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PRESS RELEASE

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NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS 31 SCHOOLS THAT OUTPERFORMED THE STATE IN SERVING ALL STUDENTS

CARSON CITY, Nev. – Today the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) recognizes 31 [Shining Stars Schools](#) that achieved 4 and 5-Star status while also serving a high percentage of students in poverty.

"These Shining Stars Schools set the bar for what we know all schools can achieve," said Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction. "Last week the state released its [Rising Stars Schools](#) list that is defined by poor performance and low graduation rates. These Shining Stars Schools set an example for what we believe is possible for each Rising Stars School."

The state's priority is to support Rising Stars Schools; these are schools in the bottom 5 percent of school performance statewide and achieve a 1-star rating or graduate fewer than 67 percent of their students. The first cohort of 91 Rising Stars Schools was identified last year and an additional 57 schools were identified this year. Schools remain on the list for three years to receive intensive supports with the goal of achieving a 3-Star rating after three years.

A Shining Stars School is a high-performing school serving a high percentage of students in poverty. A high-performing school is one that achieved a 4 or 5-Star rating on the most recent Nevada School Performance Framework. An elementary or middle school serving a high percentage of students in poverty has at least 75 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL). For high schools, the cut off is 50 percent of students eligible for FRL.

"One of our core beliefs is that all students can succeed, regardless of their background and challenges," said Jesus F. Jara, Ph.D., Clark County School District Superintendent who had 25 schools identified as Shining Stars Schools. "These Shining Stars Schools demonstrate to our community that with the right supports and dedication to rigor every child can thrive in our traditional public schools. I hope the community joins me in celebrating the success of these schools, including their students, teachers, support professionals, and principals."

Statewide Smarter Balanced assessment data for elementary and middle schools show that students qualifying for FRL have a proficiency rate approximately 10 percentage points below the average for all students. The majority of elementary and middle school Shining Stars outperformed the state average in math and reading, some by as much as 27 percentage points in math and 21 percentage points in English Language Arts.

"Over three years ago Nye County School District began a true transformation with a committed focus on education," said Dale Norton, Ph.D., Nye County School District. "As the largest, poorest, and unhealthiest county in the state, we viewed education as an avenue to help students rise above and grow in many different ways. With teachers and leaders in the building who are learning and growing with daily time for collaboration along with great external support systems, Nye County School District is proud to have five Shining Stars Schools this year."

This year's Shining Stars Schools include 20 elementary schools, two middle schools and nine high schools representing three school districts. Fourteen Shining Stars Schools are receiving this recognition for the second year in a row, while 17 schools are being recognized for the first time.

This is the third year that NDE has published a Shining Stars Schools list. While statewide, students qualifying FRL have historically lagged in performance, Shining Stars Schools are defying that trend:

- Statewide 58 percent of students qualify for FRL;

- Under Nevada's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA plan), NDE identifies low performing schools as Rising Stars Schools. These low performing schools are disproportionately serving students in poverty - 112 of the 148 current Rising Stars Schools qualify as Title I schools;
- By contrast, the Shining Stars Schools, also serving high numbers of students in poverty, are achieving 4 and 5-Star Ratings.

"Our Shining Stars Schools demonstrate that all students, regardless of background, can meet the expectations set forth in Nevada State Standards," Canavero added. "It's our responsibility as educators to hold students to high expectations and support them to reach their goals."

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