



ENDING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE IN CLARK COUNTY

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*Growing and Retaining the Exceptional Teaching
Talent our Students and Community Need*

January 2021

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Clark County School District
Superintendent's Teacher
Recruitment and Retention
Commission

INTRODUCTION.....

In May 2020, Superintendent Jesus F. Jara created the Recruitment and Retention Advisory Commission. He challenged the Commission to develop recommendations that would help ensure Clark County School District (CCSD) can fill every classroom with a high-quality teacher by the start of each school year; a challenge CCSD has historically struggled to meet and one that makes it impossible for too many students to receive the high-quality education they need and deserve.

The work of the Commission is critically aligned to CCSD's Focus: 2024 Strategic Plan as multiple studies have concluded, a quality, devoted teacher means more to student achievement than any other single factor. Therefore, recruiting and selecting enough high-quality teachers is the most important work CCSD can endeavor to do.

A lack of a high-quality teacher challenges all students and especially students in or just above poverty levels, and students of color who already suffer in a system filled with deep inequalities in our society and schools. Students living with economic challenges and students of color most especially need a talented, devoted teacher to ensure they are making their way to and staying on a path of success.

The Commission shared a belief that we must solve this chronic problem urgently, thoughtfully, and collectively as our students' success is our community success. This report will discuss the broader and most urgent solutions the Commission recommends with a more complete list of all additional solutions in the appendix of this report.

The Commission, which was composed of seventeen diverse leaders throughout the community, participated in regular meetings throughout a seven-month period, reviewed extensive historical school and District level data, and received input from staff to fully understand the impediments and generate potential solutions.

It should be noted that this Commission took place during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Commission was aware of the additional challenges the pandemic creates in recruitment and retention, the recommendations are consistent in both "normal" and pandemic times as they address root issues in either setting.

To end the teacher shortage crisis in CCSD, the District must do a better job growing its own talented teacher pool and nurturing the exceptional talent it already has to ensure all of our students receive a world class education from day one

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS.....

This report highlights CCSD's most significant challenges in recruiting and retaining a high-quality teacher workforce. It outlines the Commission's recommendations on the urgent improvements needed to ensure those challenges are overcome. The conclusions and action steps are grounded in the following observations:

- **All students need an effective teacher from day one.** One student starting the school year without a high-quality assigned teacher is too many. CCSD has an obligation to ensure that each and every student who enrolls in the District has an exceptional teacher year after year.
- **CCSD should use, as appropriate, these recommendations for all educators in CCSD, not just teachers.** While this report focuses on teacher recruitment and retention, the Commission is acutely aware that there are considerable challenges in recruiting and retaining all educators in CCSD. As such, these recommendations should also be used to address similar issues in finding and retaining the right talent for all educators across the District, not just teachers.
- **How and whom we recruit and retain matters.** CCSD needs effective, diverse teachers, and those teachers need to feel supported and motivated. Effective teachers meet children where they are and do all they can to bring them up to their grade level and push them beyond it while also inspiring them to be leaders who have the critical thinking skills they need to succeed in the world. Effective teachers are devoted to ensuring their students succeed. They maintain an awareness of the economic and racial inequities present in our education system. They have clear eyes for a plan to ensure those hurdles are removed, changing their students' lives and transforming our community. CCSD must pursue a diverse teacher force to ensure students feel seen, understood, and represented, all clear factors in their success. A genuinely diverse teaching



Teachers, I believe, are the most responsible and important members of society because their professional efforts affect the fate of the earth.”

Helen Caldecott

TWO UMBRELLA AREAS OF URGENT IMPROVEMENTS IN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

force will mirror our school community in race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, gender, and sexual orientation. To ensure that efforts are directed in ways that most benefit students, all recruitment and retention recommendations in this report aim to find and nurture an effective and diverse teaching force.

- **We need to grow our own teachers.** The residents of Clark County are exceptional — they are talented, caring, hardworking, and diverse, and they are the ones we need teaching in our children's schools. To effectively find and retain enough teachers, the community as a whole will need to be involved, helping and pushing talented community members to teach. Further, CCSD is not alone in its chronic teacher shortages - there are shortages across the country, so we will not find enough teachers by bringing in talent from other states; we must actively grow and retain our own talent.
- **CCSD must urgently improve the recruitment and retention of effective teachers.** Given the importance of high-quality teachers in shaping students' success, we must act quickly and thoughtfully to meet the needs of our students now, they cannot wait for us to make these changes any longer. While CCSD has made some strides towards stronger recruitment and retention of a high-quality, diverse teaching force, they must enact urgent improvements in key areas to accelerate the number of teachers hired and retained.

