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July 1, 2015

## **GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #15-07**

**TO:** All School Districts and Charter Schools

**FROM:** Dale A.R. Erquiaga  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Victory Schools – Senate Bill 432

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This guidance memorandum is issued pursuant to the authority provided in NRS 385.175(5), directing the Superintendent of Public Instruction to enforce the observance of Title 34 of Nevada's statutes and all other statutes and regulations governing public education.

Senate Bill 432 (SB 432) of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regular Session is a pilot program aimed at improving outcomes for students in poverty and providing the state with critical performance and spending information as the state modernizes the Nevada Plan. SB 432 is effective July 1, 2015 and provides an exciting opportunity for districts and schools to address the barriers to improved school performance. Because of additional challenges for low-income students, SB 432, the Victory Schools program, is designed to meet student needs at the lowest performing schools within the highest poverty zip codes throughout Nevada. The goals of the program focus on students reading at grade level, being prepared for rigorous curricula, and graduating from high school with the skills and attributes necessary to immediately succeed in college or a career. School districts are required to provide comprehensive plans that address the specific needs of their students in order to achieve these goals and are accountable for a school's progress against established outcome indicators.

The attached document (Nevada's Victory Schools) is intended to provide guidance related to the implementation of SB 432. Many of the questions asked by Clark County School District in their letter dated June 10, 2015, are addressed in the attached guidance document. The following questions not specifically answered within the guidance document are addressed below.

- Independent Evaluation of Victory – Given the focus on accountability and the required external evaluation of a number of programs, the Department will issue a Request for Proposal seeking an external evaluator(s) to serve the state's needs. The process for selecting a vendor is dictated by state procurement rules.
- K-3 Assessment System – The State Board of Education will take the first steps in identifying K-3 assessments for literacy under the requirements of Senate Bill 391 at the July 23, 2015 meeting.

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- Incentives – If the comprehensive needs assessment determines incentives for hiring teachers and other licensed personnel is a strategy to pursue then Victory funds may be used.
  - Recruitment and Retention Incentives – The State Board of Education will prescribe, through policy in advance of regulation, the list of recruitment/retention incentives at the July 23, 2015 meeting.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dale A. Equiano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

June 10, 2015

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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Dale A.R. Erquiaga  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Nevada Department of Education  
700 E. Fifth Street  
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Mr. Erquiaga:

The Clark County School District is ready to implement the work the Department of Education was able to accomplish during this legislative session. At this time, we are requesting a guidance memo related to legislation recently passed and signed into law. As the state superintendent of instruction, you were instrumental in the passage of these new programs, and we seek your guidance as we implement the new requirements. Many of the newly passed bills become effective on July 1, 2015. This requires immediate action by school districts across the state, given the current date and unclear scope of work and expectations in each bill.

**Senate Bill 432 – Victory Schools**

The bill outlines provisions governing the designation of newly-assigned Victory Schools and implementation procedures.

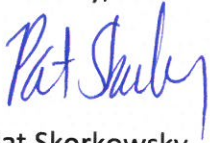
1. Will the independent evaluators be a committee, and how will they be selected?
2. Can funds shift during the second year to other schools eligible for Victory support?
3. When will the State designate a K-3 assessment system that aligns directly to the CRT to measure our primary students to determine if they are proficient by the end of Grade 3?
4. May Victory school money be utilized to pay signing bonuses/hiring incentives in those schools in lieu of utilizing monies from SB511, given that the SB511 money will not cover all of our new hires?
5. Is there a "cap" on the Victory school money/percent that could be utilized to pay such incentives?
6. Could the Victory school money be utilized to supplement whatever signing bonuses/hiring incentives would be normally provided under SB511?

Mr. Erquiaga  
Page 2  
June 10, 2015

Since Senate Bill 432 became effective upon passage, a response to the questions above is requested within 10 days of receipt of this letter to ensure compliance and implementation at our newly designated Victory Schools. Without this vital information and clarification of these questions, it will be extremely difficult to be ready for full implementation.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this request. Our team is ready and willing to meet with individuals or teams from the Department to work through these questions. I cannot overstate the sense of urgency that the diligent staff of the Clark County School District feels at this critical time.

