



THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT: Implications for Equity in Mississippi

July 2016

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is legislation that rewrites the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and replaces the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). The new law represents new opportunities for shaping education policy and recasts the federal, state, and local roles in ensuring educational equity. **Input and support from a broad and politically inclusive set of stakeholders is critical to the successful development, implementation, and ultimate sustainability of ESSA in the states.**

ESSA represents a shift in roles and responsibilities through a redistribution of centralized control toward more localized input and planning. The law's increased flexibility poses significant risks for communities where

there is little engagement or political will to make meaningful improvements on behalf of underserved students and schools. However, it also presents great opportunities for state-based civil rights and equity communities and local education leaders to develop and strengthen a comprehensive system of accountability and improvement based on local context and with support from local stakeholders: **civil rights organizations, family and community groups, teachers and educator groups, organized labor and education personnel, early education and childcare providers, faith-based organizations, researchers and advocacy organizations, elected officials, student groups, teacher educators and others from higher education, school boards, and the business community.**

Broadly speaking, in collaboration with stakeholders, states and districts will be required to:

- **set long-term goals for their schools and students**, including student achievement and rates of high school graduation;
- **measure performance and progress** via indicators based on student academic achievement, graduation rates, student growth, English language proficiency, and through an additional indicator (or indicators) of school quality or student success;
- **identify schools in need of additional support** based on the above indicators for all students and by subgroup;
- **write plans for intervention** in schools with the lowest performance and the highest need; and
- **determine how funds will be distributed and effectively used** to support these interventions and supports.

The law also includes some key shifts in how states and districts will address early education, English language proficiency, educator equity, and at-risk students. For more in-depth information about these and other requirements and opportunities within ESSA, please refer to the list of referenced resources on the last page of this document.

Throughout this document, **new requirements and opportunities for potential decision points within ESSA are indicated with an arrow: DP**



To support SEAs as they engage state stakeholders in the process of aligning current policy with ESSA, Partners *for* (in collaboration with several members of our Network and others) has put together a *Handbook for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*. The *Handbook*, along with a companion brief, "*In Consultation With... The Case for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*," are available here:

[Download the Handbook](#)
[Download the Case](#)

The Development of ESEA, in Brief:

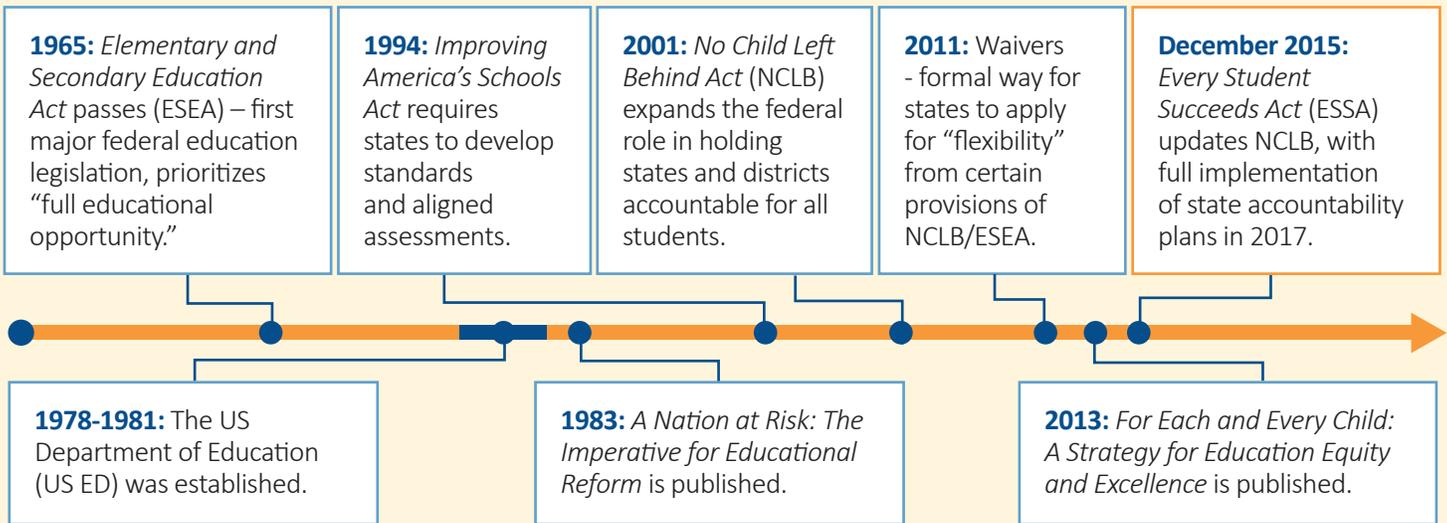


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Goals for Student Achievement

DP **ESSA:** States must set long-term goals with measurements of interim progress for student achievement in ELA and math (as measured by proficiency); high school graduation rates; and English language proficiency.

