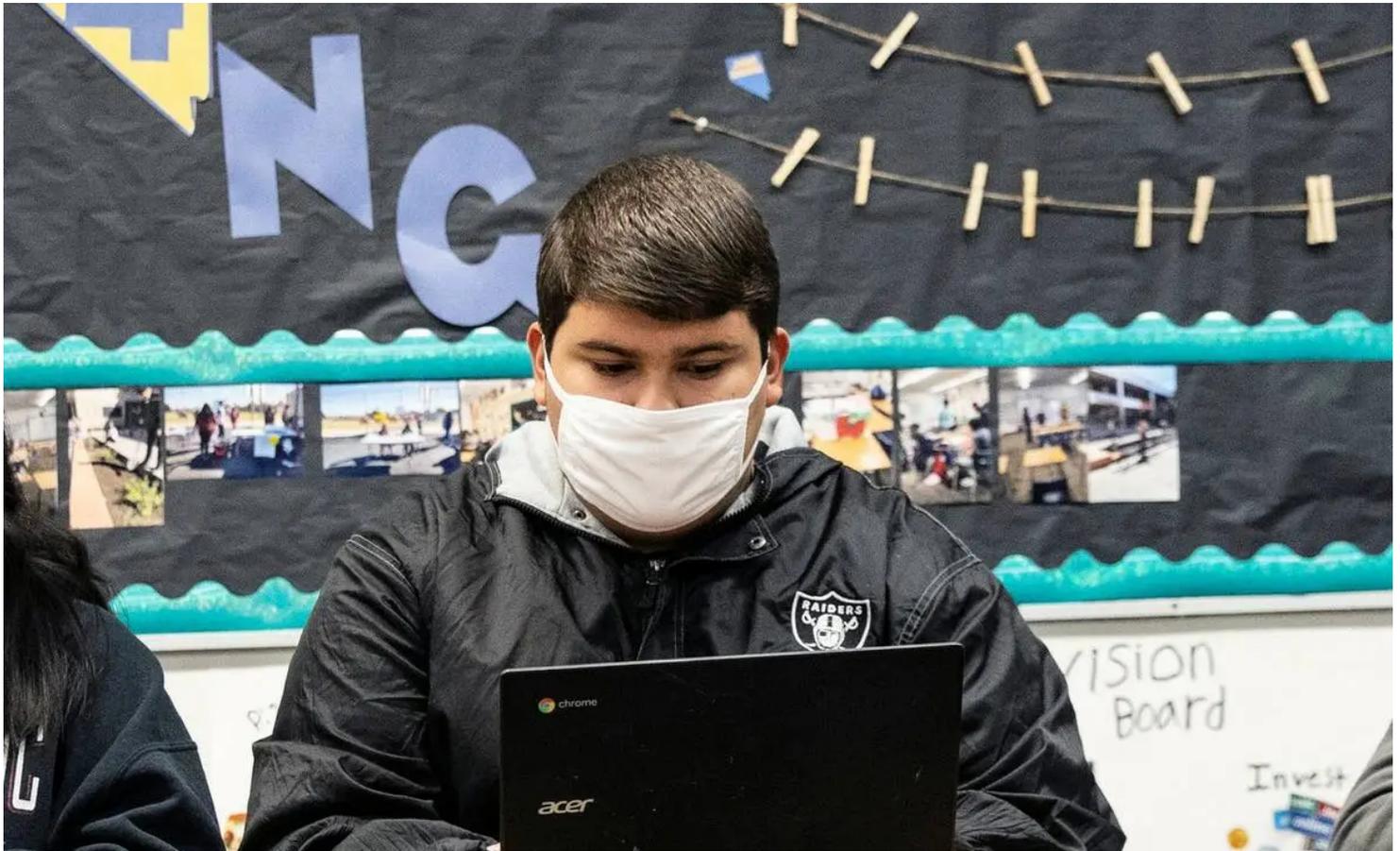


Chaparral student pursues career success through nonprofit



Chaparral High School student Joseph McNicol, 17, works during a Jobs 4 Nevada Graduates (J4NG) class, on Friday, Nov. 19, 2021, in Las Vegas. (Bizuyayehu Tesfaye/Las Vegas Review-Journal) @bizutesfaye

By [McKenna Ross](#) Las Vegas Review-Journal



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Joey McNicol was in a bind: He was three classes behind the minimum he needed to graduate on time.

It was intimidating.

But resolved to flip the tassel in spring 2022, the senior at Chaparral High School in east Las Vegas set a goal: He would finish his geometry, English and elective credits as fast as possible. It took McNicol about two weeks.

McNicol used friends, tutors and the help of Jobs 4 Nevada Graduates, a nonprofit focused on teaching employability skills to Clark County School

District students. In a class run by specialist Chanel Davison, she encouraged McNicol to get the credits out of the way and leave a clear path to graduation.

“I was kind of scared because I thought I wasn’t going to be able to do it in time,” McNicol said. “But she motivated me to step outside of my comfort zone. I was surprised, actually, that I finished so early but I was so motivated.”

Davison works with up to 65 students in high school and one year after graduation through an elective on work-related skills. As part of the class, specialists mentor students to ensure they graduate and are prepared to move through life after their education. Davison’s class includes time during the week to spend on other schoolwork.

“We make sure they’re prepared for the world,” she said. “We teach them all those skills that they need to be a successful citizen in the real world outside of high school.”

McNicol’s credit completion was a perfect example of supporting a student to achieve a path to success post graduation, she said. Her specialized course is offered as a class during the school day and teaches students how to job search, write resumes and cover letters, and all other things involved in building a career.

Specialists also support students’ careers by paying any work certificate fees, providing interview clothes and other support.

But, Davison said, all the help could be nothing without making it to graduation.

An aspiring chef, McNicol said his motivation came from finishing school with his friends and preparing for post-secondary classes in the culinary arts.

“I had to stay up, I had longer nights,” he said. “Sometimes I’d be up all night doing my work. I just wanted to get it over with.”

This story was produced in partnership with the United Way of Southern Nevada as part of the “[Everyone Deserves Hope](#)” effort to assist local families this holiday season. To contribute, visit uwsn.org/hope.

McKenna Ross is a corps member with Report for America, a national service program that places journalists into local newsrooms. Contact her at mross@reviewjournal.com. Follow [@mckenna_ross](https://twitter.com/mckenna_ross) on Twitter.