With these observations in mind, the Commission identified two umbrella areas of urgent improvements needed to recruit effective teachers and two umbrella areas of urgent improvements needed for retaining effective teachers for CCSD to tackle immediately:

Urgent Improvements in Recruitment:

1. Grow new, quality, and diverse teacher pipelines and maximize existing pipelines.
2. Create a faster, more streamlined hiring process.

Urgent Improvements in Retention:

1. Better understand teacher and administrator culture and resources to act on improving them over time.
2. Enhance mentorship and coaching for administrators and teachers at every level of experience.

The Commission believes that success in addressing CCSD's current challenges in teacher recruitment and retention will allow every CCSD student the opportunity to access their potential and graduate from CCSD prepared to succeed in our diverse and global world.

THE COMMISSION'S PLEDGE TO SUPPORT.....

This report represents the response from the Recruitment and Advisory Commission based on the charge of Superintendent Jara. Membership has signed below, indicating an unwavering commitment to the recommendations identified in this report.



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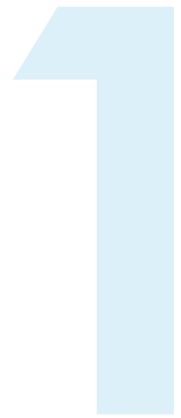
A photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a student's arm is raised high, wearing a grey and white patterned sweater. In the background, a teacher with long dark hair is holding a large red and white paper with a drawing of a school bus. The background is a whiteboard and a blue wall.

12,000
students

in

489
classrooms

on average are left without a
full-time teacher on their first day
of school at CCSD.



RECRUITMENT CHALLENGE.....

**CCSD CONSISTENTLY RUNS INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES,
LEAVING CHILDREN WITHOUT AN ASSIGNED TEACHER
ON DAY ONE AND THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR.**

In particular, there are yearly shortages of teachers in the areas of Elementary, English, Special Education, Science, and Math. These are all core subject areas and having high-quality teachers in each of these areas is fundamental to students obtaining the skills they need to be successful in school and in the world. Without a high-quality teacher in these classrooms, student motivation, inspiration, and knowledge suffer.

On average, over the last five school years, 489 CCSD classrooms (or 2.9% of CCSD classrooms) have not had a full-time teacher on the first day of school. This impacts approximately 12,000 students a year.

Each of those nearly 12,000 students is harmed by this absence as they are less likely to get the instruction and dedicated time they need to learn and grow to their potential. In addition, children who are already challenged with additional social inequalities, like poverty, are likely to fall behind, compounding their challenges.

Given the historical trends of teacher shortages in CCSD, more robust recruitment tactics and methods are necessary for attracting and securing enough teachers with a clear need to do so by growing our own teachers to ensure we permanently end this evergreen issue. There are several impediments to recruiting the large-sized teacher force CCSD needs to fill every classroom. CCSD must expediently address those impediments to end the teacher shortages that are now too familiar in CCSD.

Grow new, quality, and diverse teacher pipelines and maximize existing ones.

