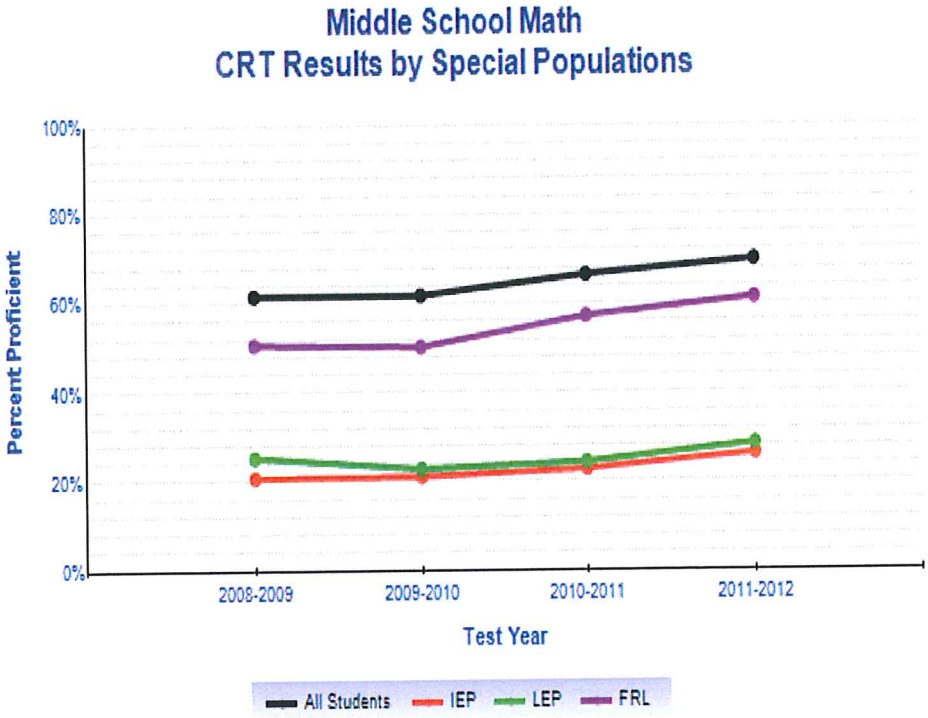




Middle School Performance Summary:

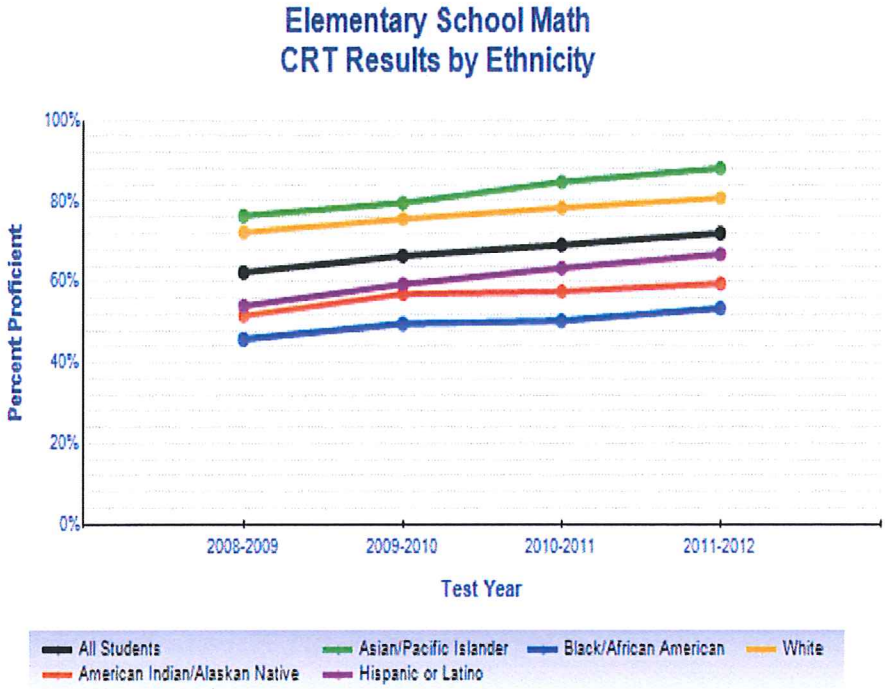
- The performance of All Students increased by approximately 5 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.
- All of the student groups increased in performance in 2012.
- The Asian and Hispanic student groups had the greatest increase of the ethnicity groups, with an increase of over 8 percentage points in four years.
- The FRL student group had the greatest increase of the special populations, with an increase of over 6 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.

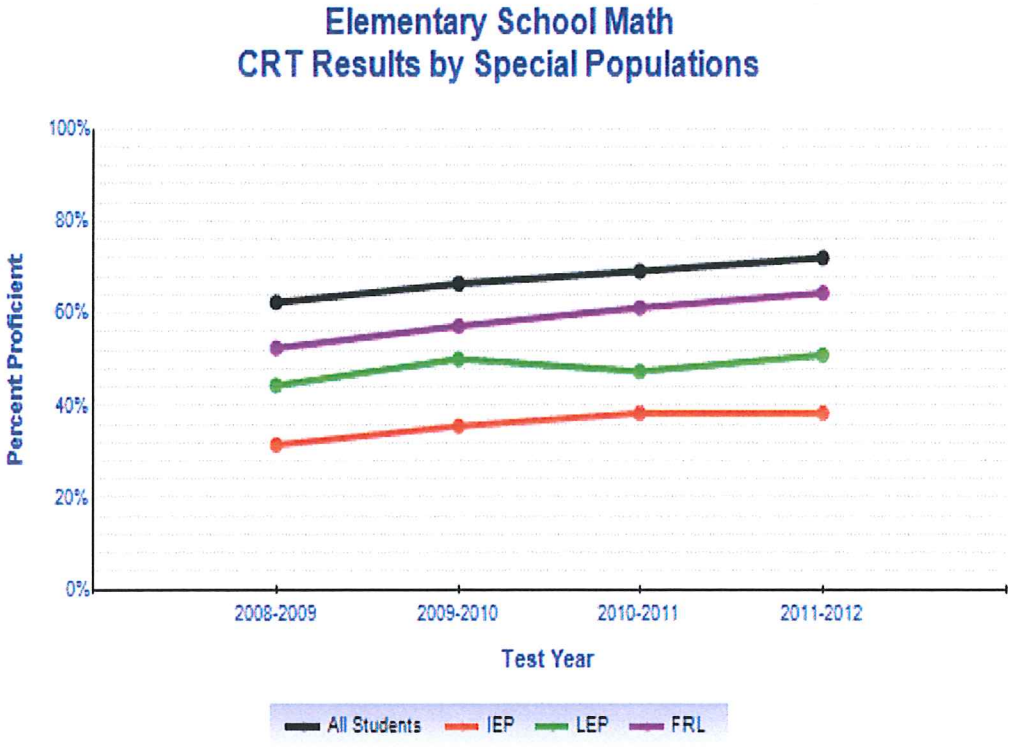




Elementary School Performance Summary:

- The performance of All Students increased by approximately 8 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.
- All of the student groups increased in performance in 2012.
- The Asian and FRL student groups had the greatest increase, with an increase of over 8 percentage points in four years.

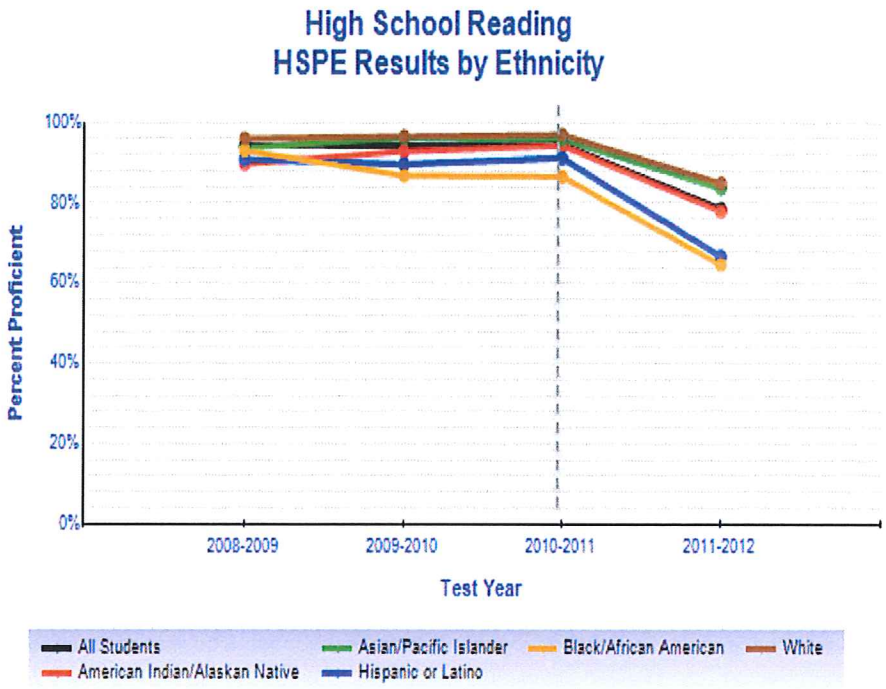


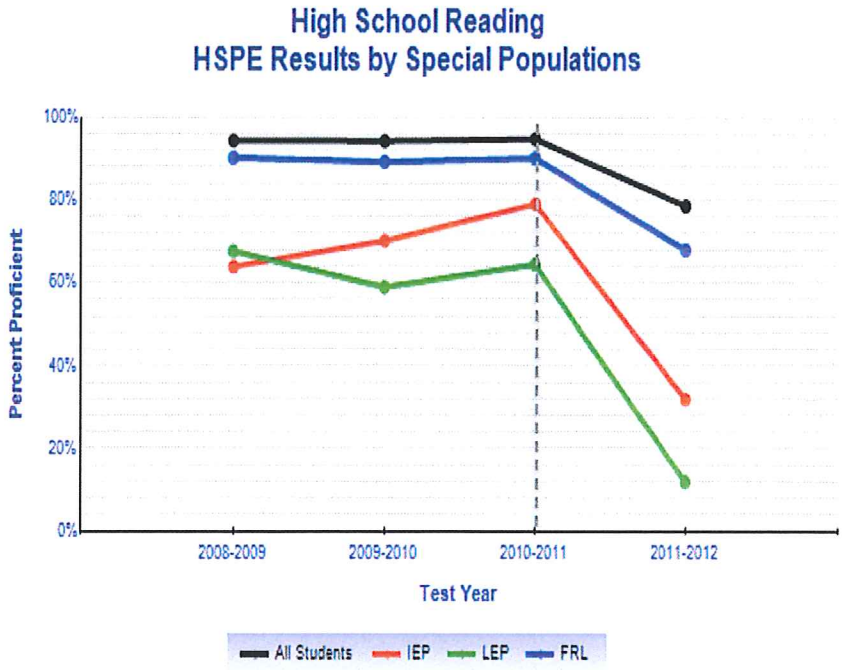


Reading Achievement

High School Performance Summary:

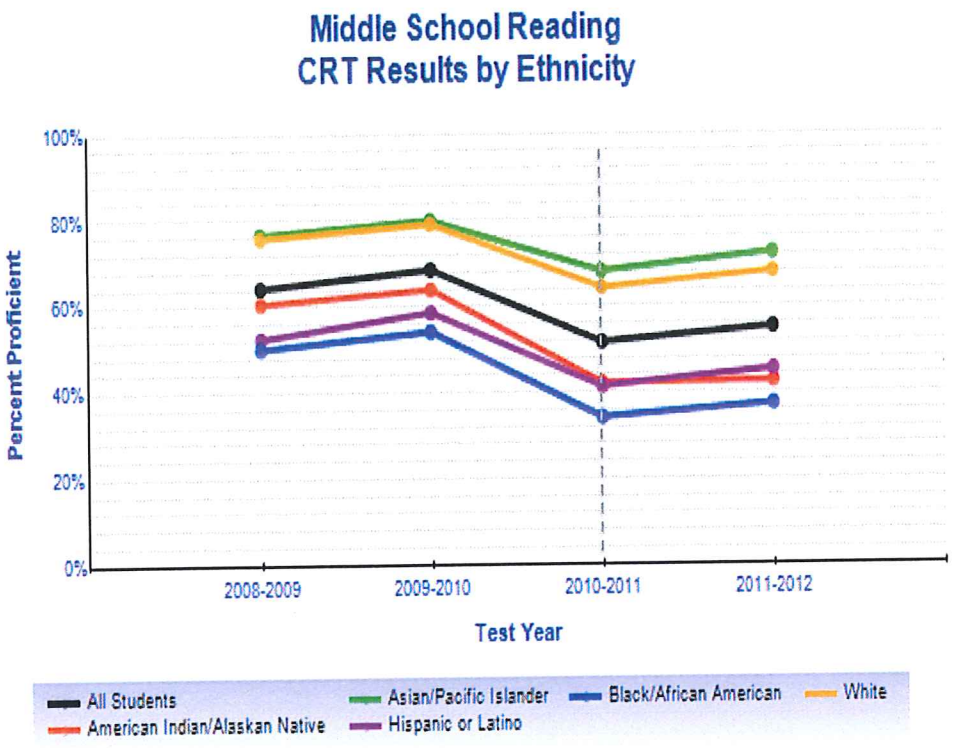
- Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, a new more rigorous reading test was administered (illustrated with dashed line on the graphs below). The impact of the new assessment was not realized until the 2011-12 school year.

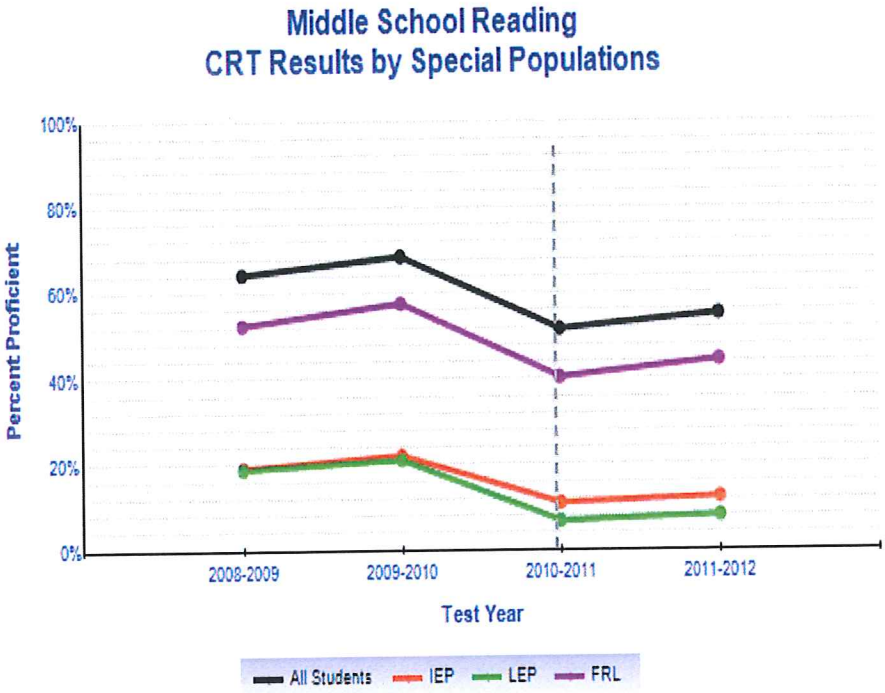




Middle School Performance Summary:

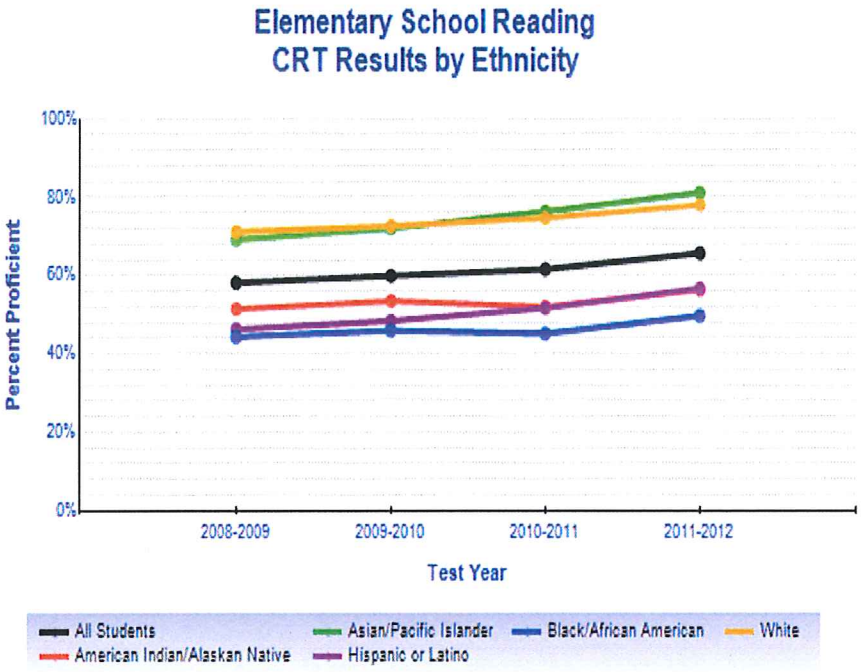
- Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, a new more rigorous reading test was administered (illustrated with dashed line on the graphs below). A slight increase in reading achievement was made in the most recent year as compared to the first administration of the new test. For HS, the impact of the new assessment was not realized until the 2011-12 school year.

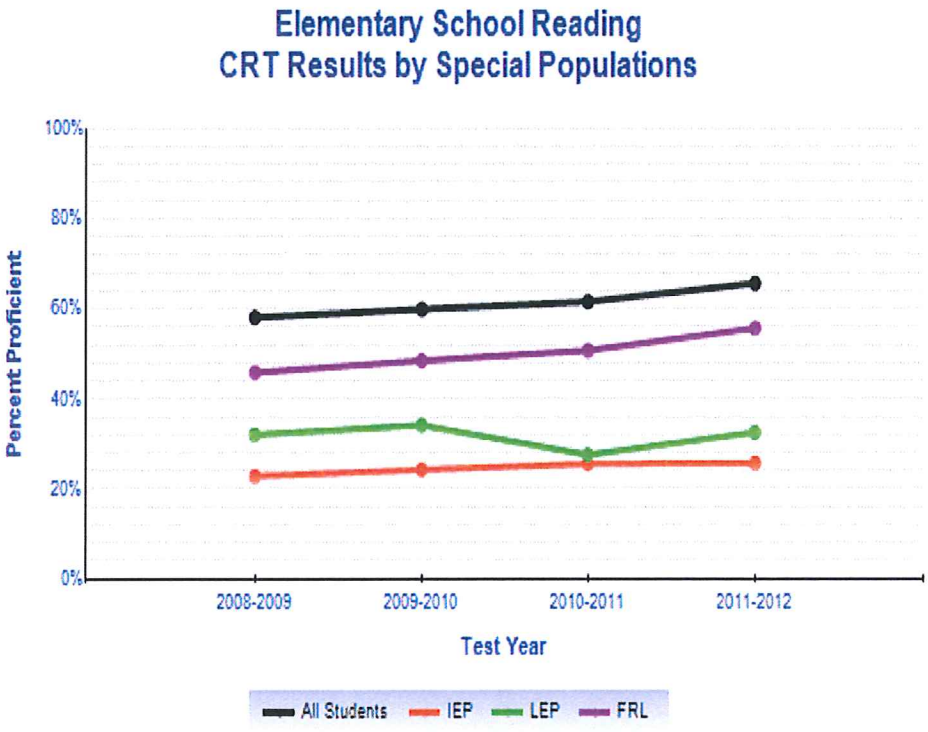




Elementary School Performance Summary:

- The performance of All Students increased by approximately 4 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.
- All of the student groups increased in performance in 2012.
- The Asian and FRL student groups had the greatest increase, with an increase of over 7 percentage points in four years.