Sincerely,



Pat Skorkowsky

Superintendent of Schools

"Every student in every classroom, without exceptions, without excuses"

cc: Clark County School District Board of Trustees  
Elaine Wynn, president, Nevada State Board of Education  
Members, Nevada State Board of Education  
Nevada Association of School Superintendents

# NEVADA'S VICTORY SCHOOLS



*GUIDANCE*  
*JULY 2015*

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Information in this document is designed to provide initial guidance to School districts and their Victory Schools for the 2015-16 school year. Additional guidance will be provided as the 2015-16 school year progresses. While this document is intended to provide guidance related to the implementation of SB 432, districts are encouraged to review the full text of SB 432 available at the following link:

<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Reports/history.cfm?ID=949>

## **A. Senate Bill 432: Victory Schools in Nevada**

### **A.1. Introduction**

Governor Sandoval's vision for improving education in Nevada was realized during the 2015 Nevada Legislative Session. This legislation provides an exciting opportunity for districts and schools to fully address the barriers to improved school performance in order to increase student achievement. Because of additional challenges for low-income students, Senate Bill 432, the Victory Schools program, is designed to meet student needs at the lowest performing schools within the highest poverty zip codes throughout Nevada. The goals of the program focus on students reading at grade level, being prepared for rigorous curricula, and graduating from high school with the skills and attributes necessary to immediately succeed in college or a career. School districts are required to provide comprehensive plans that address the specific needs of their students in order to achieve these goals and are accountable for a school's progress against established outcome indicators.

### **A.2. NDE State Goals and Theory of Action**

State law requires the State Board of Education to develop an annual plan to improve the achievement of pupils enrolled in Nevada public schools. This plan, commonly referred to as the "State Improvement Plan," or "STIP," is prepared for Board consideration by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and staff of the NDE, as well as a variety of stakeholders. The focus of the current plan is college and career readiness of all students in the K-12 public education system, as well as the system's own state of readiness for fully realizing the kind of change required by recent reform initiatives, such as Victory Schools, and the current realities of Nevada's student population. Guiding the department's work are the established goals of the STIP:

Goal 1: All students are proficient in reading by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Goal 2: All students enter high school with the skills necessary to succeed.

Goal 3: All students graduate college and career ready.

Goal 4: Effective educators serving students at all levels.

Goal 5: Ensure efficient and effective use of public funds to achieve the highest return on education investment.

Aligned with the state goals, the NDE's Theory of Action on statewide initiatives describes the department's orientation and focus on the imperative of preparing Nevada's children for future success. It also demonstrates its commitment to the goals of the Victory Schools program by strategically aligning specific programs to target improved outcomes for students. The current Theory of Action is as follows:

***If the state***

- *provides for differentiated funding based on student need,*
- *establishes a policy and funding framework that balances local implementation with statewide evaluation for purposes of accountability,*
- *ensures alignment of existing and new programming across the state, and*
- *uses state dollars effectively and efficiently...*

***Then our state's children will***

- *be proficient readers upon exit from third grade,*
- *be adequately prepared in middle school to engage and succeed in rigorous high school curriculum,*
- *graduate college or career ready, and*
- *be served by effective educators.*

The statewide Theory of Action is coupled with the Theory of Action for Underperforming Schools. This Theory of Action is specifically focused on moving underperforming schools towards successful outcomes for students. Victory Schools are not only designated due to their poverty status, they are also designated due to their low-performing status. The following Theory of Action guides the NDE's work with Underperforming Schools and, to a certain extent, the department's work with Victory Schools:

***If the NDE provides underperforming schools with a structured diagnostic and planning process focused on three priority areas:***

- *School leadership,*
- *Tier 1 instruction aligned to standards,*
- *Teacher professional learning communities that analyze and use data to strengthen instruction; and*

*Districts provide schools with the conditions required for successful school turnaround, including freedom from certain all district programs and requirements and the freedom and resources to identify and build programs and capacity to address their specific needs; and*

*The NDE identifies external organizations that can provide schools with support in diagnostic and planning and the three priority areas; and*

*The NDE establishes a Leadership Network to support school leaders; and*

*The NDE, school and district leaderships utilize all available resources to provide schools with that support; and*



*The NDE works with schools, district and support organizations to monitor implementation and identify and solve problems; and*

*The NDE, Districts, and Schools build shared social trust among parents, students, teachers, administrators and staff;*

***Then all underperforming schools will exit their low-performing status within three years.***

Alignment of the department's work is key towards moving schools to successful outcomes for Nevada's students. NDE Goals and Theory of Action guides and focuses the work necessary for rapid and improved achievement for all of Nevada's students.