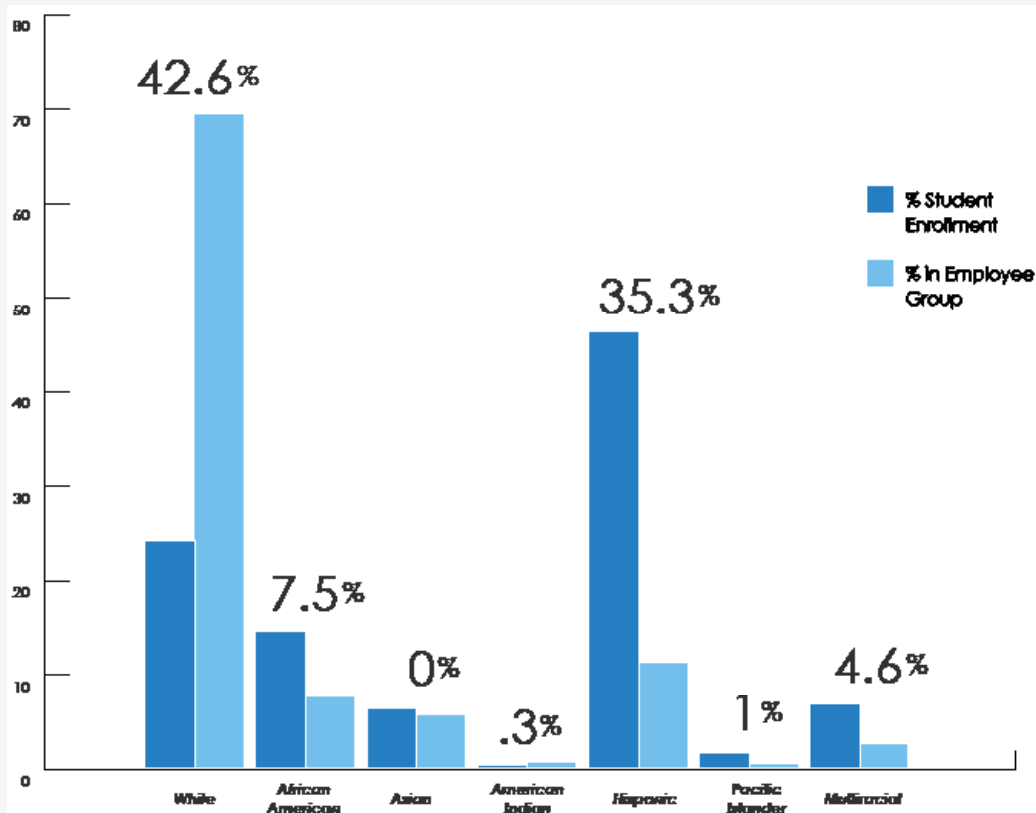
Hiring enough talented, diverse teachers to fill every CCSD classroom requires the District to attract and encourage as many candidates as possible to apply. Yet, job seekers looking for teaching roles cannot always easily find and apply for jobs within CCSD due to ineffective marketing. Also, candidates who apply for available roles are often frustrated by a cumbersome application system. Losing candidates this way is unnecessary. Better targeted marketing and more user-friendly processes will increase applications from online searchers, and overall applicants leading to more teacher hires. In particular, as we seek homegrown candidates, local advertising should be stronger and targeted within the community.

CCSD must work within the community to grow our own diverse teaching force. The District has solid existing partnerships with local universities and the community but needs to maximize those partnerships to reap more applicants. Leaning into these existing relationships will ensure every possible application from these locally-based organizations is identified and encouraged to apply.

Even with more effective marketing, processes, and more effective partnerships, it's clear from the historical data that there are not enough applicants in the CCSD pipelines to fill the open teaching roles. It's imperative that CCSD taps into and strengthens pipelines of diverse, and high-quality teachers through alternate routes to find and home grow the teachers it wants and needs to ensure a world-class education for all of its students.

VARIANCE IN LICENSED EDUCATOR/ STUDENT DIVERSITY

Research, and our experience, show that students who learn from educators who identify as the same race have positive learning outcomes. This chart shows the variance in diversity from licensed educators and students. For example, if CCSD was made up of 50% Black students, but the educator workforce was 40% Black teachers, there would be a 10% variance.



Action Steps for Recruitment Urgent Improvement #1:

1. Attract and engage potential candidates through a more substantial digital presence.

CCSD should improve teacher candidates' application process by optimizing the job portal site and simplifying the navigation to engineer a better customer experience. These tweaks will ensure the District does not lose interested candidates to application challenges.

Open CCSD roles need an online presence fully tailored and advertised directly to all teachers, those who are savvy with technology and those who are less so as well as ensuring that new job market sites that appeal to recent students are sought and used when advertising roles.

Identify where and how successful candidates found job openings and increase CCSD's presence in those sites to maximize outreach spend and effort. This data is dynamic and will change based on new trends for job seekers, so CCSD must review it frequently to keep it actionable.

2. Further engage local university and partner programs to market CCSD roles to local teacher candidates and grow our own teaching force.

To actively grow our own teaching force CCSD must maximize partnerships with local universities by actively reaching out to all potential graduates and encouraging them to apply to the District. Connect frequently with professors and appropriate program managers to find strategic ways to engage with and cultivate students. Continue to cultivate students throughout their teacher programs to help convert these candidates to applicants and teachers.