The goals and interim progress measures must take into account the improvement to make significant progress in closing proficiency and graduation rate gaps.

Currently in MS: The MS state accountability task force specifies goals.

- Goal 1: Mobilize resources and supplies to help ensure that all students exit 3rd grade reading on grade level.
- Goal 2: Reduce the dropout rate to 13% by 2015.
- Goal 3: Have 60% of students scoring proficient or advanced on assessments of the Common Core State Standards by 2016 with incremental increases of 3% each year thereafter.

Moving Forward: MS will need to align these goals with ESSA, make them long-term, and engage with **MS stakeholders** around this decision point.

Goals for High School Graduation Rates

ESSA: States must set a long-term goal for 4-year high school graduation rates with measurements of interim progress.

In addition, states **may** set goals for extended-year high school graduation rates, but those goals must be higher than the 4-year graduation rate goal.

Currently in MS: The state's waiver set a long-term goal of increasing its graduation rate to 85% by the 2017-2018 school year, with interim goals of 81% in 2016-17 and 77% in 2015-16. The state uses a 4-year cohort graduation rate.

Moving Forward: MS will need to report on graduation rates disaggregated by subgroup, not just for all students. In addition, MS may consider setting goals for extended-year high school graduation rates.

Accountability Indicators

ESSA: ESSA requires states to utilize a multiple-indicator accountability system that includes the performance of all students and each student subgroup in each indicator. The required accountability indicators are:

For elementary, middle and high schools:

- Achievement in ELA and math as measured by proficiency on statewide assessments*
- English language proficiency rates*

DP • *At least 1 additional indicator of school quality or student success that allows for meaningful differentiation among school performance, can be disaggregated, and is valid, reliable, statewide, comparable (e.g., rates of school discipline, chronic absenteeism) (See page 4 for more)*

Currently in MS: The state's accountability system assesses four indicators ("components"):

- proficiency (based on statewide assessments and end-of-course assessments required for graduation; only scores of proficient and above are counted);
- growth (increase of performance/proficiency from one year to the next);
- graduation rate (4-year cohort; and
- acceleration (beginning 2015-16 school year participation and performance combined).

10 measures within the above components include: reading proficiency, math proficiency, science proficiency, U.S. history proficiency; reading growth (all students and the lowest 25%), math growth (all students and the lowest 25%); graduation rate; and acceleration.

Accountability Indicators - Continued

For elementary and middle schools:

- A measure of student growth or other academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance*

For high schools:

- 4-year graduation rate (in addition, states may use an extended-year graduation rate)*

DP * This indicator must carry “substantial” weight. In the aggregate, these indicators must carry “much greater weight” than the indicator(s) of school quality or student success.

Moving Forward: MS will need to make annual determinations and report on the indicators outlined in ESSA. Specifically, MS will need to determine appropriate weights for these indicators, with academic indicators receiving “substantial weight” individually and collectively making up a “much greater weight” than the additional indicator(s) of school quality or student success. **MS stakeholders** have an opportunity to work together to determine the most appropriate weights for the state’s system.

MS does not currently use English language proficiency as an indicator in its accountability system. The state will have to measure and report English language proficiency at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and will need to incorporate English language proficiency in a more significant and relevant way in its state accountability system moving forward.

This gap provides an opportunity for **MS stakeholders** to work together to contribute to the design and implementation of the use of English language proficiency in the state’s system.

Additional Accountability Indicators and N-Size

DP **ESSA:** For all schools, states must include at least 1 additional indicator of school quality or success that allows for meaningful differentiation among student groups (e.g., school discipline, chronic absenteeism).

DP States must set the minimum number of students from a subgroup needed for reporting and accountability purposes. The N-size must be the same for all subgroups and for all indicators.

DP **NOTE:** states may include **more than one** additional indicator of school quality or success so long as that indicator is measured for all students and subgroups.

Currently in MS: MS does not currently have indicators of school and student success as part of its main accountability indicators.

MS also does not currently measure subgroups by N-size and instead measures subgroups that are included in the “lowest 25%” in schools, which may mask important information about students.

Moving Forward: MS will need to determine which additional indicator(s) that measure school quality or student success is most appropriate for its student population.

MS should work with **MS stakeholders** to determine the appropriate additional indicator(s) for the state’s system.

MS will be required to determine N-size, to show how the number is statistically sound, and collaborate with **MS stakeholders** (e.g., teachers, principals, other school leaders, and parents) in determining the minimum number.

