



July 14, 2026

Michell Williams
Dean of Instruction
Lassen Community College
478-200 HWY 139
Susanville, CA 96130

Dear Ms. Williams,

Subject: Summary of Key Findings for Proposed Bachelor's Degree in Education Support

The North Far North Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (NFN COE) has completed a labor market analysis in support of Lassen College's application to offer a bachelor's degree in education support. This letter summarizes the key findings from our report and is organized to address the primary questions of workforce need, wage potential, and employer preferences for candidates with a baccalaureate degree.

- **Evidence of a Regional Supply-Demand Gap for Workers with Baccalaureate Degrees**

Our analysis shows that the north far north region has 4,171 projected annual job openings over the next 10 years across the four studied education support occupations, compared to just 3 average annual awards conferred by regional community colleges — an enormous mismatch between demand and local training output. The region held 30,543 education support jobs in 2024, projected to grow 6% by 2034, adding 1,960 new jobs — a faster growth rate than California overall. Only one community college in the entire 22-county region (Butte) conferred any awards, just 3 certificates in "Educational Aide (Teacher Assistant)" in 2024-25, with zero in prior years and zero in "Other Education." No non-community-college institution in the region conferred a single certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree in the relevant CIP programs over the three-year period reviewed.

- **Evidence that Employers Are Willing to Pay Baccalaureate Degree Holders a Regional Living Wage**

Based on our wage analysis, workers with a baccalaureate degree in Education Support are likely to earn a wage that meets or exceeds the regional living wage. Specifically, wage data shows that education support occupations earn entry-level wages up to \$7 above the region's single adult living wage of \$22.54 per hour. All occupations earn entry-level wages above the living wage, except teaching assistants, except postsecondary. Median wages posted in the last 12 months were similar and above the living wage for the studied occupations. This confirms that graduates of the proposed program can expect to earn wages that meet local living standards.





- **Evidence that Employers Are Willing to Pay Baccalaureate Degree Holders More than Those with an Associate Degree or No Postsecondary Degree**

An analysis of wages from job postings from the last 12 months suggests that employers are willing to pay workers with a bachelor's degree up to \$4 more per hour than those with a high school diploma or associate degree in the North Far North. Over the last five years, median wages advertised in online job postings have been between \$0 to \$2,197 more annually for postings that include higher levels of education. In 2025, annual salaries were \$45,312 for postings requesting a high school diploma or equivalent and \$47,509 for postings requesting a bachelor's degree, a difference of \$2,197, suggesting that workers with a bachelor's degree can make slightly higher wages.

- **Evidence that Employers Prefer Candidates with the Proposed Baccalaureate Degree**

Employer feedback and job posting analysis suggest employers prefer candidates with a baccalaureate degree within this sector. BLS classifies three of the four occupations (Adult Basic Education/ESL Instructors, Substitute Teachers, and Teachers and Instructors, All Other) as typically requiring a bachelor's degree at entry-level; Teaching Assistants typically requires only "some college, no degree." Even where not formally required, a substantial share of current workers already hold bachelor's degrees:

- Adult Basic Education/ESL Instructors: 36%
- Substitute Teachers: 36%
- Teachers and Instructors, All Other: 36%
- Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary: 24%

The evidence for direct employer preference is real but more moderate than the evidence for the supply-demand gap or attainment of living wage. A full third of postings specify no education requirement at all, and explicit bachelor's degree requirements are concentrated in a couple of occupations (especially Substitute Teachers) rather than universal. The strongest signals of preference are indirect: the wage premium for degree holders and the high rate of incumbent workers who already hold bachelor's degrees, suggesting the credential carries real value in the market even where employers don't always mandate it upfront.

In summary, the labor market data provide substantial evidence supporting the case for a baccalaureate degree program in education support occupations in the North Far North. Regional demand significantly outpaces educational supply: the region is projected to see 4,171 annual job openings over the next decade across the four studied occupations, yet only an average of three awards were conferred annually by community colleges, and no non-community-college institution in the region conferred any



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relevant certificates or degrees—a pattern mirrored statewide, where 41,301 annual openings compare to roughly 890 average annual awards. Wage data further show that employers are willing to compensate degree holders accordingly: entry-level wages for these occupations range from \$5 below to \$7 above the region's living wage of \$22.54/hour, with all occupations except teaching assistants exceeding that threshold, and postings requiring a bachelor's degree paid up to \$4/hour more, and about \$2,197 more annually, than those requiring only a high school diploma or associate degree. Evidence of direct employer preference for the credential is more moderate but still present—only 15% of job postings explicitly required a bachelor's degree (compared to 44% for an associate degree and 33% with no requirement listed), yet more than one-third of incumbent workers in three of the four occupations already hold bachelor's degrees, and BLS classifies three of the four occupations as typically requiring one at entry-level. Taken together, this points to a market where a bachelor's-level workforce is common, modestly better compensated, and clearly undersupplied relative to demand, even though formal degree requirements in job postings remain uneven across occupations.

Please find the full labor market report attached for a detailed review of the data and analysis. Should you have any questions or need further clarification, feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

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