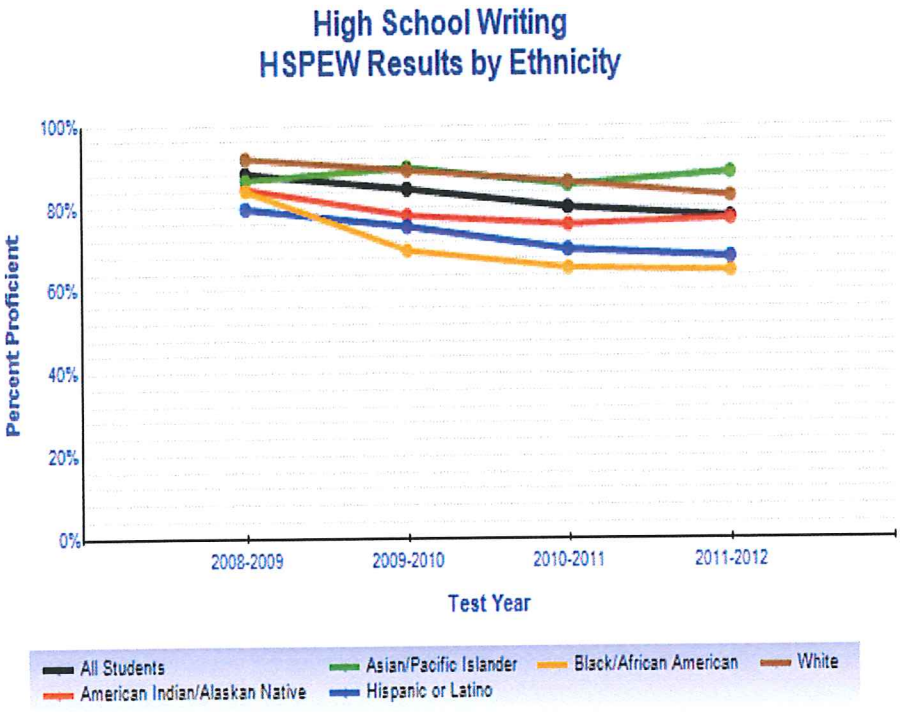


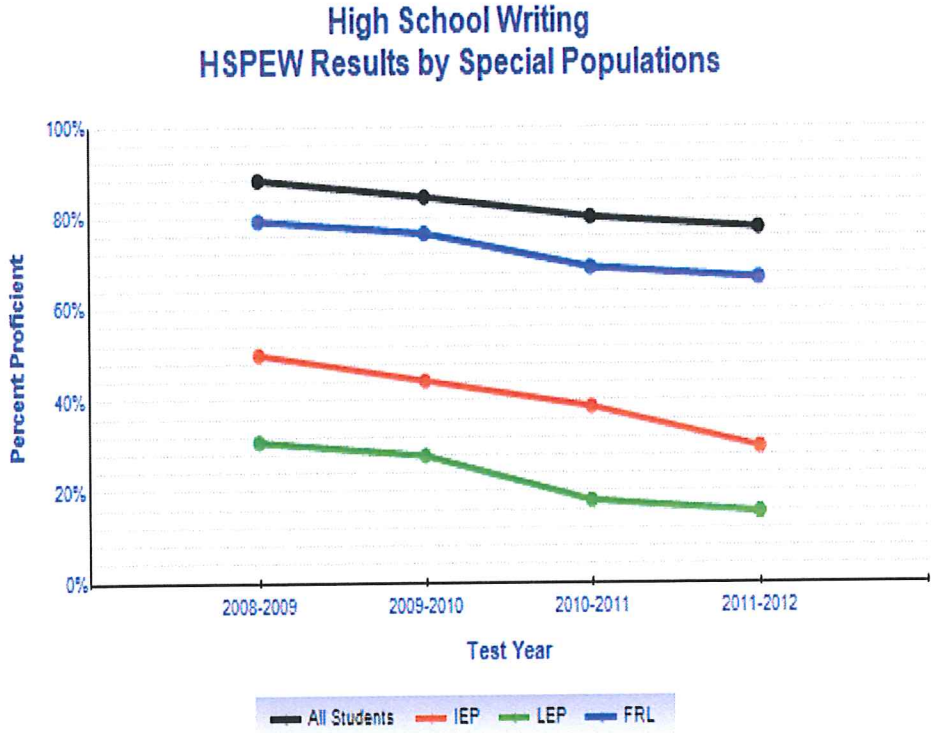


Writing Achievement

High School Performance Summary:

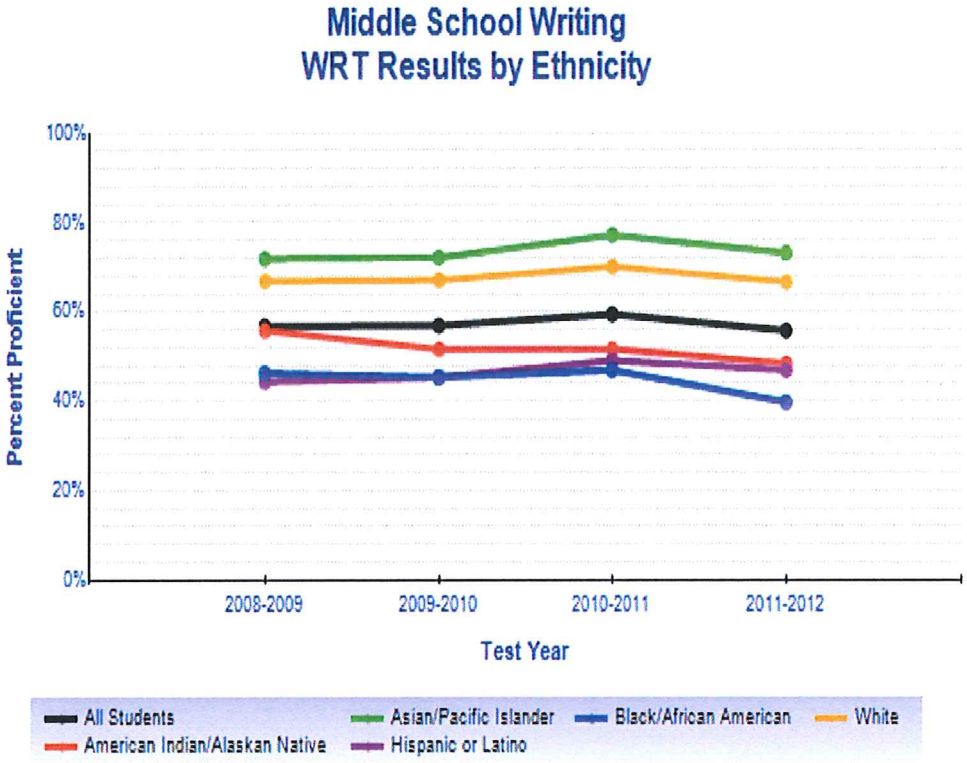
- All of the student groups have shown a decrease in performance over the four years, except for the Asian student group.
- The African American student group had a significant drop in performance from 2008-2009 to 2009-2010 with performance continuing to decline to 2011-2012.

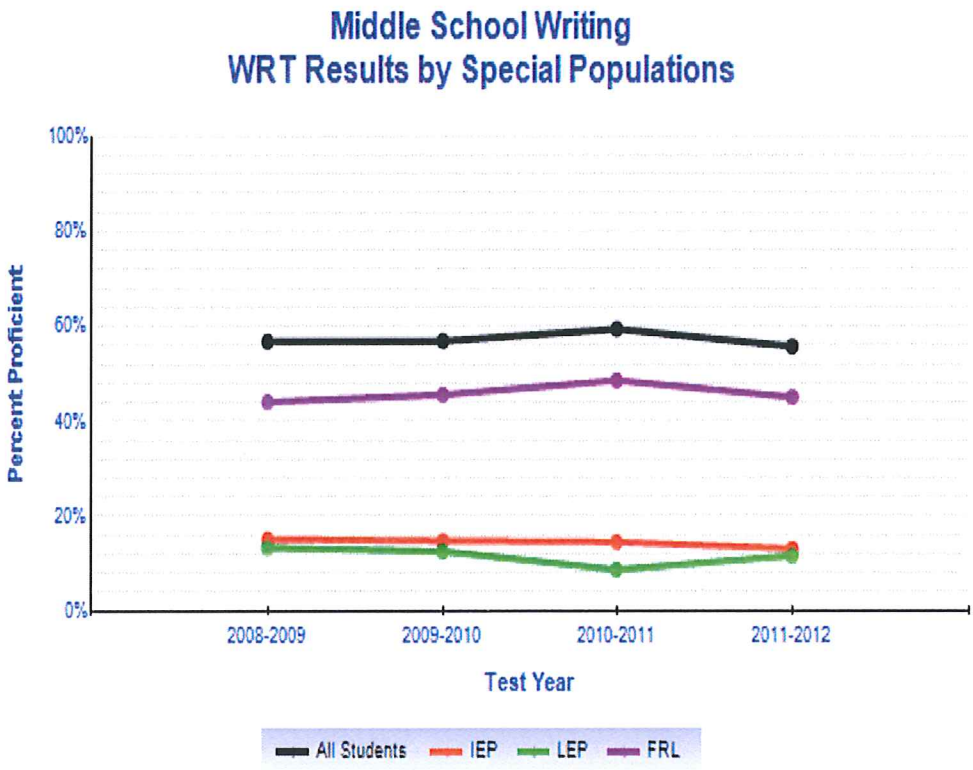




Middle School Performance Summary:

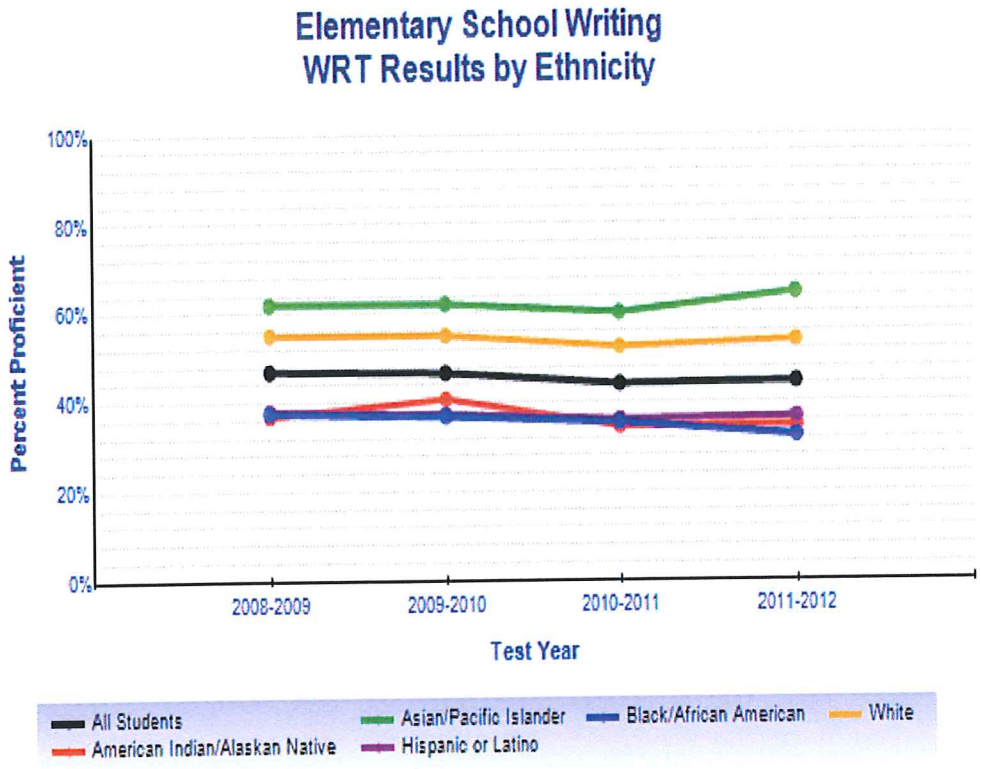
- In 2011-12 and for the first time, there was an "online" writing assessment. All 8th graders completed the writing assessment online.