Report Cards and Data Reporting

ESSA: Annual state and district report cards are required. The following are a subset of the information required by ESSA to be included on the state and district report cards:

- DP** • Long-term goals, measures of interim progress for all students and subgroups, on all accountability indicators;
- DP** • Minimum number of students for subgroups (N-size);
- The system used to meaningfully differentiate among schools (including indicators and their specific weights, methodology for differentiating schools, and schools identified for *Support & Improvement* and respective exit criteria) (see page 6);
- Performance on annual assessments (See page 10) disaggregated by: economic disadvantage; each major racial and ethnic group; gender; disability, English learner (EL) and migrant status; homeless; foster care; and military-connection.
- DP** • Educator Equity: professional qualifications of teachers overall and in high-poverty schools compared to low-poverty schools, including the percentage of teachers who are inexperienced, teaching with emergency or provisional credentials, or who are not teaching in the field they are certified;
- DP** • Measures of school quality, climate, and safety, which may include data reported as part of US ED's Office for Civil Rights Data Collection; and
- Early Childhood Data: percent of students enrolled in preschool programs.

Currently in MS: The MS annual state and district report card includes:

- % students making 1 year's progress in 1 year's time on the state assessment, with an emphasis on the progress of the lowest 25% in the school or district;
- the number of students who graduate in 4 years from a school or district with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who entered 4 years earlier as first-time 9th graders.
- % students scoring proficient or advanced on the current state assessments (ELA, math, science, history);
- % of students participating in statewide assessments for ELA, mathematics, and science; and
- the components of its accountability system with grades "A-F" assigned based on five performance categories.

Moving Forward: Under ESSA, MS report cards will need to include educator equity, civil rights, and early childhood data.

State report cards must be presented in an understandable and uniform format that is developed in consultation with **parent and family stakeholders**, and in a language parents and families can understand.

Schools Identified for Comprehensive Reform Based on *Performance of All Students*

ESSA: States must identify schools for *Comprehensive Support & Improvement*, at least once every 3 years:

- the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools; and
- all high schools with a graduation rate at or below 67%.

DP NOTE: *Targeted Support and Improvement* schools (see below) that are consistently underperforming over a period of time, and that fail to achieve state determined “**exit criteria**,” must be reclassified by the state as *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools.

Currently in MS: *Priority* schools are schools that have been identified as among the lowest performing in the State (total number must be at least 5% of the Title I schools in the state) or any school that receives an “F” for 2 consecutive years. *Priority* schools are responsible for implementing interventions for a minimum of 3 years.

Moving Forward: MS will have to reclassify schools identified for support and improvement in different ways based on all of the annual accountability indicators, disaggregated by subgroup.

For each *Comprehensive* school identified by the state, and **in partnership with stakeholders**, each district shall locally develop and implement a *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* plan for the school to improve student outcomes. Plans must be approved by the school, district, and state and must include evidence-based interventions, a school-level needs assessment, and an identification of resource inequities – all areas of opportunity for **MS stakeholder engagement**.

Schools Identified for Targeted Reform Based on *Subgroup Performance*

ESSA: States must identify, annually, any school with a subgroup of students that is consistently underperforming based on all of the indicators in the state accountability system for *Targeted Support & Improvement*.

States must also identify schools where the performance of any subgroup of students is at or below the level used to identify Title I schools for the bottom 5% in the state for *Targeted Support & Improvement*. If these schools fail to meet “**exit criteria**,” (state-defined and for a state-determined period of time) they will be reclassified as *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools.

DP

Currently in MS: *Focus* schools are schools that receive a “D” or “F” for 2 consecutive years, and are responsible for implementing interventions for a minimum of 2 years. Any schools identified as *Focus* will remain on the *Focus* list until the school meets the exit criteria.

Moving Forward: Each *Targeted* and *Additional Targeted* school should develop and implement school-level plans **in partnership with stakeholders** (e.g., parents, teachers, principals, school leaders). Plans must be approved by the district and must include evidence-based interventions and an identification of resource inequities – areas of opportunity for **MS stakeholder engagement**.

Interventions and Supports for Struggling Schools

ESSA: 1. Comprehensive Support & Improvement Schools

At least once every 3 years, states must identify the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools and high schools with graduation rates at or below 67% for *comprehensive*, locally-determined, evidence-based intervention.

Districts have the responsibility of developing improvement plans which must:

- be informed by all of the accountability indicators;
- be evidence-based;
- be based on a school-level needs assessment;
- be approved by the school, district, and state;
- be monitored and periodically reviewed by the state; and
- identify resource inequities to be addressed.

2. Targeted Support & Improvement Schools:

Annually, states must identify any school with any student subgroup that is “consistently underperforming” based on all indicators in the state accountability system. Those schools must receive targeted, locally-determined, evidence-based intervention. Schools have the responsibility of developing improvement plans which must:

- be informed by accountability indicators;
- be evidence-based;
- be approved and monitored by the district; and
- result in additional action for underperformance over a period of time determined by the district.