Student teachers are a built in homegrown teaching force. CCSD should identify strong student teachers and connect with them as candidates through direct outreach. Make contingent offers to these student teachers (pending graduation and licensure) to better attract and retain this group of talented early teachers.

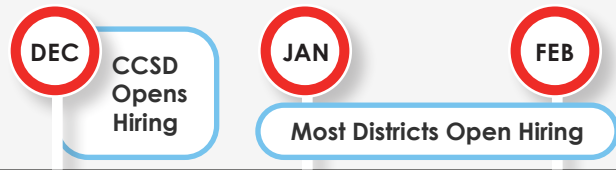
3. Identify and expand high-quality and diversity-focused alternate route teacher prep/certification programs.

Grow the capacity of CCSD's Alternative Routes to Licensure program, Accelerated Licensure Teaching Academy (ALTA), by actively and strategically marketing it to the community and exploring ways to increase the number of cohorts and the size of those cohorts to home grow as many high-quality teachers as possible.

Partner with the Nevada Department of Education to consider alternate licensure standards for support professionals. Current CCSD support professionals represent an incredibly diverse pool of talent and are locally based professionals who want to teach our students.

Continue to develop the CCSD Teaching and Training Career and Technical Education program, a local program aimed at homegrown high school students by teaching them about and encouraging them into careers in education. This program could be further enhanced by creating thoughtful ways to stay engaged with this amazing group of homegrown talent, such as internships and/or helping them find employment as teacher aides or paraprofessional roles as they work to become certified. This program is a long term strategy that, over time, could significantly increase the diverse talent pipeline the District needs.

HIRING TIMELINE



Early and fast hiring timelines would allow CCSD to beat competitors to secure high-quality teacher candidates.

Recruitment Urgent Improvement #2

Create a faster, more streamlined hiring process.

As the teacher workforce grows, the District must hire talented teachers as early as possible to bring them into CCSD. Currently, teacher hiring starts too late in the year to secure the number of high-quality teachers needed. Experienced teachers and new teachers receive offers from other districts earlier and are unavailable when CCSD begins hiring. Early and fast hiring timelines would allow CCSD to beat competitors to secure high-quality teacher candidates. Using historical data about past openings and retirements to project future openings, instead of waiting for actual positions to open, will enable the District to hire talent earlier and faster.

Action Steps for Recruitment Urgent Improvement #2:

- 1. Begin teacher hiring in December. This will give CCSD one of the earliest teacher hiring starts and thus an advantage in finding and contracting with more high-quality teachers.**

This timeline will make it possible to find and secure new and experienced teacher talent before other districts. To accommodate this earlier hiring season, make teachers, who have been vetted as high-quality, offers before there is an open position using historical hiring data and retirement data to project upcoming needs. As these early-offer teachers will not have a classroom placement, CCSD will need to continue cultivating these early-contract teachers, keeping them engaged as they wait for principal interviews and official school assignments.

- 2. Design a streamlined system to ensure principals have time and access to candidate pools to conduct teacher interviews.**

Principals have a complex mix of work and should be aided as much as possible in the teacher interviewing process to make teacher hires more efficient and better. CCSD should sort early contract teachers into pools by licensure to help principals quickly access the appropriately licensed candidates for interviews and review.



12.1%

of CCSD first-year
teachers leave
after year one.

RETENTION CHALLENGE.....

CCSD NEEDS TO DO MORE TO RETAIN MORE HIGH-QUALITY FIRST-YEAR AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS TO ENSURE THERE ARE ENOUGH TEACHERS TO FILL EVERY CLASSROOM ON DAY ONE.

Over the last five years, an average of 12.1% of first-year teachers have left after their first year of teaching. In addition, an average of 14.9% of experienced teachers resigned for reasons other than retirement. To put that into a national perspective, CCSD retains more first-year teachers than other large school districts across the country but is lower performing in retaining experienced teachers than its peers, according to a recent report by the Council for Great City Schools.

CCSD is aware that there are culture issues in schools that negatively impact teachers and, in some cases, pushing them out of their schools or even the field altogether. They need to do more to get to the bottom of these issues to determine how to best change them for the better.