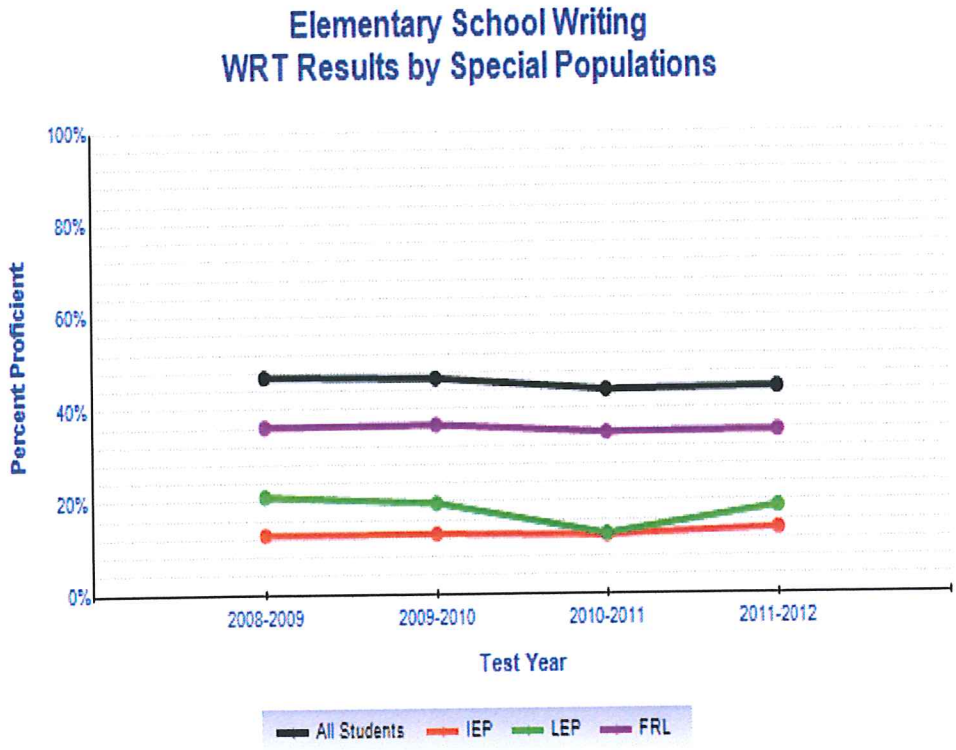




Elementary School Performance Summary:

- The performance of All Students decreased by approximately 3 percentage points from 2008-2009 to 2011-2012.
- The Asian and FRL student groups had a slight increase, while the rest of the student groups had a slight decrease in performance.

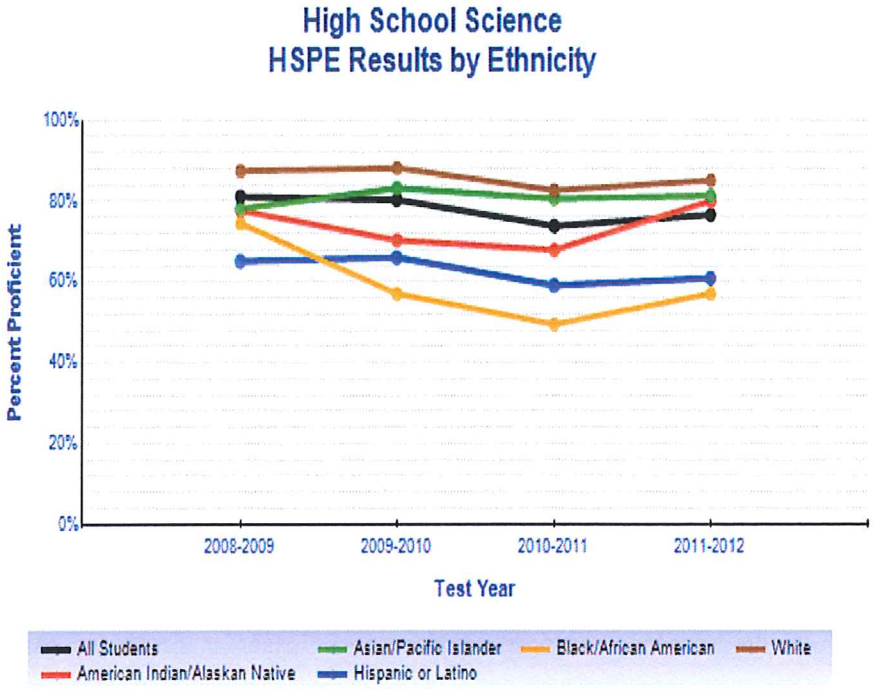


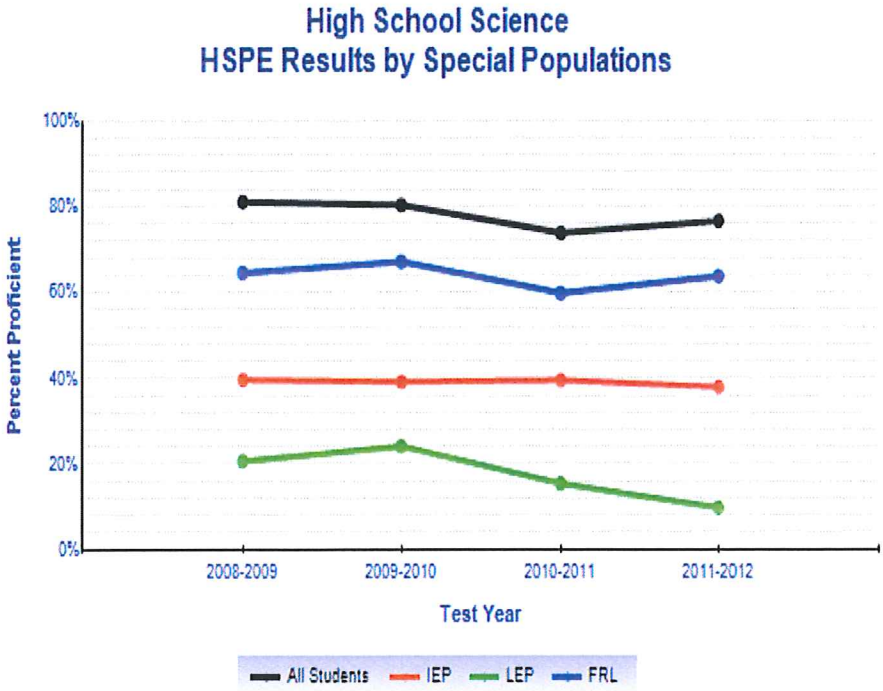


Science Achievement

High School Performance Summary:

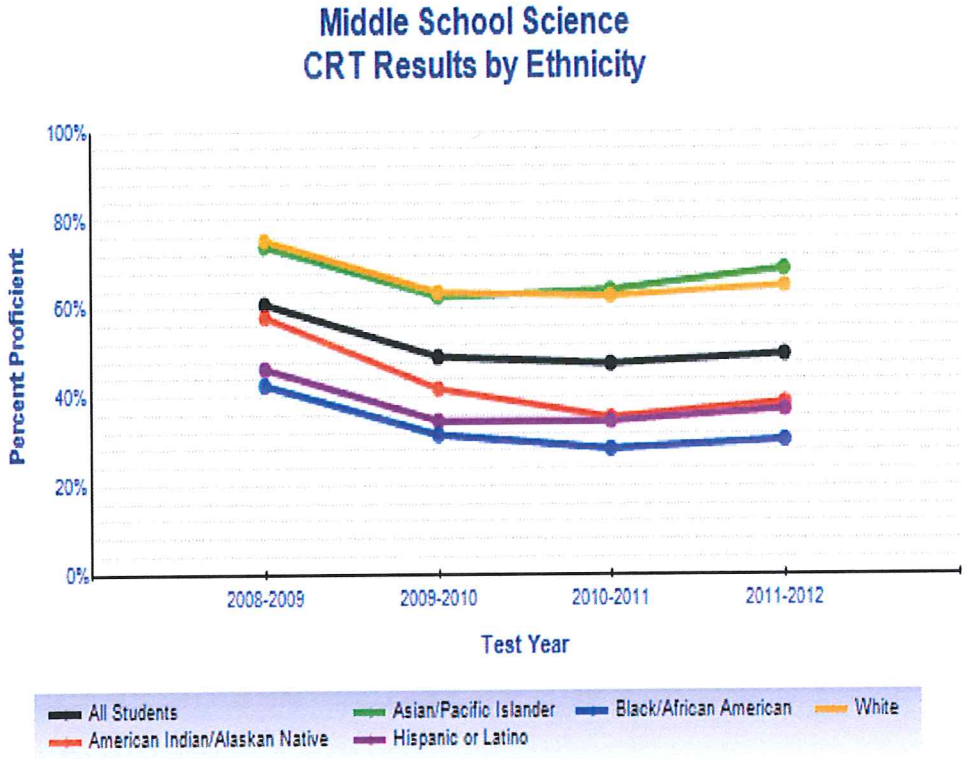
- The performance of All Students increased by approximately 3 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.
- The American Indian and Asian student groups had the greatest increase in performance over the four years.
- The LEP student group had a decrease of over 12 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.

