ON THE FastTrack

December 2025 - Issue #24

MONTHLY UPDATE: CELEBRATING NEVADA'S EDUCATORS

December arrives with a spirit of celebration and purpose, making it the perfect time to honor National Special Education Day on December 2nd. This month, we applaud our 60+ mentees pursuing careers in Special Education—future educators committed to ensuring that students across the Silver State who receive specialized instructional supports are taught by passionate, highly qualified teachers.

We are also proud to feature Mentor Karen Villatoro-Gonzalez, whose advocacy for accommodations for teachers with disabilities reminds us that inclusive education begins with supporting educators themselves.
We also celebrate the achievements of the 94 mentees who have completed the Nevada Forward Initiative's Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program. Your determination and progress represent the heart of what it means to be on the FastTrack, and we couldn't be more inspired by your growth.

As the winter break approaches, we encourage you to take time to rest, reflect, and connect with loved ones. And for a little seasonal fun, remember that December 21, 2025, is National Crossword Puzzle Day—crossword puzzles have been shown to boost memory and strengthen problem-solving skills. The Teacher FastTrack Team is grateful for your dedication and looks forward to sharing more exciting news and accomplishments with you in the new year.

Current Cohort DATA

* data based on mentoring connections from 8/1/25 to 12/3/25

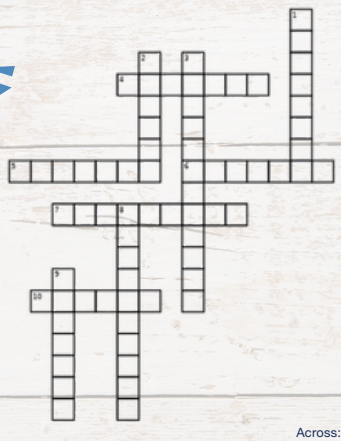
1,704 Hrs	4896	1006
Connection Time	Tasks Completed	Meetings Attended

PEF Teacher FastTrack RECRUIT

CROSSWORD

DID YOU KNOW?
December 21st is National Crossword Puzzle Day?

Test your Teacher FastTrack knowledge with our crossword puzzle!



Down:
1. A person who provides instruction or education
2. A person who is advised, trained, or counseled by a mentor.
3. A person engaged in a specified activity as one's main paid occupation rather than as a pastime.
8. The guidance provided by a mentor.
9. A person who teaches, especially in a school.

Across:
4. To enlist someone.
5. A permit from an authority to own or use something.
6. Give assistance to.
7. A feeling of fellowship with others.
10. An experienced and trusted advisor.

Path to UAP

Future Licensed Educators Moving on to the Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program

*representative of participants in the Nevada Forward Undergraduate Pre-Apprenticeship program who are progressing to the Udergraduate Apprenticeship program as of 12/10/25

PEF Teacher FastTrack

BANK OF AMERICA · CAESARS FOUNDATION · CANARELLI & FAMILY FOUNDATION · CCSD CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT · JOHN C. KISH FOUNDATION · Siriwan Singhasiri & Kenneth Lin FOUNDATION · LINCOLN DYNAMIC FOUNDATION · MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL · Alan & Christy Molasky Family Foundation

NEVADA GOLD MINES · NVEnergy FOUNDATION · NV|FORWARD · SAN MANUEL BAND OF MISSION INDIANS · Select Health · UNLV COLLEGE OF EDUCATION · workforce CONNECTIONS

Teacher FastTrack Recruit addresses the teacher shortage crisis by helping to identify school employees who dream of becoming a licensed teacher and providing invaluable wrap-around support while they complete a teacher apprenticeship program at UNLV. We also mentor hundreds of new teachers during the first three years in their own classrooms through our Teacher FastTrack Retain program.

Empowering Futures: The Inspiring Advocacy of Karen Villatoro-Gonzalez

This month, we showcase the profound impact of mentorship within our educational community, highlighted by the journey of Karen Villatoro-Gonzalez. Starting as a volunteer at Walter Long Elementary School, Karen transitioned to a part-time role in the special education department, where she discovered her true calling. Her desire to shape the educational experience for others was reignited when a teacher allowed her to create lessons for her son's Kindergarten class, showcasing her potential and passion for teaching.

Karen embodies the mission of Jerome D. Mack Middle School: "Building humans who create and sustain their own paths to success." She emphasizes empowering students and educators alike by removing barriers and fostering inclusivity. Celebrating National Special Education Day, Karen stresses that support for educators with disabilities involves respecting their expertise and ensuring access. Her belief that disability is not a limitation, but rather a lack of access, shines through in her dedication to providing equitable resources.

Her mentorship approach is rooted in openness and empathy, creating a safe space for mentees to express their needs. Karen believes that educators play a critical role in shaping students' identities and confidence, encouraging them to see their potential. Balancing her dedication to mentoring with self-care, Karen teaches her mentees the importance of well-being in a profession that is meaningful but demanding.

Karen also advocates for lifelong learning within education, emphasizing that professional development keeps educators effective and responsive. She envisions a future where teacher preparation programs and mentoring structures are inclusive and accessible for all, particularly for educators with disabilities. Through her nurturing and supportive approach, Karen Villatoro exemplifies the essence of mentorship, inspiring a community that uplifts and empowers the next generation of leaders in education.

PEF Awarded $100,000 San Manuel Palms Cares Grant to Strengthen Nevada's Teacher Workforce

The Public Education Foundation (PEF) is proud to announce that we have been awarded a $100,000 San Manuel Palms Cares Grant in support of our Teacher FastTrack initiative.

This generous grant from San Manuel will directly support TFT Recruit as we help guide paraprofessionals and long-term guest teachers through UNLV's Nevada Forward apprenticeship programming, covering costs such as Praxis exam fees and mentor/mentee stipends.

Click here for the full article

This investment also underscores the tremendous value of strong community partnerships. Addressing Nevada's critical teacher shortages requires collaboration across sectors, and PEF is fortunate to work alongside organizations like the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and Palms Cares—partners who recognize that improving public education strengthens the entire region. Their support reflects a shared belief that when we invest in educators, we invest in families, students, and the long-term health of our communities.

The San Manuel Palms Cares Grant will help ensure that PEF can continue providing the mentorship, tools, and financial support that aspiring and new teachers need to thrive. Together, we are working toward an ambitious goal to fully staff every CCSD classroom for the first time since 1994.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and Palms Cares for their commitment to empowering lives and strengthening our community's future.

PEF Teacher FastTrack

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