As in any career field, there will always be some attrition, but CCSD needs to do more to minimize resignations to ensure every student has the teacher they need to succeed from day one. Once the District is retaining more excellent teachers, they can place less emphasis on constant recruiting and add more focus and resources to support and nurture great teaching.

Retaining top teachers is a critical component of every talent management strategy, and leaders must act intentionally to ensure their best teachers stay. Transforming each CCSD school into environments where high-quality teachers feel supported and thrive will improve student success.

An average of 14.9% of CCSD experienced teachers resigned for reasons other than retirement over a five-year period.

**Retention Urgent
Improvement #1**

**Better understand teacher and administrator culture and resources
to act on improving them over time.**

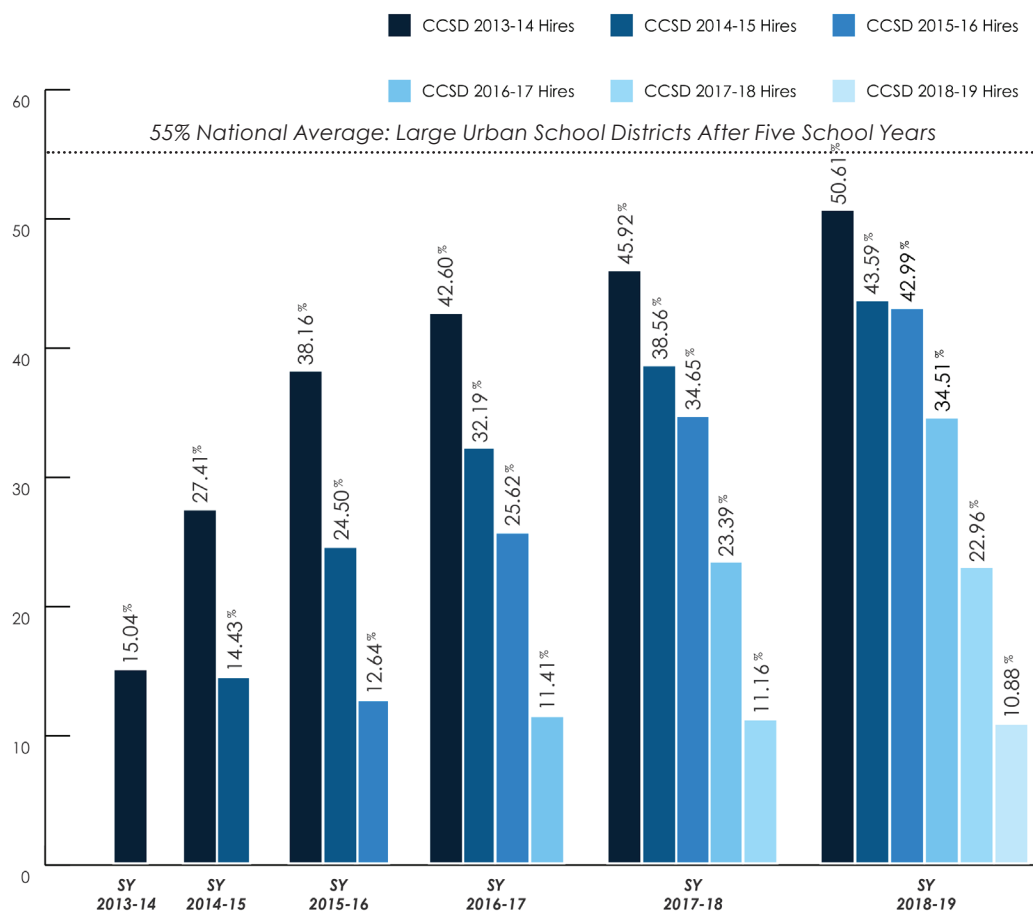
Understanding teacher needs helps administrators pinpoint areas that need improvement. Culture Surveys of active teachers and Exit Surveys of teachers who recently resigned provide a wealth of actionable information about the teaching experience, including challenges teachers face and types of support they need and want.

CCSD conducts teacher and staff Climate Surveys and Exit Surveys internally. Previously, Exit Surveys were for probationary teachers who were in CCSD for three years or less. The survey processes were updated to reflect emerging best practices to lead to better data so the District can make better and more strategic decisions on retaining teachers.