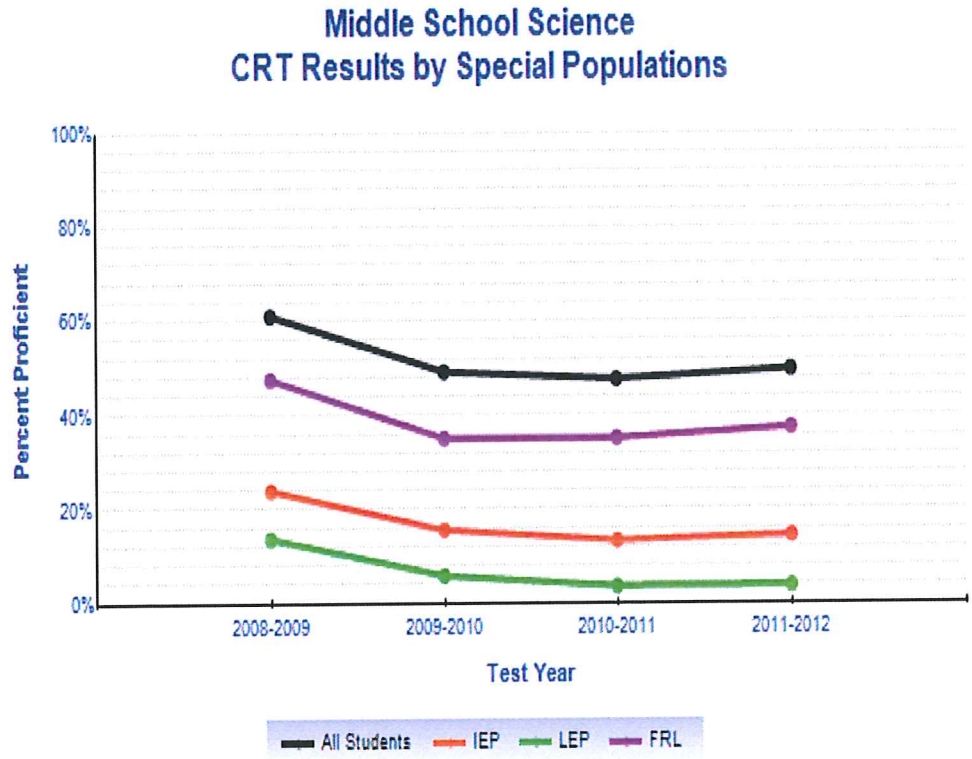




Middle School Performance Summary:

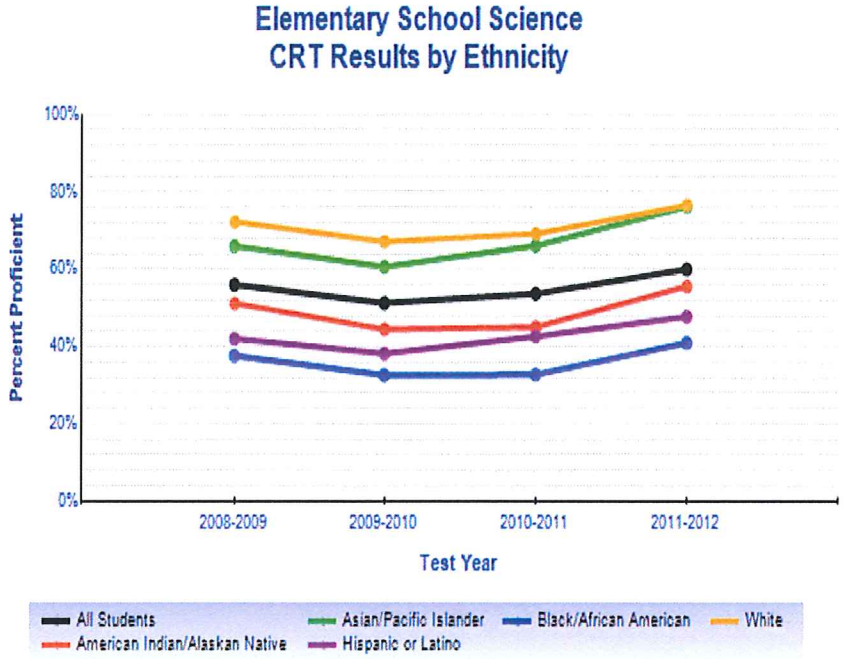
- All student groups decreased in performance from 2009 to 2010, then the Asian, White and Hispanic student groups had a slight increase in performance from 2010 to 2012.

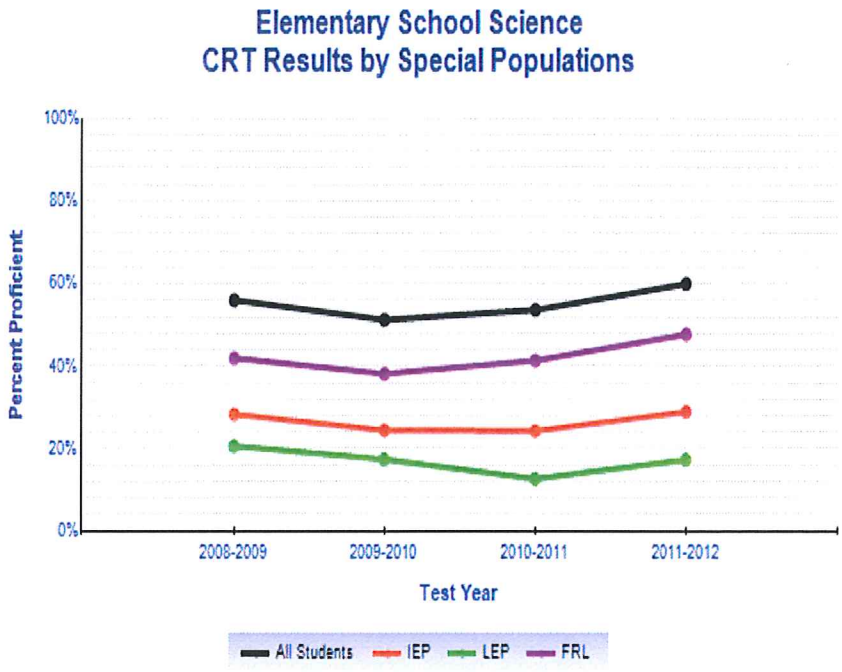




Elementary School Performance Summary:

- The performance of All Students decreased from 2009 to 2010, then increased by approximately 3 percentage points from 2010 to 2012.
- The Asian student group had the greatest increase, with an increase of over 12 percentage points in four years.
- The LEP student group had a decrease of approximately 3 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.





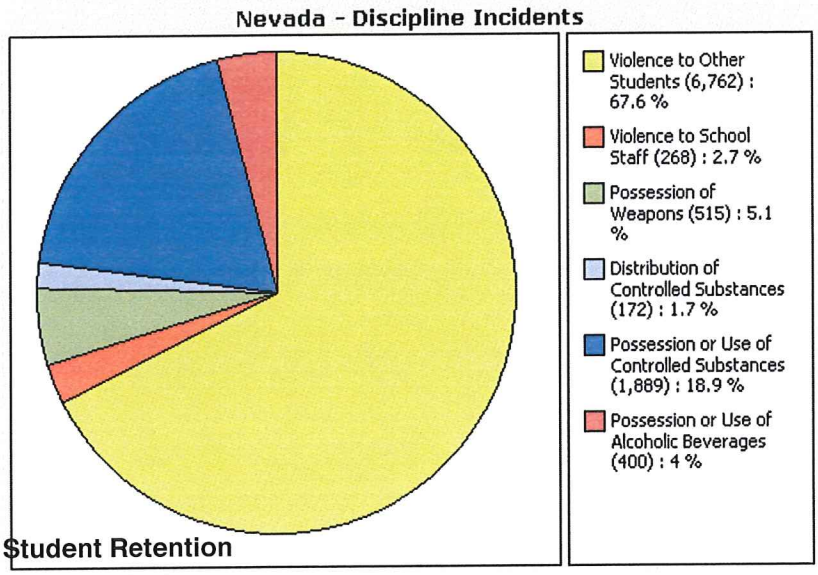
NAEP Student Results

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a nationally representative assessment. Assessments are conducted in mathematics and reading. Since NAEP assessments are administered uniformly using the same sets of test booklets across the nation, NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states. In the figure below below, performance in both mathematics and reading have increased from 2007 to 2011 in both Grade 4 and Grade 8.

Subject	Grade	Year	State Avg.
Mathematics	**4**	**2011**	237
		2009	235
		2007	232
	8	**2011**	278
		2009	274
		2007	271
Reading	**4**	**2011**	213
		2009	211
		2007	211
	8	**2011**	258
		2009	254
		2007	252

Student Discipline Statistics

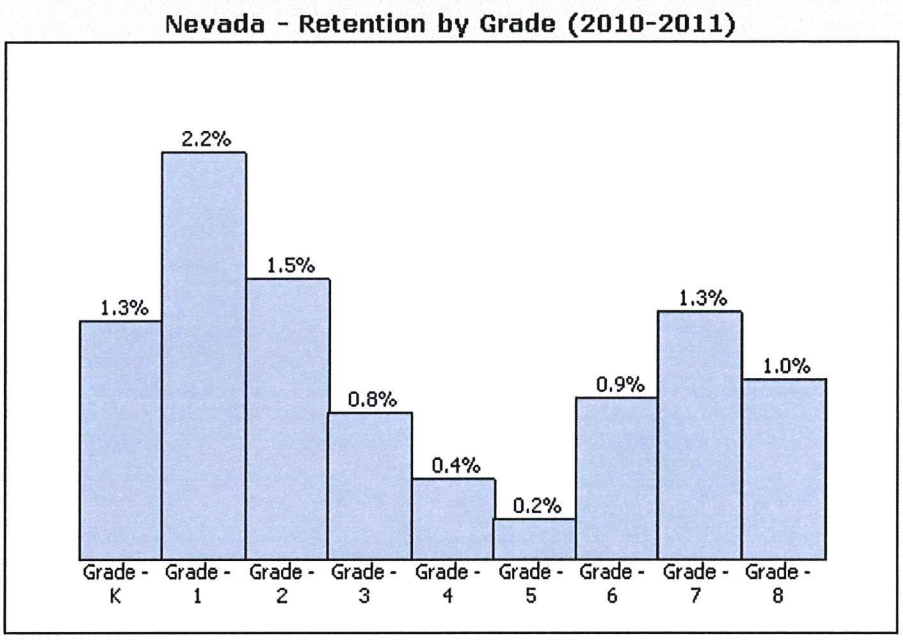
Six categories of student discipline are collected. The category with the most incidents was "Violence to Other Students." The category with the least incidents was "Distribution of Controlled Substances."



Student Retention

The retention rate for each grade represents the percent of students that are not promoted to the next grade in each given year. The retention rates for 2010-2011 are displayed in the figure

below. The primary elementary years had the highest retention rates while the intermediate elementary years had the lowest.