## **B. Victory School Identification**

### **B. 1. Victory School Designation Criteria**

Victory Schools are designated based on the following criteria, per SB 432 Section 2:1

The Department of Education shall designate a public school as a Victory school if, relative to other public schools, including charter schools, that are located in the school district in which the school is also located:

- (a) A high percentage of pupils enrolled in the school live in households that have household incomes that are less than the federally designated level signifying poverty, based on the most recent data compiled by the Bureau of the Census of the United States Department of Commerce; and
- (b) The school received one of the two lowest possible ratings indicating underperformance of a public school, as determined by the Department pursuant to the statewide system of accountability for public schools, for the immediately preceding school year.

### **B. 2. Designated Victory Schools and Funding**

On June 1, 2015, the NDE designated Victory schools for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 School Year. Each school will receive, upon approval of plans by the Department, an allocation of approximately \$1,125 per pupil to support student learning through the eligible expenditures provided for within SB 432. The figures below may be used for planning purposes and reflect the count day enrollment from 2014/15 to establish the per-pupil and school allocation.

The following chart lists the designated schools and their funding for the 2015-16 School Year:

District	School	Amount	School	Amount
Clark	Agassi ES	\$532,125	McCall ES	\$500,625
	Booker ES	\$583,875	Monaco MS	\$1,604,250
	Desert Rose HS	\$483,750	Reid ES	\$16,875
	Fitzgerald ES	\$484,875	Smith MS	\$1,073,250
	Hollingsworth ES	\$734,625	Snyder ES	\$1,053,000
	Innovations ES	\$610,875	Sunrise Acres ES	\$928,125
	Jeffers ES	\$1,046,250	Valley HS	\$3,179,250
	Kelly ES	\$353,250	Vegas Verdes ES	\$610,875
	Lake ES	\$909,000	West Prep Acad	\$520,875
	Long ES	\$930,375	West Prep Sec	\$1,522,125
	Lowman ES	\$904,500	Williams Wendell ES	\$384,750
	Manch ES	\$907,875	Woolley ES	\$840,375
	Elko	Owyhee ES	\$190,125	West Wendover MS
Owyhee HS		\$72,000	West Wendover ES	\$653,625
Humboldt	McDermitt ES	\$79,875	McDermitt MS	\$16,875
Nye	Amargosa Valley ES	\$102,375		
Washoe	Bailey Charter ES	\$322,875	Hug HS	\$1,569,375
	Booth ES	\$481,500	Natchez ES	\$199,125

### **B. 3. Restriction on Multiple Designations**

No school may be eligible to receive funding from more than one of the following state grants: Zoom, Victory, and Read by Third Grade. It may be possible in a rural or small school context where a Victory school may apply for a Read by Third Grade grant.

### **C. Victory School Program Requirements – LEA Level**

#### **C.1. LEA Requirements**

The following items outline the key program requirements that all School Districts/Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Charter School governing boards, and schools must address/complete in order to provide the state legislated Victory School programs.

## **C.2. Needs Assessment**

The board of trustees of each school district and the governing body of each charter school that have Victory Schools (Local Education Agency or LEA) are required to conduct an assessment of the needs of students who attend the school.

The needs assessment is a critical step towards identifying the specific needs at each school and will play an important role in selecting Victory School program components in SB 432 (Section 2.8).

The assessment must include soliciting input from the community served by the Victory school in order to:

- Identify any barriers to improving student achievement and school performance; and
- Include strategies to meet the needs of students at the school.

Examples of meaningful community engagement include, but are not limited to, collaboration with stakeholders on the needs of the school and students, and future implementation of programs and services through meetings, focus group interviews, and surveys. Stakeholders may consist of, but are not limited to, the following: students, parents, school and district staff, civil rights organizations, American Indian Tribes, organizations representing students with disabilities, organizations representing English learners, institutions of higher education, and other relevant community members, etc.