Best practices include using a third-party vendor to administer the surveys, surveying all staff and teachers to get a broad understanding of the school and District culture, and thoughtfully engaging with survey results after their releases to gain trust amongst responders.

**BEGINNING
TEACHER
SEPARATION
DATA**

CCSD, while having significant challenges in retention, does have some success as compared with other large urban districts. This chart shows the culmination of separation data.





Action Steps for Retention Urgent Improvement #1:

1. Identify a third-party vendor to administer Climate Surveys and Exit Surveys to all teachers and staff.

Third-party surveys typically garner more trust as responders will know their information is confidential, and CCSD will not be able to see the raw data. This increase of trust means respondents are more likely to respond honestly and completely, giving more actionable and robust data for the District to act on.

Culture Survey and Exit Survey data collected from all teachers and staff at every stage in their journey with CCSD will give a complete picture of the teacher experience in CCSD. CCSD can also segment data by experience level to offer differentiated responses.

Survey data shared broadly across the District and by school-level groups to ensure understanding and investment in the surveys and a collective understanding of challenges and successes.

Data is used to make strategic and targeted improvements to the teacher experience. Collecting data about the teacher experience is only useful if it is used to make meaningful transformations at the school and District levels. Each survey season should produce a thoughtful and strategic action plan based on the results.

MENTORSHIP EFFECTS



Retention Urgent Improvement #2

Enhance mentorship and coaching for administrators and teachers at every level of teaching experience.

Teachers are more likely to stay in their classroom, school, and the District when they feel actively supported to do their best work and are given targeted help when and where it is needed.

Mentorship and coaching are most effective when delivered based on a targeted and differentiated need. They should always focus on providing a path to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes.

Administrators, experienced teachers, and new teachers all have unique needs that require inspiration and tactics to improve their individual and collective practices.

Action Steps for Retention Urgent Improvement #2:

1. Implement a new administrator mentoring program, focusing on creating a positive climate and culture.

Invest in the development of administrators, so they can effectively create a positive climate and culture for educators. This is essential to increasing effective teaching and accelerated student learning. School-level structures must be in place so that all educators feel and know they make a difference in their students' success. Mentoring will allow new administrators to reflect on current practices and create new pathways to support teachers by creating a climate and culture of learning.

2. Audit current mentorship practices and research emerging best practices to expand and enhance mentorship of first-year and experienced teachers to ensure teachers get the type of mentorship they need to be effective.

Teachers are more likely to stay if given a support system in their first year, and throughout their early years, a time when many teachers report they feel overwhelmed and under-supported. Experienced teachers need support as they continue to grow in their practice and seek tactics and inspiration. For both new and experienced teachers, targeted mentorship will ensure teachers receive the investment and preparation they need to stay in their role and engage students to do their best work.

Mentoring and coaching should use the proven process of feedback and improved practice as a goal to create results that improve on student outcomes. These factors are critical for ensuring that the investment is aimed where it needs to be – on helping students meet their full potential.

CCSD should continually monitor professional learning outcomes to invest in the most effective programs for continued teacher development. Investments should be data-based, focusing on programs that show success within the District. The District should also be open to new programs that have demonstrated success in other districts.

3. Ensure Learning Strategists are in teacher support/coaching roles in schools.

Learning Strategist roles are currently varied between school buildings and need to be realigned to have the same job description throughout the District. The position should be focused solely on actively supporting teachers in delivering high-quality instruction that increases student outcomes.

CONCLUSION.....

Every member of the Commission is devoted to ensuring each student in CCSD has access to a world-class education and teaching force every day of their time in the District. We wanted to publish this report to ensure everyone in the community knows the challenges and opportunities CCSD faces in recruitment and retention, and we are asking for the community to join us in actively supporting the recommendations as well by helping us hold CCSD accountable for the urgent and clear action steps laid out in the report.

Teaching is inherently complex and dynamic; it demands teachers have a broad knowledge of the subject matter they teach, the curriculum they use, and the standards their students must meet to succeed.

Great teachers must be caring, enthusiastic about their students learning, and possess an unwavering knowledge that every one of their students can and should learn at the absolute best of their abilities. To believe in their students, teachers must understand them and the barriers and challenges they face. They must understand the inequities in our society and be able and willing to meet children in life and learning. They must create a specific blueprint for each student to use to succeed in the face of a great and ever changing world.