College & Career Readiness

HSPE Failure Rates

The High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) failure rate for the past four years has been 5% of test takers that fail to reach proficiency targets.

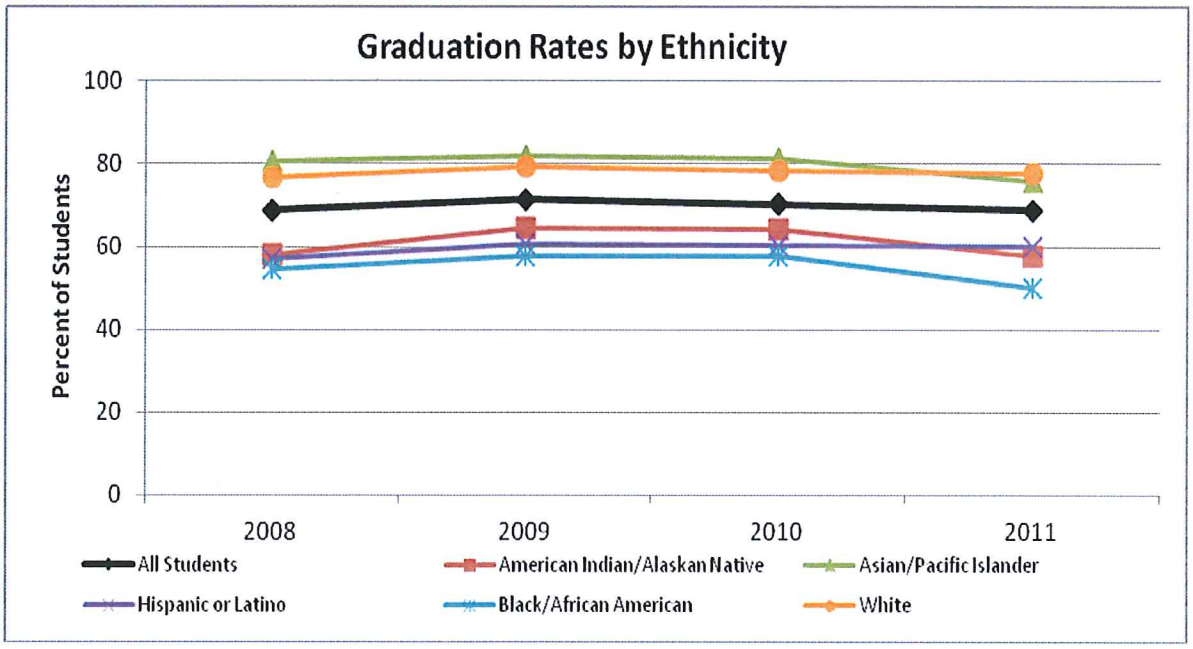
Credit Deficiency Rates

The credit deficiency percentage rates for the past four years for each grade are listed in the figure below. The diagonal comparisons represent the progression of credit deficiency rates for students as they move from ninth grade to twelfth grade.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
9th Grade	17.3	0.8	19.0	0.6
10th Grade	17.5	23.6	15.6	17.4
11th Grade	7.6	18.1	10.9	24.1
12th Grade	2.6	17.5	8.2	21.9

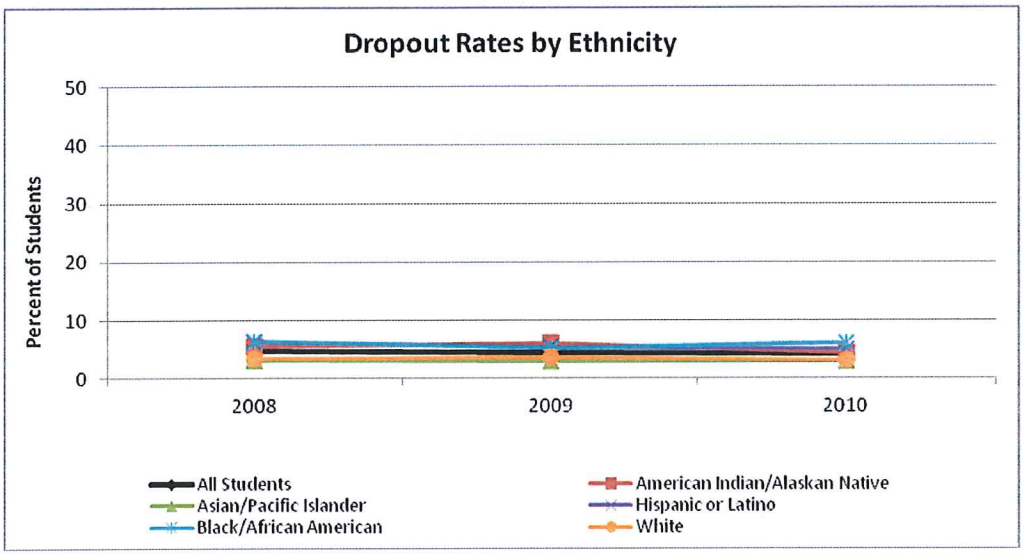
Graduation Rates

The graduation rate for 2011 was 69%, a one percent drop from the previous year. The White student group had the highest graduation rate at 78% and the Black student group had the lowest at 50%. The American Indian and Asian student groups had a significant drop in graduation rates, 6 percentage points and 5 percentage points respectively.



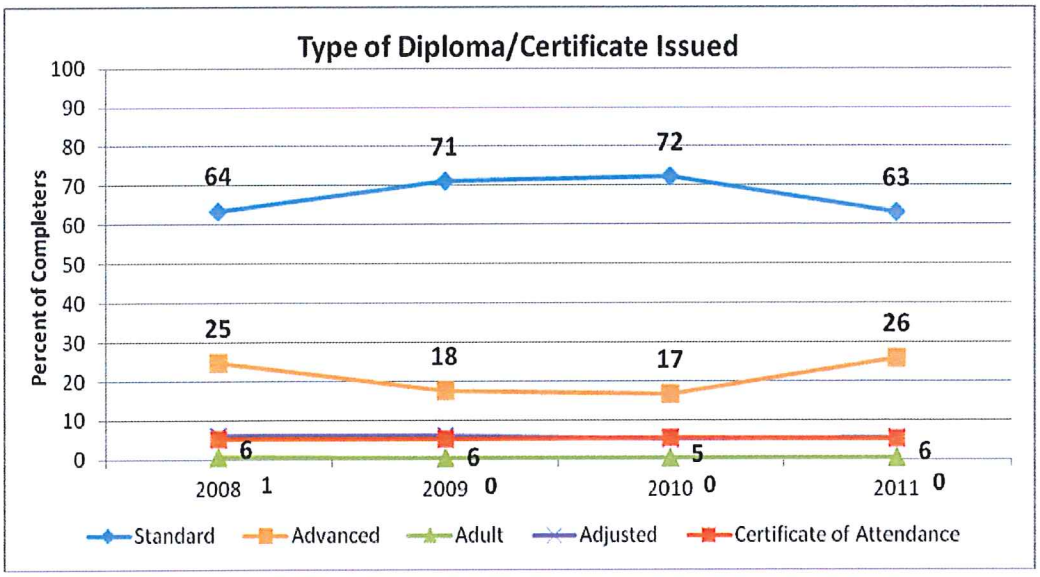
Dropout Rates

The dropout rate for 2011 was 4%, a one percent improvement from 2008. The Asian student group had the lowest dropout rate at 3% and the Black student group had the highest at 6%.



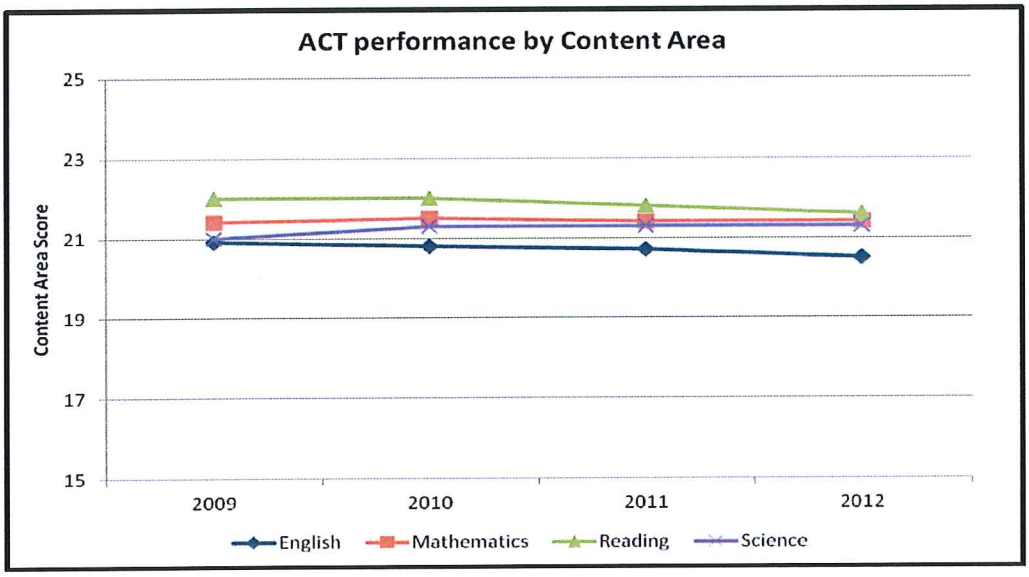
Completion Rates

Completion rates are demonstrated by the issuing of diplomas and certificates of attendance. In the figure below, the diplomas issued are shown by the percentage of types: standard, advanced, adult and adjusted.



