

[ESSA: IMPLICATIONS FOR EQUITY IN MISSISSIPPI - A VIDEO PANEL](#)

SUMMARY – WEBINAR EVENT, FEBRUARY 25, 2016

On February 25th, we heard from voices around Mississippi on the new *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* and its implications for issues of educational equity in the state. In the coming months, **Mississippi will need to engage all of its stakeholders - educators, community based organizations and non-profits, state, district, and school leaders, families, advocates, and others** - in developing and implementing changes to MS's accountability system, providing resources and supports for equitable implementation, and determining the most appropriate intervention and support plans to ensure equity and excellence for all students.

This webinar was an opportunity for some of Mississippi's key stakeholder representatives to talk through important aspects of the law and the ways that stakeholders can and should engage with the process.

[Webinar and Resources:](#)

- Webinar video recording
- Mississippi Webinar read-ahead and Powerpoint slides

[PANEL & ATTENDEES](#)

The event was moderated by Dr. Leeson Taylor, Superintendent, Greenville Public Schools and President, Mississippi Alliance of Black School Educators, with a brief overview on ESSA provided by Dr. Kent McGuire, President and CEO, Southern Education Foundation.

The panel consisted of:

- Joyce Helmick, Educator, De Soto County and President, [MS Association of Educators](#)
- Dr. Kent McGuire, President and CEO, [Southern Education Foundation](#)
- Joyce Parker, Executive Director, [MS Delta Catalyst Roundtable](#)
- Etta Taplin, Former President, [Mississippi State School Board Association](#)
- Dr. Leeson Taylor, Superintendent, [Greenville Public Schools](#) and President, [Mississippi Alliance of Black School Educators](#)
- Sanford Johnson, Deputy Director, [Mississippi First](#)



The panelists led a lively conversation about the promise of the new federal law, especially highlighting the opportunity:

- for federal and state agencies to truly invite new voices and perspectives to take part in the design and implementation of these new systems of support for our schools and students;
- to design systems of accountability, assessment and support that “help, not hurt” our schools;
- to align efforts and support effective collaboration by including the perspectives of all of the caring adults that are part of students’ lives;
- to advance recent efforts around school climate as a significant part of understanding student and educator experiences; and,
- to work together, even when “we don’t agree across the board on everything,” to advance policies that ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn -- especially the least advantaged.

The webinar was attended by nearly 100 participants from around the state and nationally, mainly representing community-based organizations and educators, but also including district and school leaders, philanthropists, researchers, families, and others. Areas of highest interest among those who attended were teaching and learning, vulnerable populations, early childhood education, and systems of accountability. We are grateful to all who participated.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS/QUOTES (MINUTE COUNT)

“Whether [ESSA] works on behalf of all kids or not is very much a function of how well it is implemented... It is going to be really important for there to be as much dialogue between state, districts, schools and stakeholder groups in Mississippi as we can have.” (10:50)

- Dr. Kent McGuire, President and CEO, [Southern Education Foundation](#)

“Many times, we don’t agree across the board on everything, but even in this conversation we agree with more things than we don’t, and when we are given the opportunity to have a real dialogue and respect and regard what everybody brings to the table, we will be so much further ahead and be able to make those measurements count.” (1:06:57)

- Joyce Parker, Executive Director, [MS Delta Catalyst Roundtable](#)

“If we are going to have high expectations, we need to be clear, communicate, and collaborate... We can change the way we look at how we implement things and take on a more open-minded approach about who we are going to invite in.” (29:00)

- Etta Taplin, Former President, [Mississippi State School Board Association](#)

“Pre-K should be part of the discussion because it is so important. If you look at our lowest performing kids, you will see schools where access to high quality early childhood education is very limited.” (49:40)

- Sanford Johnson, Deputy Director, [Mississippi First](#)

“It is really important... to lean in in ways that make sense for Mississippi and are likely to give rise to a much better policy environment for helping all kids learn – especially the least advantaged.” (5:30)

- Dr. Kent McGuire, President and CEO, [Southern Education Foundation](#)

“Some of our schools have made improvements because the community has become involved in what we’re doing. That has made a huge difference... Some of our “F” schools have moved up to “B” schools because our community has come and supported [them].” (1:01:50)

- Joyce Helmick, Educator, De Soto County and President, [MS Association of Educators](#)

“[ESSA] will provide an opportunity - if all stakeholders are engaged - to replicate success, rather than to focus on failure.” (1:10:15)

- Dr. Leeson Taylor, Superintendent, [Greenville Public Schools](#) and President, [Mississippi Alliance of Black School Educators](#)

MISSISSIPPI PARTNERS:

The video-conference was presented in collaboration with:



FURTHER RESOURCES:

[Mississippi Department of Education/State Board of Education](#)

- Meeting to discuss the MDE Five-Year Strategic Plan
Tuesday, March 1, 2016, at 9:00 AM
Mississippi Public Broadcasting, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi
- Additional 2016 State Board of Education Meeting Dates
 - March 17, 2016
 - April 21, 2016
 - May 19, 2016
 - June 16, 2016

[Dignity in Schools Campaign](#): National organizations whose mission is unite parents, youth, advocates and educators to support alternatives to a culture of zero-tolerance, punishment and removal in our schools.

[Alliance for Excellent Education](#): Resources on ESSA; Includes video explanations of parts of the new law

[Education Counsel](#): Summary analysis of ESSA

[First Five Years Fund](#): Resources on Early Education & ESSA

[United States Department of Education on ESSA](#)