In conducting the comprehensive needs assessment, districts and charter school governing boards may choose the method and instrument(s) that best meet their needs. Options include, but are not limited to:

- The Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S)  
[http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/NCCAT-S\\_Resources/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/NCCAT-S_Resources/)
- External provider(s) to ensure accurate results of the needs assessment.
- District facilitators to assist the school in identifying the critical areas that must be addressed in order to improve student achievement.

## **C.3. LEA Comprehensive Plans**

The board of trustees of each school district and the governing board of charter schools with identified Victory Schools must submit a comprehensive plan to the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). The list below identifies the Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan requirements per SB 432 (Section 2.5). These requirements will need to be addressed within ePAGE, NDE's electronic application and grants management system.

The LEA plan must:

- Identify the selected person or persons who assisted with the development of the plan;
- Include appropriate means to determine the effectiveness of the plan;
- Be based on the assessment of the needs of the pupils who attend the school, including soliciting input from the community served by the Victory school and identify any

barriers to improving achievement and school performance and strategies to meet the needs of the students;

- Analyze available data concerning pupil achievement and school performance, including, without limitation, data collected and maintained in the statewide system of accountability for public schools and other pupil achievement data collected and maintained by the school district or charter school;
- Include a description of the criteria used to select entities to provide programs and services to pupils enrolled in the Victory school;
  - A Pre-screened External Provider list can be found on the NDE website at: [http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/External\\_Providers\\_List\\_Home/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/External_Providers_List_Home/)
- Include a description of the manner in which the school district or governing body will collaborate with selected entities so that academic programs and services and nonacademic programs and services, including, without limitation, transportation services, may be offered without charge to support pupils and their families within the region in which the school is located;
- Take into account the number and types of pupils who attend the school and the locations where such pupils reside;
- Provide for the coordination of the existing or planned engagement of other persons who provide services in the region in which the school is located;
- Coordinate all funding available to each school that is subject to the plan;
- Provide for the coordination of all available resources to each school that is subject to the plan, including, without limitation, instructional materials and textbooks; and,
- Identify, for each school or group of schools subject to the plan, which of the measures described in Section D of this document will be implemented.

#### **C.4. LEA Plan Due Date:**

School district/Governing Board plans must be submitted to NDE via ePAGE by August 15, 2015. However, if school districts need additional time to complete their comprehensive plan, they may submit a letter of intent (via ePAGE) by August 15, 2015. At a minimum, the letter of intent must include the following:

- (a) An initial assessment of the needs of the pupils who attend the school
- (b) An analysis of available data concerning pupil achievement and school performance, including, without limitation, data collected and maintained by the school district or charter school; and
- (c) A summary of activities that the board of trustees or governing body, as applicable, will take to ensure completion of the comprehensive plan required by not later than September 15, 2015.

School districts that submitted the letter of intent must submit their completed comprehensive plan, including both the updated SPP and Victory School requirements to NDE by September 15, 2015.

## **D. Victory School Program Requirements – School Level**

Senate Bill 432 identifies specific program components that Victory Schools may implement in order to meet the identified student and school needs as indicated by the comprehensive needs assessment. The NDE is developing guidance that will provide more detail regarding these strategies.

### **D.1. Program Components/Strategies**

The comprehensive needs assessment will assist the LEA and school in determining which allowable strategies will address the identified needs of the school. Victory Schools must use the majority of the money (no less than 51%) to provide one or more of the following strategies:

- (a) A prekindergarten program free of charge, if not paid for by another grant or funding source.
- (b) An expansion of full-day kindergarten classes, if not otherwise paid for through legislative appropriation.
- (c) A summer academy or other instruction for pupils free of charge at times during the year when school is not in session.
- (d) Additional instruction or other learning opportunities free of charge at times of day when school is not in session.
- (e) Professional development for teachers and other educational personnel concerning instructional practices and strategies that have proven to be an effective means to increase pupil achievement in populations of pupils similar to those served by the school.
- (f) Incentives for hiring and retaining teachers and other licensed educational personnel who provide any of the programs or services set forth in this section.
  - *The State Board of Education will provide a list of what the incentives may include. This process is in development.*
- (g) Employment of paraprofessionals, other educational personnel and other persons who provide any of the programs or services set forth in this subsection.
- (h) Reading skills centers.

