

Frequently Asked Questions

For Leaders - Learn more about the Portrait of a Nevada Learner

What is the Portrait of a Nevada Learner?

The Portrait of a Nevada Learner is a collective vision of the mindsets and skills that bring academic knowledge to life and help students thrive now and in future school, workplace, community, and personal settings. It emphasizes competencies such as self-awareness, collaboration, communication, and resilience—skills that go beyond academics and prepare students for a rapidly changing world. For leaders, the Portrait serves as a north star for decision-making, culture-building, and instructional design. It is not an initiative to layer on top of existing work; it is a framework to align priorities and make learning more meaningful and future-ready.

How does the Portrait align with Nevada’s vision for student-centered and future-ready learning?

The Portrait is central to Nevada’s commitment to creating student-centered, future-ready learning environments. This vision emphasizes engaging students as active participants in their learning, increasing opportunities for voice and choice, and preparing them with the skills and mindsets needed for success in all areas of life. Leaders help make this vision real by fostering flexible structures, authentic assessments, and professional learning that support meaningful experiences. The Portrait provides the guiding vision for these changes, ensuring every initiative helps students grow, connect, contribute, and thrive.

How does data culture connect to the Portrait of a Learner?

Assessment practices aligned with the Portrait of a Nevada Learner go beyond traditional tests. They include portfolios, presentations, peer and self-assessments, and other authentic tasks that allow students to demonstrate mastery in meaningful ways. These approaches help educators evaluate not just what students know, but also how they apply their learning and grow as individuals through Portrait competencies central to future success.

What does instructional alignment to the Portrait of a Learner look like?

Instructional alignment means designing learning experiences that intentionally build both academic knowledge and Portrait competencies. It encourages project-based and performance-based learning that grows student agency, connects learning to authentic contexts, and develops communication, collaboration, and purpose.

Principal example: Use PLCs to analyze student work through a Portrait-aligned lens (e.g., evidence of collaboration or communication).

District example: Integrate Portrait competencies into PD cycles and learning walks so schools have shared look-fors.

Is the Portrait of a Nevada Learner required for all districts?

No. The Portrait of a Nevada Learner is not a mandate. Districts may adopt or adapt it based on local priorities. Local Portraits do not need to be replaced; instead, the Portrait of a Nevada Learner can serve as a unifying reference point for regional alignment, resource sharing, and statewide professional learning.

Portrait of a Nevada Learner Mapping Protocol

Creating System Coherence

This protocol helps district and school leadership teams create coherence between the Portrait of a Nevada Learner or a local portrait and existing programs, initiatives, and strategic priorities. The goal is to ensure the Portrait is not just aspirational but embedded in the system's design, guiding decisions, and aligning resources.

Why This Matters

The Portrait represents a shared vision for what success looks like for Nevada learners. Mapping current programs to the Portrait's guiding questions helps leaders identify alignment, gaps, and opportunities. This process fosters coherence across initiatives, ensuring that every effort supports the vision for future-ready graduates.

Possible Outputs

- Alignment chart or heat map showing how current programs connect to Portrait questions
- List of priority actions for improving coherence

Preparation

Participants: District leadership team, school leaders, and program directors. Additionally, districts may choose to include community partners, parents, students, etc.

- Materials:**
- Portrait of a Nevada Learner or local portrait traits and attributes
 - List of current district or school programs and initiatives, such as strategic plan goals, professional learning systems, and instructional and assessment frameworks
 - Large chart paper or a digital collaboration tool such as Padlet, Miro, or Google Sheets
 - Sticky notes or color coding for alignment levels

Adaptations

For Local Portraits

If your district has a local portrait of a learner with traits or attributes instead of guiding questions:

- Replace the Nevada guiding questions with your local traits, such as Critical Thinker, Effective Communicator, and Engaged Citizen
- Map each program to these traits using the same alignment categories: Strong, Partial, or Opportunity
- Discuss how local traits complement or differ from the state Portrait and identify opportunities for integration

School-Level Mapping

Use the same process but focus on school programs such as advisory committees and clubs. Consider engaging teacher leaders in mapping classroom-level practices to the Portrait of a Nevada Learner questions.

Step-by-Step Protocol

01

Ground in the Vision

Begin with a brief overview of the Portrait of a Nevada Learner and its guiding questions. Facilitate a short discussion: Why is coherence important? How does the Portrait serve as our north star for student success?

02

Inventory Current programs and Initiatives

List major district-level programs such as multi-tiered system of supports, social-emotional learning initiatives, and career pathways. Include assessment systems and professional learning structures. For school-level adaptation, add advisory programs, instructional models, and extracurricular offerings.