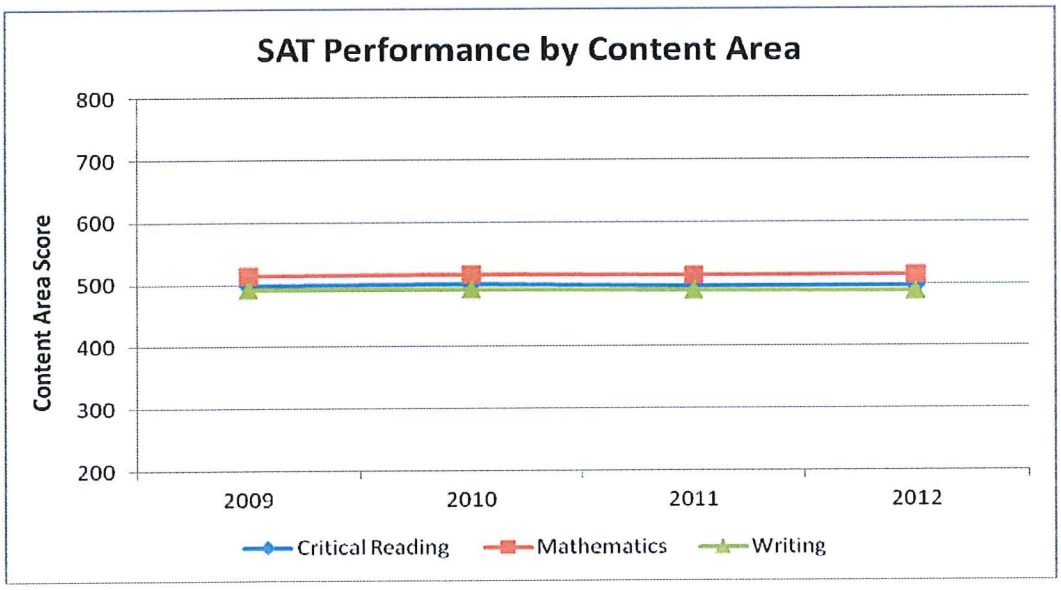
ACT Results

The ACT incorporates a 1 to 36 point scale for each area: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science and Composite. The highest average score of 21.6 was in Reading for the 2011-2012 school year; the lowest average score of 20.5 was in English.



SAT Student Results

The College Board administers the SAT program to assist high schools and institutions of higher education in assessing college readiness of high school graduates. The SAT incorporates a 200 to 800 point score scale for each of the assessments: Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing. The figure below reports the average SAT scores for all Nevada test takers by content area by year. Performance remained stable in each content area.



Analysis of Teacher Data

Teacher Attendance Rates

The attendance rate for the 2011-12 school year was 95.7%, similar to the past four years.

Highly Qualified Teachers

The percent of highly qualified teachers at high poverty schools continues to be lower than at low poverty schools. The percent of highly qualified teachers increased by approximately 6 percentage points at low poverty schools, versus a 5 point increase at high poverty schools.

HQ Teachers	2009	2010	2011	2012
Low Poverty Schools	91%	95%	94%	97%
High Poverty Schools	90%	92%	92%	95%

Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals

The percent of highly qualified paraprofessionals has increased from 43% to 60% from 2009 to 2012.

Substitute Teachers

The number of short-term substitutes has decreased from 2009 to 2012. In all four years, at the secondary level the English teacher category had the greatest number of short-term substitutes. The number of long term substitutes has increased from 2009 to 2012.

Short Term Substitutes	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Elementary	121,286	117,008	118,047	115,419
Math	13,356	13,426	12,681	12,663
Science	11,916	12,613	12,129	12,382
Social Studies	9,189	9,228	9,053	9,398
English	16,552	17,586	17,412	18,392

Long Term Substitutes	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Elementary	1,056	1,167	1,013	1,359
Math	269	109	235	144
Science	544	135	374	315
Social Studies	73	60	174	239
English	132	154	361	311

Student-Teacher Ratios

The student-teacher ratio for the 8th grade increased by 6 students from 2009 to 2012. The student-teacher ratios for 4th grade and 7th grade did not change over the four years.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
All	20:1	20:1	22:1	23:1
K	23:1	20:1	24:1	24:1
1	17:1	16:1	18:1	19:1
2	17:1	16:1	19:1	19:1
3	19:1	18:1	21:1	21:1
4	26:1	23:1	26:1	26:1
5	26:1	23:1	26:1	27:1
6	24:1	20:1	25:1	25:1
7	19:1	11:1	17:1	19:1

Appendix 2. Five-Year Action Plans

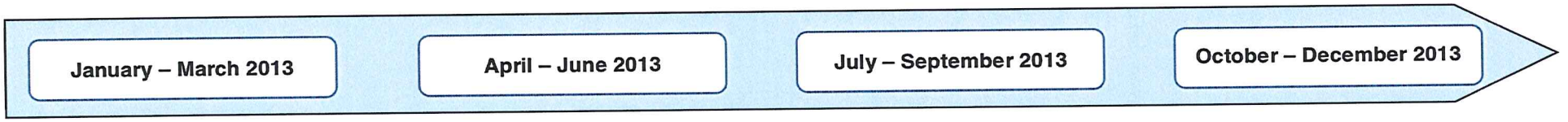
Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability (pages 42-43)

Enhancing Human Capital (pages 44-45)

Responsible Competition and Choice (pages 46-47)

Managerial Excellence and System Integrity (pages 48-49)

Action Lever #1: Standards, Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability



Provide leadership for CCSS/SBAC Implementation Plan development

Oversee and contribute to implementation of CCSS/SBAC plan ----------→

Assess district readiness for SBAC technology implementation ----------→

Provide technical assistance to support district planning for SBAC ----------→

Engage in standards development, review, and implementation for Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, CTE, Adult Ed. ----------→

Implement and maintain student level credentialing system for CTE ----------→

Provide technical assistance to targeted districts with low performing schools (ongoing)

Establish parameters for ELL Initiative and begin implementation ----------→

Provide leadership for design and adoption to ensure alignment of formative and summative assessments (NPEP, WIDA, NCSC, NGIT, SBAC) ----------→

Publicly launch NSPF ---------→

Create and disseminate instructional resource materials aligned to NV content standards; engage in outreach efforts and provide prof. development ----------→

Provide technical assistance and training on NSPF for varied stakeholders ----------→

Establish parameters for Kindergarten Inventory Development Skills (KIDS)

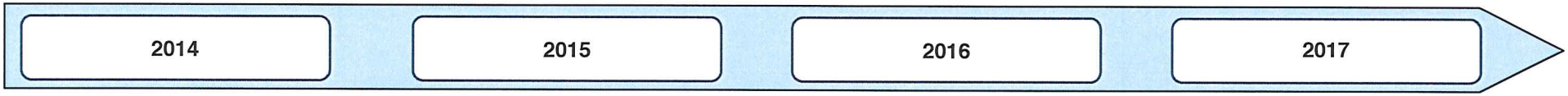
Seek system support for KIDS implementation ----------→

Provide targeted support & monitoring for Focus, Priority, 1&2-star Schools; assist districts to implement strategies for diverse learners ----------→

Develop and implement policy resulting from recommendations created as an outcome of the Assessment Summit

Explore metrics for assessing reading in early grades -------→

Collaborate with Parent Involvement Advisory Council and others to expand family engagement strategies in Nevada schools ----------→



Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- Full implementation of CCSS Mathematics content in grades K-8
- Implementation of CCSS Mathematics - Algebra I or Geometry - in grade 9
- Implementation of CCSS Mathematics – Geometry or Algebra II - in grade 10
- Implementation of Nevada State Standards in grades 11-12
- Full implementation of CCSS English Language Arts in grades K-12

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- Full implementation of CCSS Mathematics content in grades K-8
- Implementation of CCSS Mathematics - Algebra I or Geometry - in grade 9
- Implementation of CCSS Mathematics – Geometry or Algebra II - in grade 10
- Implementation of CCSS Mathematics - Algebra II or higher - in grade 11
- Implementation of Nevada State Content Standards in grade 12
- Full implementation of CCSS English Language Arts in grades K-12

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
Full implementation of CCSS Mathematics and English Language Arts content ---------->

Provide technical assistance to support district planning for SBAC

Refine NSPF as indicated through initial rollout efforts; Implement NSPF ---------->

Coordinate with executive and legislative branches to address any needed statutory revision ---------->

Expand & validate data in SAIN & local district systems & enhance systems

Provide leadership for acquisition and implementation of metrics for assessing reading in early grades

Provide technical assistance to support district planning for SBAC

Seek system support and provide technical assistance for KIDS implementation

Implement assessment policy resulting from legislative and executive branch

Implement assessment policy resulting from legislative and executive branch

Engage in standards development, review, and implementation for Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, CTE, Adult Ed. ---------->

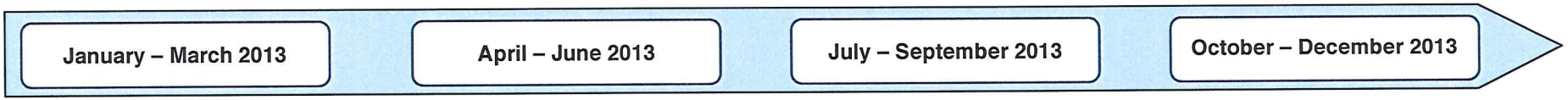
Provide targeted support & monitoring for Focus, Priority, 1&2-star Schools; assist districts to implement strategies for diverse learners ---------->

Provide technical assistance and training on NSPF for varied stakeholders ---------->

Provide technical assistance to targeted districts with low performing schools ---------->

Maintain and enhance student level credentialing system for CTE ---------->

Action Lever #2: Enhancing Human Capital



Adoption of regulations for components of NV Educator Performance Framework

Adoption of regulations regarding evaluation process

Analyze targeted sample validation data and refine rubrics and training modules ---------->

Materials development:
- Training modules for evaluators & evaluatees on standards, indicators, data systems/tech;
- Modules for policy-makers, families; Rubrics for Instr. Practice, Instr. Leadership, & Prof. Responsibilities

Implement first phase of validation studies on Nevada Educator Performance Framework ----->

Attend to and align professional development materials with CCSS and SBAC rollout

Provide initial training on data collection tools and processes for evaluators and evaluatees ------>

Implement second phase of validation studies on Nevada Educator Performance Framework ---------->

Engage in legislative advocacy to support refinements and enhancements to current statutory parameters ---------->

Expand & validate data in SAIN & local district systems (completeness, ability to roster educator/ course/ student) ---------->

Implement any changes implicated through legislative passage ---------->

Professional Development:
- Reallocate resources for delivery of PD
- Train participating evaluators and educators in targeted sample
- Align PD w/ CCSS & SBAC

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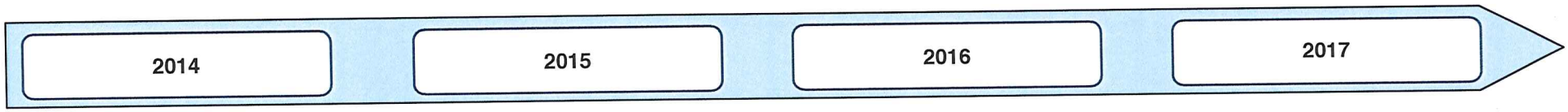
Engage stakeholders in input opportunities ---------->