A Victory school may use any remaining funds (up to 49%) to:

- (a) Provide evidence-based social, psychological or health care services to pupils and their families, including, without limitation, wrap-around services.
  - *The law defines wrap-around services as “supplemental services provided to a pupil with special needs or the family of such a pupil that are not otherwise covered by any federal or state program of assistance” (SB 432 § 2.20(d))*
- (b) Provide programs and services designed to engage parents and families.
- (c) Provide programs to improve school climate and culture.
- (d) Provide evidence-based programs and services specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils who attend the school, as determined using the needs assessment or;

- *SB 432 defines “Evidence-based programs and services” as practices, interventions and services that have been proven, through scientifically based research, as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(37), to be effective in improving outcomes for pupils when implemented with fidelity.*

(e) Any combination thereof.

## **D.2. Victory School Performance Plan**

Victory Schools will be expected to incorporate their Victory School strategies within their School Performance Plan (SPP). Key items will need to be reflected within the school’s plan. Those items are:

- Inclusion of the Victory School comprehensive needs assessment findings within the SPPs comprehensive needs assessment section;
- Addition of relevant action steps for plan implementation; and
- Inclusion of Victory School budget and a description of the associated activities on the Budget page of the SPP.

Victory Schools must submit a school performance plan (SPP) via its online monitoring system eNOTE. The NDE is developing additional guidance to assist districts and schools in this process. The SPP template and rubric can be found on the NDE website at the following link:

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/District\\_and\\_School\\_Performance\\_Planning\\_Resources/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/District_and_School_Performance_Planning_Resources/)

## **E. Monitoring**

Districts, in collaboration with the NDE, are responsible for ensuring that Victory programs and services are implemented with fidelity at each of the Victory schools. Additionally, the NDE will conduct monitoring to verify that Victory programs and services are being implemented appropriately as defined in the LEA application and school plans. NDE will contact districts to schedule annual monitoring for the Victory Schools and reserves the right to schedule more monitoring if deemed necessary. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to, on-site or desktop monitoring, district meetings, conference call and webinars.

## **F. Reports and Program Evaluation**

### **F.1. LEA Report Requirements**

On or before **November 30, 2016**, and **November 30, 2017** the board of trustees of the school district shall submit a report to NDE and the Legislative Committee on Education. This report must include the following:

- Identification of the Victory Schools in the district
- The amount of money received by the school
- Description of the programs and services of how the money was used



- The number of students who participated in Victory-funded programs or received Victory-funded services
- The average expenditure per pupil for each program or service that was funded
- Recommendations regarding average per pupil spending formulas for allocating funds

## F.2. Independent Evaluation

As required by the legislation, the NDE will hire an independent evaluator through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to evaluate the effectiveness that Victory school programs and services has on student achievement. The evaluator will submit a report to both the NDE and the Legislative Committee of Education.

## F.3. Corrective Action

The State Board of Education (SBE) shall require a Victory school to take corrective action if the Board determines that student achievement and school performance are unsatisfactory. The SBE will consider the independent evaluator(s) reports in determining corrective action, which may include withholding or terminating Victory funding.

## G. Timeline: Victory School dates for the 2015-2016 School Year

The following timeline outlines the estimated/proposed dates for Victory School activities:

<b>PROPOSED TIMELINE for Victory Schools</b>	
<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
July 1, 2015	Initial Guidance for Victory Schools released
August 15, 2015	LEA Application Due: LEAs submit comprehensive plans for Victory Schools in ePAGE and Victory Schools will turn in SPPs or updated SPPs in eNOTE due to NDE for approval <b>OR</b> A letter of intent to meet the needs of the Victory school students
September 15, 2015	LEA Application Due: LEAs that completed a letter of intent turn in comprehensive district plans for Victory Schools and Victory SPPs to NDE for approval
December 2015 – February 2016	Engage in monitoring activities through on-line monitoring, on-site monitoring, phone conference and/or video conferencing
June 30, 2016	End of Fiscal Year (FY) 16
August 15, 2016	FY16 Final Financial Report (FFR) due to NDE
November 30, 2016	Victory School reports from LEAs due to NDE and LCE

## H. Nevada Department of Education Contacts

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VICTORY SCHOOL CONTACTS		
Name	Title	Contact Information
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