



CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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New department will better serve teachers and students

District reorganizes support to focus on professional development, English Language Learners

LAS VEGAS – Clark County School District Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky announced a reorganization of several district departments to direct more time and resources to two key areas of focus: professional development for teachers and administrators, and services to support English language acquisition.

"We know that putting a quality teacher in each classroom is the best way to increase student achievement," Skorkowsky said. "The Board of School Trustees has directed our district to provide the right training and support to our teachers and enhance instruction in the classroom. This reorganization also aligns our work to provide support for students working toward English language acquisition."

The former Curriculum and Professional Development Division will now be called the Instructional Design and Professional Learning Division.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

The district is changing the way it offers professional development for teachers and administrators with a greater focus on a job-embedded approach based on [Learning Forward](#)'s professional learning standards. This effort includes \$8 million in new funds for the 2014-2015 school year to help teachers effectively implement the new Nevada Academic Content Standards.

Assistant Superintendent Danielle Miller, who oversaw the implementation of the school district's 14 Zoom Schools this year, will oversee the Instructional Design and Professional Learning Division. She will report to Chief Innovation and Productivity Officer Jhone Ebert, who also oversees the district's technology efforts and the Nevada Learning Academy, the district's online school.

"We need to implement the best strategies to reach all students in our classrooms -- whether it is a math classroom, a science classroom, or an elementary classroom with a large number of English learners," Ebert said. "This reorganization directs resources to designing effective instruction that will impact and inspire our 316,000 students."

INCREASING SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The Instructional Design and Professional Learning Division will also include the English Language Learner Department.

The school district is putting out a Request for Proposal to national experts to develop a plan to increase English Language Acquisition (ELA) in the school district. In the coming months, the district will hire an executive director to oversee the implementation of that plan.

"As a community we have to make progress in the education of English Language Learners (ELL) so that we can develop a workforce in Southern Nevada that is competitive and highly qualified," said Sylvia Lazos, a professor of law at the Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and an advocate for English Language Learners.

"English Language Learner high-quality teaching is not only good for recent immigrants but also for our poor students, who together with ELL students make up over 50 percent of CCSD students and are the most likely not to graduate from high school," Lazos said. "By consulting with national experts who will weigh in on the development of ELL high-quality instruction and help CCSD develop a long-term strategic plan, CCSD shows the confidence to be at the cutting edge of high-quality education practices. CCSD is ready to be at the forefront of training all of its teachers to be proficient in ELL pedagogy and to be highly cultural competent. This is a step in the right direction."

The district's plan will focus not only on students who grow up speaking a language other than English, but also students who need extra help acquiring the academic English used in classrooms.

"The caucus is proud that the district has taken this step to ensure that all children with limited English proficiency have the tools and resources they need to achieve," said Clark County Black Caucus Education Committee Chair Adam Johnson. "CCSD's commitment to literacy for all students is a testament to their willingness to partner with and listen to the students, families and stakeholders in Clark County. As a community we've seen the devastating effects on student achievement due to poor English proficiency. In particular over 32,000 Black Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students, who often underperform other FRL students, have seen profound negative impact in part because of a lack of English language proficiency. We hope this is the first of many steps by CCSD that will help provide all ELA students with the targeted programming necessary to help them overcome the barriers impeding their academic success."

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