03

Map Each Program to Portrait Questions

For each program, ask:

- How does this program help students grow in their learning? (**EMPOWERING**)
- How does it help build and sustain relationships and community? (**CONNECTING**)
- How does it enable students to contribute and make an impact? (**IMPACTING**)
- How does it help students thrive? (**THRIVING**)

Use a simple chart or grid to rate each program's level of alignment with the Portrait. Suggested ratings include Strong, Partial, and Opportunity. Before scoring, ensure the group shares a common understanding of what each rating means and calibrates expectations.

Program	How does this program help students grow in their learning?	How does it help build and sustain relationships and community?	How does it enable students to contribute and make an impact?	How does it help students thrive?
Career Pathways	Strong	Partial	Strong	Strong

EXAMPLE

04

Identify Patterns, Gaps and Opportunities

Look for clusters of strong alignment and areas where alignment is weak or missing. Discuss:

- Where do we have duplication?
- Where do we have gaps?
- What needs to be strengthened or redesigned?

05

Prioritize Action for Coherence

Decide on two or three high-leverage moves:

- Strengthen alignment in existing programs
- Sunset or redesign initiatives that do not connect to the Portrait
- Launch new strategies to fill gaps

06

Document and Share

Create a visual heat map or summary chart for leadership teams and stakeholders. Communicate findings to staff and community to build shared understanding.

Community Engagements

Strategies to connect families and community to the Portrait in a way that enhances your local goals and supports future ready learning

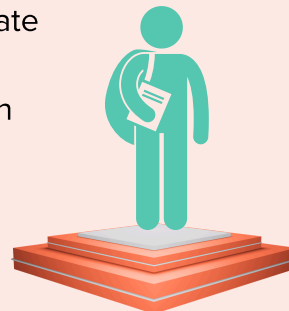
Strategy 1: Host forums and invite student voice

Organize family nights or community forums to explain the Portrait. Include student presentations to highlight how they are integrating competencies into their lives in and out of school to make the Portrait relatable and authentic. Hearing directly from learners can help families and partners see how the Portrait connects to real experiences.



Strategy 2: Create exhibitions and share stories

Plan student showcases where learners demonstrate portrait competencies through projects and performances. Share stories and examples through newsletters, social media, and local media. These exhibitions make learning visible and highlight how students are growing in ways that matter for life and work.



Strategy 3: Partner with local businesses

Collaborate with businesses and organizations to connect portrait of a learner skills to real-world careers. Invite partners to speak at events or mentor students. These partnerships show families and students how portrait competencies prepare learners for future opportunities.



Reflect on your current community engagement practices. How can you use events, exhibitions, and partnerships to make a portrait of a learner visible and meaningful for families and community members?

Professional Learning

Strategies for leaders to embed a portrait of a learner into educator growth practices

Strategy 1: Integrate Portrait competencies in professional learning communities

Include portrait of a learner competencies in professional learning community structures and discussions. Encourage teams to reflect on practices that support durable skills like collaboration and resilience. This keeps the Portrait at the center of instructional planning and improvement.



Strategy 2: Design performance tasks that bring competencies to life

Create opportunities for educators to design and share performance tasks that show how portrait skills are applied in authentic learning experiences. Form cross-grade or cross-content teams to collaborate on tasks that integrate academic standards with competencies that include communication and problem-solving. Sharing these tasks during professional learning builds clarity and sparks innovation.



Strategy 3: Showcase teacher practice

Invite teachers to share how they incorporate portrait of a learner skills into instruction. Highlight examples across grade levels and content areas to spark collaboration and innovation. These showcases build momentum and help educators learn from one another.



Review your professional learning structures. How can you integrate portrait of a learner language into goals, discussions, and celebrations of teacher practice to create coherence and shared purpose?

Portrait of a Learner Practices Across a System

Classroom-Level Practices

- Ask Portrait-aligned questions during instruction
- Use rubrics during peer feedback



Grade-Level & PLC Practices

- Identify Portrait-aligned activities in unit plans
- Share learner work samples for calibration



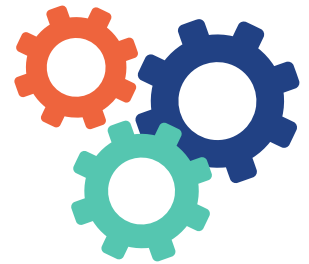
School-Level Practices

- Build advisory lessons around the Portrait
- Celebrate Portrait competencies in assemblies, newsletters, & social media



District-Level Practices

- Embed the Portrait in curriculum reviews
- Use Portrait rubrics as part of graduate profile pathways or capstones



Community Practices

- Align internships & apprenticeships to the Portrait
- Local businesses incorporate Portrait into hiring practices



Home Practices

- Make time to discuss what each domain means and why it is important
- Encourage children to share stories of overcoming challenges