3. Additional Targeted Support Schools:

A school with a subgroup performing at the level of the lowest-performing 5% of all Title I schools must also be identified. These schools must identify resource inequities to address through the implementation of its improvement plan in addition to meeting the requirements described above.

Currently in MS: *Priority* schools: Each district works with its *Priority* Schools to set annual goals; MS approves the annual goals with consultation with the district. If a school does not improve after 2 years in the process, state conservatorship is a possibility. The MS Code requires that schools failing for 2 consecutive years may be transformed into a New Start School under the administration and control of the MS Recovery School District within the state. Schools failing to exit *Priority* status after 3 years will be required to attend all MDE training regarding turnaround principles that align to the approved implementation/action plan for the school.

Focus schools: MDE staff provide additional support and quarterly follow-up training for any school not exiting *Priority* or *Focus* status after 3 years of implementation. This training and support is aligned to the turnaround principles, is different and more rigorous when compared to support provided to other *Priority* and *Focus* schools, and is required for all schools that have not met exit criteria.

Moving Forward: MS will need to align *Priority* and *Focus* school interventions and supports with those required for ESSA's *Comprehensive*, *Targeted*, and *Additional Targeted* schools. See page 6 for more information about how these schools must be identified.

State and districts must locally develop plans for interventions and supports for *Comprehensive*, *Targeted*, and *Additional Targeted* schools in consultation with **MS stakeholders**.

Intervention Timeline

ESSA: *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools have 4 years to meet state-set criteria that allow them to exit the *Comprehensive* intervention status. If they do not meet these criteria, they must implement more rigorous **state-determined interventions**, which may include school-level operations.

DP

Any school with a subgroup performing at the level of the lowest-performing 5% of all Title I-receiving schools and implementing Targeted interventions must reach state-set "**exit criteria**" by a state-set **time period** or the school will be identified for *Comprehensive Support & Improvement*.

Currently in MS: *Priority* school interventions must be implemented for a minimum of 3 years. If the school's grade level improves, the school will take the higher grade level but continue to be considered as a *Priority* school for federal reporting and continue to implement the *Priority* school interventions for the 3-year minimum.

Focus school interventions must be implemented for a minimum of 2 years. If the school's grade level improves, the school will take the higher grade level but continue to be considered a *Focus* school for federal reporting and will continue to implement the *Focus* school interventions for the 2-year minimum.

Moving Forward: MS need to determine a timeline for intervention that aligns with the requirements under ESSA. Determining both the timeline and the required interventions are opportunities for **MS stakeholder engagement**.

School Improvement Funding

ESSA: States must use 7% of Title I allocations for school improvement activities. States will determine if these funds are distributed by formula or competitive grants.

DP

States **may** use 3% of Title I allocations for "direct student services," in consultation with districts, including:

- Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and other advanced coursework; career and technical education that leads to an industry-recognized credential;
- credit recovery programs;
- personalized learning; and
- transportation from *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools to higher performing schools.

Currently in MS: *Priority* schools are required to spend "up to 20%" of their Title I funds on improvement.

Focus schools are required to spend 10% of their Title I funds on improvement.

Moving Forward: In order to receive ESSA's school improvement resources, the state and local districts must develop implementation plans with input from **MS stakeholders** (e.g., policy makers, district leadership, representatives of Indian tribes located in the State, teachers, principals, other school leaders, charter school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, administrators, other staff, parents and families).

In addition, MS might consider the strategic opportunity of using Title II professional learning funds to support teacher and staff development in high-poverty schools.

Standards

ESSA: States must demonstrate that their challenging academic standards are aligned with entry-level course requirements in the state's public system of higher education and the state's career and technical education standards.

NOTE: The US Secretary of Education cannot mandate, direct, control, coerce, or exercise any direction or supervision over standards adopted or implemented by the state.

Currently in MS: Mississippi College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) are aligned with Common Core, and based on proficiency needed for students to attend college.

Moving Forward: MS will need to demonstrate that the MCCRS are "challenging" under the new law.

Student Assessment

ESSA: States must:

- assess at least 95% of all students and include participation rates in the state accountability system;
- assess students annually in grades 3-8, and at least once in high school, in math and ELA, with science assessments required at least once in each grade span (3-5; 6-9; 10-12);
- not assess more than 1 % of students using an alternate assessment

for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities; and

- make “every effort” to develop assessments in languages other than English that are present to a “significant extent” in its participating student population.

