



NEVADA'S ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

What is the Achievement School District?

The Achievement School District (ASD) will be an office within the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) that oversees rapid improvement in the state's low performing schools.

Who will lead the Achievement School District?

The ASD will be led by an Executive Director who is appointed by and reports to the Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Why do we need the Achievement School District?

The Nevada Department of Education has identified 78 schools as persistently failing. These schools enroll over 57,000 students each year. These students deserve the opportunity to attend better schools, and the ASD will provide that opportunity.

How will the ASD transform schools?

Each year, a subset of the underperforming schools identified above will be declared eligible for transformation by the ASD. The ASD will authorize charter management organizations to transform the state's underperforming schools. When a school becomes part of the ASD, the ASD Executive Director will select high-performing or high-potential charter management organizations to convert schools to charter schools.

What autonomies are afforded to ASD schools?

In ASD schools, decisions regarding instruction, budgets, and personnel are made at the school level. School leaders are fully empowered to make the best decisions for their students.

How is the ASD funded?

ASD schools receive the same state and local per-pupil resources that they would have received as part of their original home district. This includes local, state, and federal funding. As with other charter school sponsors, the ASD will receive a small administrative fee from each school it authorizes.

How are ASD schools operated?

ASD schools are community-led schools which are governed at the local level. The ASD will empower its school principals to lead dramatic change while the ASD continually monitors each school's progress toward meeting its goals. ASD schools will be held to a high standard for performance and each school will be expected to improve across multiple measures of student outcomes.

How is the ASD operated?

The ASD will work collaboratively with local school districts, the Nevada Department of Education, the State Public Charter School Authority, and other key stakeholders to ensure success for the students in its schools. The ASD staff will primarily serve to match the ASD schools with high-quality charter management organizations, ensure a successful transition of management, and conduct ongoing oversight and performance management for all ASD schools.

Which schools will be in the ASD?

On an annual basis, the State Board will identify schools for inclusion in the ASD based on a number of factors including school performance, community feedback, and the availability of high-quality charter school organizations. Currently, the NDE has identified 78 schools that are eligible for the ASD.

How is the ASD different from Nevada's other school districts?

The ASD will not operate any schools – instead, the ASD will match low-performing schools with high-quality charter management organizations, ensure a successful transition of management, and conduct ongoing oversight and performance management for all ASD schools. It will not control curriculum or school staff, and it will have a limited administrative budget.

How will the ASD impact Nevada's other school districts?

Nevada's 17 school districts will continue to govern their schools. A school district that fails to support underperforming schools in making significant improvement will be subject to a the comprehensive school accountability system that may include transformation by the ASD.

What will happen to students in ASD schools?

Students who attend a school that is placed in the ASD will have first preference to attend the ASD school. If a student chooses not to attend the ASD school, he or she will have the option of attending a nearby neighborhood school in the local district.

What will happen to teachers in ASD schools?

Teachers will have the opportunity to apply to work in the ASD school. ASD schools will make their own hiring decisions, ensuring that each school has the opportunity to build the strongest instructional team possible. Teachers who choose not to teach at the ASD school or who are not selected to remain at the school will have the opportunity to find another position in their local district according to that district's placement rules.

How long will a school be in the ASD?

Once a school is placed in the ASD, it will remain there for at least six years. ASD schools that have demonstrated high achievement will have the option to continue in the ASD, become a state-sponsored charter school, or return to their original district. Operators of ASD schools that do not demonstrate meaningful improvement will be held accountable pursuant to policies set by the ASD.

What happens with the school facility?

The ASD will be permitted to use all facilities of schools that are transferred to the ASD. The ASD Executive Director may repurpose the building to the new operator of the school. The contents of the facility (textbooks, technology, media resources, instruction equipment and resources, etc.) will remain with the facility and be used by the school while under control of the ASD or the school operator. The existing utilities supplied to the facility (all standard utilities including broadband capability and internet access) by the original district remain in place for the ASD school. The ASD or charter school governing board is responsible for paying for routine maintenance and repair such that the facilities and property are maintained in as good order as when the right of use was acquired by the ASD. The ASD will also be responsible for paying the original district a reasonable fee for all utilities in use at ASD facilities. The local school district is responsible for extensive repairs to buildings or facilities considered capital expenses. Any fixtures, improvements or tangible assets added to a school building or facility by the ASD will remain at the school building or facility upon its return to the local district.

How will the school provide support services and routine operational services?

ASD schools will purchase services from the ASD, the original district, or another contract provider of its choosing for routine student support and operational services. ASD schools will be required to purchase testing administration services and student information system services from the ASD or education service provider. The original school district will be required to cooperate fully with the ASD school to make available at a reasonable cost all appropriate services requested. This may include, but is not limited to, transportation, cafeteria, custodial, alternative education, broadband, utilities, and special education services.

What happens to schools that are identified as underperforming but are not placed in the ASD?

The ASD is one part of a comprehensive school accountability system that the NDE will implement. This system will employ a robust set of strategies designed to reward high-performing schools, support growth across the spectrum, and close or replace low performers that do not improve. The NDE will enter into rigorous performance compacts with low-performing schools that are not chosen to enter the ASD.

What is the timeline for the ASD?

ASD planning and operations will begin if and when ASD legislation passes through the Nevada Legislature and is approved by Governor Sandoval in the spring of 2015. The first ASD schools could open their doors for the 2016-2017 school year.

Has this model been tried in other states? What have been the results?

Nevada's ASD model most closely resembles the Recovery School District (RSD) in Louisiana and the Achievement School District (ASD) in Tennessee.

Louisiana expanded and implemented the Recovery School District (RSD) in 2005 following Hurricane Katrina. The New Orleans Parish School System badly needed reforms and the storm necessitated a radical shift in governance and an aggressive improvement strategy. The model has been successful – with the RSD in place, New Orleans has become the fastest-growing, most-improved urban school system in the country in terms of student achievement. In fact, the RSD has taken the percentage of failing schools in New Orleans from 44 percent in 2005 to only 8 percent in 2013.

In 2011, Tennessee launched its own Achievement School District ASD, and the early results are promising. During the 2013-2014 school year, elementary and middle school students in the first six ASD schools outgained students across the state in math and English. Within two years, five out of twelve schools were already out of the bottom 5%.

For more information on the way that Louisiana’s RSD has impacted student achievement in New Orleans, check out the following resources:

[New Orleans Results](#), Educate Now:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/swtzdviz2imt212/NOLA%20Resuts%2C%20Educate%20Now.pdf?dl=0>

[ASD Second Year Results](#), Tennessee Achievement School District:

<https://vimeo.com/116296040>

[Transforming Public Education in New Orleans](#), The Cowen Institute:

<http://www.coweninstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/History-of-the-RSD-Report-2011.pdf>

[Redefining the School District in Tennessee](#), Fordham Foundation:

http://edex.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/publication/pdfs/20130423-Redefining-the-School-District-in-Tennessee-FINAL_7.pdf