Finding these extraordinary professionals is challenging, given all that is required of them. We believe doing all we can to help home grow, and nurture a diverse, high-quality teaching force is the most vital work we can do to ensure our children grow into the future leaders we need for their potential to be realized and for the success of our community.

The recruitment and retention challenges detailed in this report represent fundamental barriers to CCSD students receiving the world-class education they need. These barriers are even more challenging for students of color and students in poverty who, unnecessarily, face already long-standing disparities in learning. As the students who are most likely to be failed by the education system, we must double our efforts to ensure their needs are met and amply supported.

This report's suggested improvements and action steps provide a recipe for growing our own talent and recruiting enough high-quality and diverse teachers to fill every classroom by day one of school and for better retaining effective teachers, so CCSD does not need to recruit as extensively.

Following the action steps outlined in this report will help transform the District and set our students on a successful path for themselves and our entire community. Our vision and hope is that this report will be used as an active work plan by CCSD staff and that it will be supported by our entire community to help move the District towards the goals it laid out in the Focus: 2024 Strategic Plan. We must ensure that every student is given the help and attention they need to grow into their potential and lift our community to new heights.

To ensure the District stays accountable for this critical work, the Commission will check informally on progress towards each of the detailed solutions in the Spring of 2021 and the Fall of 2021. We've asked the Human Resources Division to create actionable timelines and assign owners to all pieces of this work, including the additional solutions

in the appendix, to ensure accountability and transparency as they move forward with these important steps. We will make all of our findings and progress reports public and hope that everyone in the CCSD community will become involved with these efforts by staying informed, attending open forums, and providing the District feedback when they do not live up to these recommendations. With your help, we believe CCSD can and will ensure every classroom and, therefore, every student in the District has an effective teacher every day of the school year.

APPENDIX

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ALL NECESSARY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IMPROVEMENTS

The Commission believes the solutions detailed in the report represent the most urgent and expansive improvements needed. However, our research and time represents a much larger group of improvement suggestions that fall under these main areas. We will also be checking in on this list, with the understanding that the four main recommendations detailed in the report represent the most urgent priorities.

Recruitment:

- Work with community partners (e.g., DETR, Work Force Connections, Goodwill, etc.) to identify potential qualified candidates for ALTA.
- Consider further expedited pathways into classrooms for alternate licensure candidates (in partnership with NVDOE).
- Meet with local companies and organizations and urge them to include ALTA information in any materials they may give during layoffs.
- Engage local University Alumni Associations and actively recruit through emails or mail.
- Provide early offers to high-quality pre-service candidates.
- Engage and track Teach and Training CTE program students and consider early hiring opportunities for upcoming program graduates as teacher assistance, paraprofessionals or instructional aides.
- Actively cultivate support staff to pursue teaching licenses.
- Survey all current teachers to understand why they chose CCSD, why they stay at CCSD and how they learned about the open teaching role with CCSD. Use this survey to improve and enhance recruitment.

Retention:

- Add more differentiated and self-selected options for professional learning. Include Culturally Responsive Instruction, Trauma-Informed-Instruction, and Social Justice as items for teachers to choose from as they address real world challenges.

- Do more to formally recognize and celebrate the work of teachers including: expanding and enhancing Rave Reviews and teacher leadership opportunities that allow teachers to be compensated for their leadership work outside of the classroom.
- Push for more teacher-driven professional learning including exploring partnerships with the Public Education Foundation and the National Board Certified Teachers organization. Consider helping teachers use time off to attend more professional learning.
- Offer discounts for childcare for teachers.
- Consider incentive benefits for teachers working at schools with the most challenges.
- HR should establish procedures for reaching out to teachers considering separating from the District to try to counsel them back in to the District.
- Design an administrator accountability system that is informed by educator retention and culture/climate survey results.
- Prioritize responsibilities for administrators focusing on instructional leader skills.
- Use Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) and Measures of Academic Progress. Look closely and examine the accuracy of the licensed and administrator evaluation tool, NEPF in assessing performance.
- Hold focus groups to gain insights/feedback and possible solutions on teacher retention with stakeholders such as administrators, parents, counselors, community leaders, and teachers.
- Reduce class sizes, include professional learning on how to best leverage the smaller classes for improved student outcomes.
- Create a cost effective branding campaign that highlights the amazing work of teachers and the importance of teachers and their work to students and our community.