States **may**:

- use computer adaptive assessments, interim assessments that result in a single summative score, and/or complementary assessments that use projects, portfolios, and extended performance tasks.
- allow districts to use a locally-selected, nationally-recognized high school assessment in place of the required statewide high school assessment;
- apply to implement an *innovative assessment and accountability pilot*, which may include the use of competency- or performance-based assessments that may be used in place of the annual statewide assessments (flexibility will only be afforded to up to 7 states, and a consortia not to exceed 4 states); and
- set a target limit on the aggregate amount of time spent on assessments.

Assessment Audit Grants are available for states to audit the number and quality of assessments statewide and by district; and to provide district subgrants to improve assessment systems and capacity to use results to improve teaching and learning.

Currently in MS: The state’s new Mississippi Assessment Program (MAP) assesses students using online, computer-based tests in grades 3-8 in ELA and math. The ACT is administered to all students classified as Juniors.

Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, the 3rd grade ELA assessment will be used for promotion/retention decisions as required by current state law.

MS has a goal of 95% assessment and must report on progress towards this goal as part of its annual report card.

Moving Forward: MS will need to meet or surpass their goal of 95% assessment for compliance, and will need to determine if it will use an alternative assessment for the subset of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

MS will need to consider the opportunity to apply for specific *Assessment Audit Grants* to provide a structured process to get feedback from teachers, school leaders and administrators, on the supports they need to better use assessment data to improve instruction and how data can be regularly provided to communicate effectively with and build understanding of all stakeholders.

If MS applies for the *Innovative Assessment* pilot, the design and implementation plans should be developed in consultation with **MS stakeholders representing students with disabilities, English learners, and other vulnerable children** (e.g., teachers, principals, and other school leaders; LEAs; parents; and civil rights organizations). MS will need to specify how parents can learn about the system at the beginning of each year of implementation, and engage and support teachers in developing and scoring assessments that are part of the innovative assessment system.

Teacher and Leader Evaluation Systems

ESSA: States are not required to have teacher and leader evaluation systems.

States **may** use federal professional development funds and Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund competitive grants to implement teacher and leader evaluation systems based on student achievement, growth, and multiple measures of performance, and to inform professional development.

Currently in MS: MS's teacher evaluation system is the M-STAR. M-STAR assesses teachers based on "standards-based teacher actions" across 5 domains and 20 standards such as student engagement, learning delivery, as well as student achievement and progress on state assessments.

Moving Forward: MS will need to determine if or how it will use federal professional development funds and *Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund* competitive grants to implement current or new evaluation systems. These decisions are important opportunities for **MS stakeholder engagement**.

Educator Equity

ESSA: States no longer need to define and track Highly Qualified Teachers (HQTs), but states must develop, report and share plans describing how they will identify and address educator equity disparities that result in poor and minority students being taught by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other students.

DP States must collect and publicly report data on these disparities and describe the metrics used to determine the disparities. States must also report on, where available, the annual retention rates of effective and ineffective teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

DP States **may** use federal professional development funds to increase access to effective teachers for students from low-income families and students of color.

Districts must describe how they will identify and address educator equity, and must have mechanisms to notify parents regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher.

In May 2016, US ED proposed regulations to implement the law's accountability, data reporting, and state plan provisions. The proposed regulations build upon states' existing Educator Equity Plans and also includes the following requirements:

- **SEAs must define "ineffective teacher"** or provide guidelines for LEA definitions of "ineffective teacher," that differentiates between categories of teachers.
- **SEAs must put educator disproportionality rates into their annual report card**, including the percentage of teachers in each LEA at each effectiveness level. The report cards must be easily accessible and available on a public website, in language that parents of students enrolled in all schools can understand.

Currently in MS: MS currently reports on high-qualified teachers by district and state across 3 measures:

- inexperienced teachers;
- inappropriately licensed teachers; and
- educator effectiveness, measured against both student achievement outcomes and standards-based teacher actions.

High poverty and minority students are disproportionately located in the lowest performing schools, which have half as many highly effective and 1.5 times as many ineffective teachers as high-performing schools. Proposed strategies were expected to begin Fall 2015 – Fall 2016.

The Mississippi Educator Equity Lab (hosted by US ED, MDE, Partners for Each and Every Child) on March 29, 2016; district, school, and community stakeholders – primarily from Focus Districts – looked at data, identified specific challenges, developed opportunities for collaborative action, and considered what kinds of targeted support is needed.

The MDE Equity Conference on July 18, 2016: district, school, and community stakeholders to discuss effective teacher mentoring programs, building P-16 councils, earning National Board Certification; using Title II funds to address equity gaps

MS Critical Teacher Shortage Act: Any district with over 10% of teachers who are inexperienced or inappropriately licensed is eligible for incentives to help recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

Moving Forward: MS has already identified 10 Focus Districts with the highest educator equity gaps, and is working with them to reduce those gaps. Title II funding allocations, which are specifically

Educator Equity - Continued

- **Root cause analysis and strategies to address equity gaps** must prioritize schools identified for *comprehensive or targeted support & improvement*, and include timelines and funding sources.
- **SEAs can direct an LEA to use a portion of its Title II, Part A funds to support educator equity strategies**, and require LEAs to describe how funds will address disproportionality; the SEA can deny LEA applications if it fails to describe how it will address disproportionality.

meant to support preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers and principals, require state and local districts to work with **MS stakeholders** to assess, develop, and refine strategies to meet the state's goals around high quality teachers and school leaders.