Increase licensure productivity & efficiency

Analyze current regulations for educator licensure and refine as appropriate to streamline licensure process and promote licensure of educators who will be effective and highly effective ---------->



Implement first phase of validation studies on Nevada Educator Performance Framework

Implement second phase of validation studies on Nevada Educator Performance Framework

Engage in full-scale implementation of Nevada Educator Performance Framework ----------→

Attend to and align professional development materials with CCSS and SBAC rollout

Analyze larger scale sample validation data and refine rubrics and training modules

Expand & validate data in SAIN & local district systems & enhance systems ----------→

Engage in legislative advocacy to support refinements and enhancements to current statutory parameters

Coordinate with executive and legislative branches to address any needed statutory revision

Implement any changes implicated through legislative passage

Coordinate with executive and legislative branches to address any needed statutory revision

Engage stakeholders in input opportunities ----------→

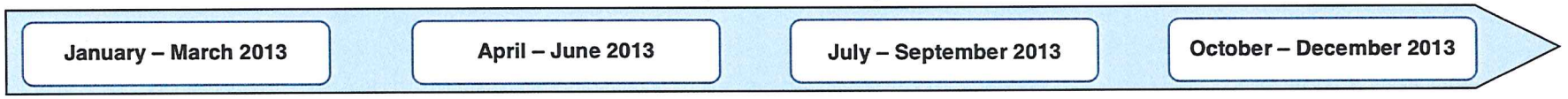
Implement any changes implicated through legislative passage

Provide professional development for effective implementation of NV Educator Performance Framework ----------→

Convene Summit on Enhancing Human Capital to guide policy on issues associated with pre-service preparation, licensure, performance evaluation, and professional growth

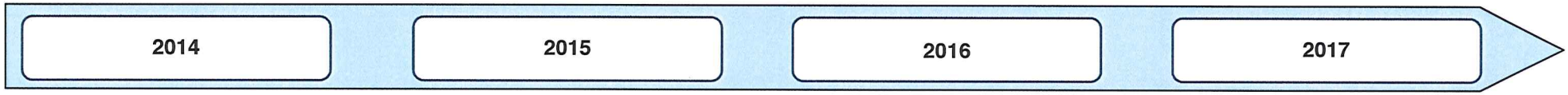
Develop and implement policy resulting from recommendations created as an outcome of the Summit ----------→

Action Lever #3: Responsible Competition and Choice



Collaborate with the Charter School Authority to engage in planning to expand the number of quality charter schools in the state ----------→

Pending legislative approval, oversee of Jobs for America's Graduates programs in 17 additional high schools ----------→



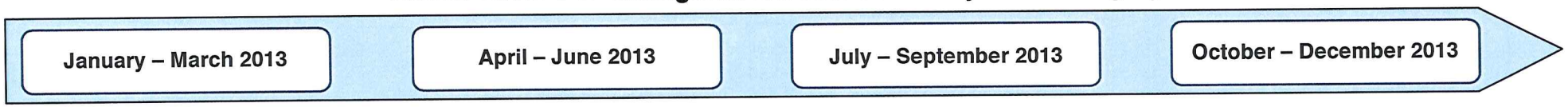
Collaborate with the Charter School Authority to expand the number of quality charter schools in the state
--Develop funding request for an NDE position to work on charter schools
--Develop the NDE role of 'sponsor' of charter school sponsors
--Advocate for equitable funding for charter schools and their facilities
--Conduct a comprehensive review of Nevada Administrative Code to streamline, enhance accountability and oversee sponsors
--Provide information (report cards, best practices) to strengthen high performing charter schools and their public image

Continue to expand digital learning options for students that maximize choice, curricular quality, and cost-effective instructional options

Continue to develop choice in school programs for rigorous and quality career and technical education programs which employers and higher education institutions validate as effective preparation for work and college

Evaluate and expand choice options for students that improve educational opportunity, achievement and cost-effectiveness

Action Lever #4: Managerial Excellence and Systems Integrity



Human capital management policy----------→ Contracts policy----------→

Grants administration----------→

Budgeting----------→

Update longitudinal data system policy (connect to higher ed and employment data bases, system health check, migrate E-Page to new virtual infrastructure, develop new Teacher Licensure WEB site) ----------→

Reform school funding formula----------→

Develop a system and procedures for tracking, prioritizing and assigning IT work --------→

Provide support for the budgeting and fiscal reporting process for schools, districts and the state----------→

Assure resources are spent as intended through compliance audits----------→

Ensure all eligible children benefit from available child nutrition resources ----------→

Develop new policies and procedures to fulfill Public Records and Data requests ---------→

Review and revise as needed, policies to ensure most effective use of federal and program funds (assessment, child nutrition, special education, Title I, Title III, etc.) --------→

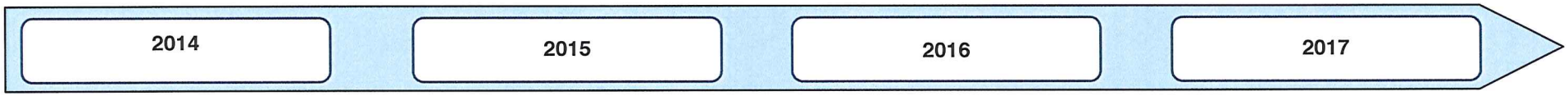
Enhance data system for greater impact (Unique ID, Count Day and additional charter schools) -----→

Develop a model for reallocating resources to support improved student achievement. Document and share the model to encourage its use by Nevada school districts. ----------→

Implement leadership development including a Leadership Academy to identify future NDE leaders----------→

Foster a culture of continuous improvement through a strategic alignment of all NDE resources in support of NDE mission and vision ----------→

Improve communication within NDE and with our stakeholders through the implementation of staff-proposed and leadership-approved recommendations ----------→



Reform school funding formula

Develop budgeting that is management rather than accounting focused

Incorporate early childhood data in longitudinal data system ---------->

Conduct annual needs assessment for management integrity ---------->

Review and adjust audit policies to accommodate funding changes and education needs ---------->

Request funds and develop a plan to collect school finance data electronically

Migrate legacy servers to virtual platform ---------->

Continue SLDS data validation and clean-up (Unique IDs, IC course data, electronic student transcripts) ---------->

Develop System to calculate and track Average Daily Attendance

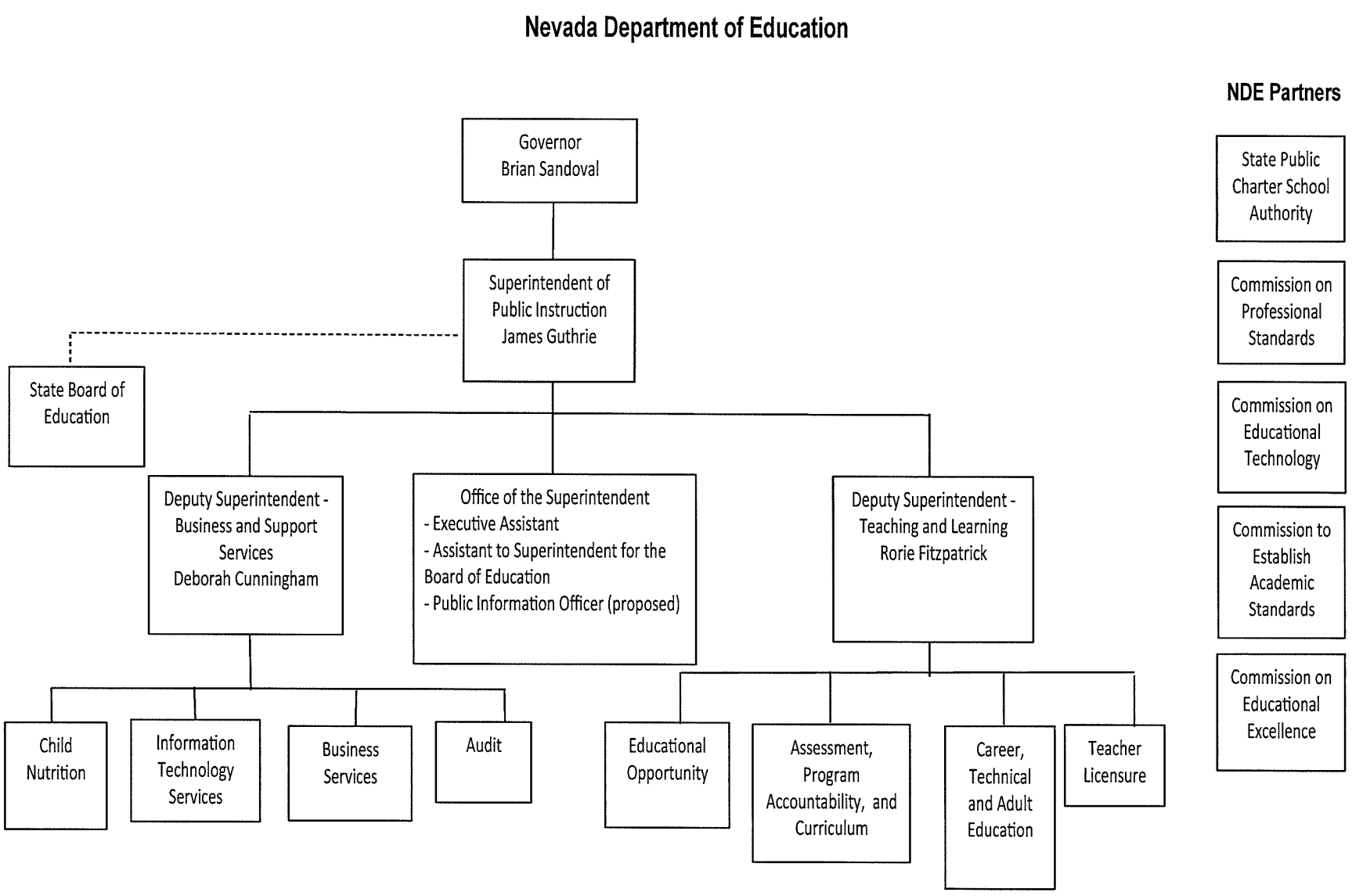
Sharepoint upgrade for cloud-like IT services

Develop New Electronic Nevada Teacher Licensure System

Improve the integrity of the data we collect and the effectiveness of the way we report such data ---------->

Expand the number of districts that engage in resource reallocation strategies to improve student learning ---------->

Expand NDE's strategic alignment to its mission to include school districts ---------->

Assess the effectiveness of communication strategies and implement improvements ---------->

Appendix 3. Nevada Department of Education Organizational Chart