Additionally, the following strategies have been identified for ongoing work in MS:

Teacher Effectiveness: The Mississippi Statewide Teacher Appraisal Rubric (M-STAR) is an evaluation process, aligned to the MS Teaching Standards, designed to improve the professional performance of all educators, differentiated by four levels of "effectiveness." MS's revised educator equity plan should include M-STAR findings as part of its analysis to determine equity gaps of ineffective teachers. Additionally, MS should align resources and systems that promote teacher effectiveness, and invest in regional professional development networks, coaching supports, and partnerships with IHLs, HBCUs, and community colleges.

Stakeholder Engagement/Accessibility: The MS Legislature requires MDE to provide an annual report on Critical Shortage Act data (includes % teachers 0-3 years teaching, % teachers not highly qualified). However, this report is not easily available to the public, and the state has no report cards available on the website with data other than student enrollment and demographic data. MDE will need to publish report cards that are easily accessible and consider language accommodation to provide access for all families.

MDE may also consider making publicly available: data on teacher preparation and certification; hiring, distribution and retention; teacher satisfaction; salary; retirement.

Targeted Interventions and Supports: MS will need to prioritize educator equity strategies and resources to support schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement that are contributing to disproportionality.

Funding/Title II: Mississippi will need to determine how it will direct LEAs to use a portion of their Title II, part A funds to support educator equity strategies, particularly for LEAs with persistent educator equity gaps. For Focus Districts (and other districts facing similar educator equity challenges), MDE will need to consider clear guidance around Title II, part A funds, as well as funds and funding formula to help support rural and small school districts.

Educator Equity

DP **ESSA:** ESSA's provisions aim to promote:

- early learning coordination within communities;
- greater alignment with the early elementary grades; and
- early childhood education focused on capacity building for teachers, leaders, and other staff serving young children.

ESSA includes a birth to 12th grade literacy initiative, and also includes early childhood as a component of education and interventions for Native American and Alaskan Native students, dual language learners, and children experiencing homelessness.

A new authorization has been created for a *Preschool Development Grant* (PDG) program:

Authorized at \$250M for FYs 2017-20, the PDG is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) jointly with US ED. Funds can be used to develop, update, or implement a plan to increase collaboration or coordination among existing early childhood programs and participation of children from low-income families in high quality early childhood programs. Secretaries of HHS and US ED are restricted from prescribing early learning development guidelines, standards, specific assessments, and specific measures or indicators of quality early learning and care.

In addition to the stakeholder engagement required in the development and implementation of PDGs, school districts will need to determine whether they plan to use Title I funds for early childhood education more broadly. If so, their plans must describe the district strategy to support participating students' transition to local elementary schools. These decisions should be made with engagement of stakeholders, especially local early childhood and childcare experts.

Currently in MS: Before 2013, MS had no statewide preschool program. MS transferred authority for early childhood education from the Department of Human Services (MDHS) to MDE in 2013 through the Early Learning Collaborative Act (ELCA), which appropriated \$3,000,000 to fund 11 *Early Learning Collaboratives Grants* that include school districts, nonprofit groups, Head Start Centers, and private child-care providers to provide preschool.

Moving Forward: Under ESSA, MS school districts will need to determine if they plan to use Title I funds for early childhood education. If so, their plans must develop and describe the district strategy to support participating students' transition to local elementary schools. These decisions should be made with engagement of **MS stakeholders**, especially local early childhood and childcare experts.

English Learners

ESSA: Accountability for ELs is shifted to Title I, which increases funding opportunities and visibility for ELs. States must:

- DP** • include English proficiency as an indicator in their accountability systems;
- DP** • annually assess and report English proficiency, and students who have not attained English proficiency within 5 years of identification as an EL;
- clarify a standardized process for classifying ELs and re-designating students as English proficient; and disaggregate ELs with a disability from ELs in general.

DP States have two options regarding timing for testing ELs:

- Include test scores after they have been in the country 1 year (consistent with current law); OR
- Refrain from counting EL test scores in a school's rating in their first year, but require ELs to take both math and ELA assessments and publicly report the results.

In order to receive Title III funding to support EL programs, state and district plans must explicitly include parent, family, and community stakeholder engagement as part of their EL strategy, and develop implementation plans with all state stakeholders.

Currently in MS: MS acknowledges in its flexibility waiver that its current system that uses the “lowest 25%” metric to identify subgroup proficiency (while increasing accountability for traditional subgroups vs. using N-size) does not necessarily capture proficiency of all members of this subgroup. MS uses the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) for assessing EL learner needs.

Moving Forward: MS will have to measure and report English language proficiency at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and will need to figure out how to incorporate English language proficiency in a more significant and relevant way in its state accountability system moving forward.

ESSA's explicit accountability focus on ELs provides an opportunity for the state and local districts to work with and learn from **MS stakeholders** (e.g., EL teachers and administrators and families of ELs). Their guidance will be instrumental to clarifying a process for identifying, classifying, and redesignating ELs; and ensuring that MS provides sufficient resources to data infrastructure, student supports, and capacity building efforts.

In order to receive Title III funding to support EL programs, state and district plans must explicitly include **parent, family, and community stakeholder engagement** as part of their EL strategy, and develop implementation plans with all **MS stakeholders**.

At-Risk Students

DP **ESSA:** HSGI is eliminated, but a new funding program, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant, authorizes formula grants to states for three purposes: (1) provide students a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions; and (3) improve the use of technology to support digital literacy. These funds may be used to support dropout prevention and re-entry programs.

Currently in MS: MS has a statewide goal of achieving an 85% 4-year graduation rate by 2017-18.

MS currently requires that any high school with a graduation rate lower than 80% be placed in “restructuring status” and must implement a dropout prevention /high school completion plan.

MS's current policy does not allocate specialized funds specifically for dropout prevention, aside from funding to support interventions within *Priority/Pocus* schools (of which graduate rate can be a trigger).

Moving Forward: MS now has the opportunity to take advantage of the *Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant* program, and would need to determine which student supports to implement with this new funding. These decisions should be made in consultation with local **MS stakeholders**.

Funding

ESSA: The new law includes some funding provisions that include:

- Supplement not supplant requirements are maintained.
- Maintenance of Effort requirements for K-12 remain in place.
- **DP** A school with at least 40% poverty is eligible for Schoolwide Title I programs.
- The Title II formula shifts to a more significant weight on poverty (80% of the formula by 2020).
- *Weighted Student Funding* (WSF) pilot: 50 school districts working to improve school finance systems, including system evaluation.

Currently in MS: The MS Adequate Education Program (MAEP) funding formula produces a base student cost, the amount that is required to provide each student an adequate education. Each district is required to provide up to 27% of the base student cost through local contribution (local taxes). The state funds the difference between what a local community is able to provide (up to a maximum of 27%) and the total base student cost. This amount is multiplied by the school district's average daily attendance to calculate the district's MAEP allocation.

The state has had problems with underfunding its education system in the past, and advocates have been pushing for fair funding in the state. For example, **Initiative 42** (November 2015) was a ballot initiative to hold the state legislature accountable for keeping its promise to fully fund its public schools.

Moving Forward: A full assessment should be conducted, with the input and engagement of **multiple MS stakeholder groups**, as to whether applying for the *WSF* pilot is feasible.

Districts who apply to participate in the *WSF* pilot should develop their proposals with the input of **MS stakeholders** (e.g., teachers, principals, other school leaders, administrators of federal programs impacted by the agreement, parents, and community leaders).

Rural Schools

DP **ESSA:** Spending flexibility of *SRSA*- and *RLIS*-directed funds is expanded to best meet the needs of underperforming students and schools.

These funds can be used to support teacher recruitment and retention, teacher professional development, increasing access to educational technology, family engagement, ELL support, as well as partnerships that increase access to student enrichment, during and after the school day.

Currently in MS: Approximately \$5 million in total funds are available for rural MS schools, disbursed to qualifying districts based on a per-pupil formula as recorded by average daily attendance records for the month of March.

Eligible MS school districts are those with 20% or more of the children ages 5-17 years are from families with incomes below the poverty lines and must be designated with a school locale code of 6, 7 or 8. These districts may apply directly to US ED for funds.

Districts and schools receiving these funds may use them for teacher recruitment and retention, professional development, educational technology, family engagement, violence and drugs prevention, and/or EL support.

Moving Forward: MS should continue to utilize this avenue of funding and now has the opportunity to use these funds for increasing access to student enrichment, which is another opportunity for **MS stakeholder engagement**.

Charter Schools

ESSA: All public schools are included in the state’s accountability system, including charter schools. States must:

- DP**
- establish charter school authorization standards, which may include approving, monitoring and re-approving or revoking the authority of an authorized public chartering agency based on charter school performance in the areas of student achievement, student safety, financial and
 - operational management, and compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations;
 - ensure charter school annual reports include academic measures that are part of the state accountability system (4 academic, 1 additional indicator), as well as adjusted 4-year and extended cohort graduation rates, disaggregated by subgroups, including plans for intervention and supports; and
 - provide assurance of equitable distribution of effective educators.

Currently in MS: The first MS charter schools were approved for the 2015-16 school year; only 2 have opened so far (both in Jackson).

The MS Charter Schools Act of 2013 requires that charter school applicants receive permission via a majority vote from the local school board in order to establish a public charter school in districts with an “A,” “B,” or “C” rating. The law prohibits private schools from becoming public charter schools and requires public charter schools’ enrollment of “underserved students” to be at least 80% of the underserved enrollment in the school district in which the charter schools are located.

The MS Charter School Authorizer Board (state controlled) is responsible for approving/authorizing applications for new charter schools through a competitive proposal process. Proposals must include descriptions of accountability systems, and standards.

Moving Forward: In addition to a formal process for authorizing charter programs, MS will now have to ensure annual reporting on indicators used for district schools under the state accountability system and ensure equitable distribution of teachers.

Mitigating the Effects of Poverty

DP **ESSA:** Funds include competitive grants for supportive programs, such as *Full-Service Community Schools*, *Promise Neighborhoods* and *21st Century Community Learning Centers*. These grants are intended to expand equitable access to comprehensive student enrichment and supports, including integrated community partnerships and professional development for educators to work effectively with families and communities.

Currently in MS: MS's priority for *21st CCLC* funding is given to programs serving students at *Priority*, *Focus*, or *Approaching Target* schools, schools located in geographical areas underrepresented by *21st CCLC* programs, and middle and/or high schools with programs that use an evidence-based bullying program.

Moving Forward: MS's application for Title IV funding, and its plans to allocate funds to local districts and partnerships will need to emphasize and incentivize greater **collaboration between education decision makers**, including state and local agencies that fund before and after school programs, health and mental health agencies, after-school networks, and **representatives from MS stakeholder groups** (e.g., teachers, districts, and community based organizations).

Districts and community partners should learn from established and effective *21st CCLC* grant partnerships and the Delta Promise Neighborhoods initiative in order to deepen community partnerships and consider opportunities to leverage additional public and private funds. The funding guidelines outline significant opportunities for **input from a broad array of stakeholders** (e.g., specialized instructional support personnel, students, teachers, school leaders, community based organizations, law enforcement, child welfare agencies, public housing agencies) to help MS refine resource and program implementation priorities.

In addition, competitive grant programs (e.g., *Promise Neighborhoods*, *Full-Service Community Schools*) provide an opportunity for deeper understanding of student, family and community needs, by working directly with **parents, families, and community stakeholders** in the planning and implementation of strategic programs.

APPENDIX A: Stakeholder Engagement in ESSA

The ESSA sections below highlight specific opportunities for engagement with various stakeholders in the state:

Title I, Section 1111 – State Plans

- *Development*: Requirement that to receive grant funds plan must be developed by SEA with timely and meaningful consultation with the Governor, members of the State legislature and the State board of education, LEAs, representatives of Indian tribes located in the State, teachers, principals, other school leaders, charter school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, administrators, other staff, and parents (Sec. 1111(a)(1)(A)).
- *Public Comment*: Requirement that each state shall make the State plan publicly available for comment for no less than 30 days. Must be available electronically in an easily accessible format. Must happen before submission of the plan to the Secretary. Assurances must be provided in the plan that this has taken place.
- *Determining ‘N’ size*: States must demonstrate how it determined N size, including how it collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders when determining the minimum number (Sec. 1111(c)(3)(A)(ii)).
- *Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans*: For each Comprehensive school identified by the state, and in partnership with stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, principals, school leaders) locally develop and implement a Comprehensive plan for the school to improve student outcomes (Sec. 1111(d)(1)(B)).
- *Targeted Support and Improvement Plans*: For each Targeted school identified by the district, and in partnership with stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, principals, school leaders), shall develop and implement school-level Targeted plans (Sec. 1111(d)(2)(B)).
- *Assurances – Parent/Family Engagement*: Each SEA plan shall include assurances that the SEA will support the collection and dissemination to LEAs and schools of effective parent and family engagement strategies, including those in the parent and family engagement policy under section 1116 (Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F)).
- *State Report Card*: Must be presented in an understandable and uniform format that is developed in consultation with parents, and to the extent practicable, in a language parents can understand (Sec. 1111(h)(1)(B)(ii)).

Title I, Section 1112 – LEA Plans

- *LEA subgrants*: May only be received by the LEA if it has on file with the SEA an SEA-approved plan that is developed with timely and meaningful consultation with teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and charter school leaders, administrators, other appropriate school personnel, and with parents of children in Title I schools (Sec. 1112(a)(1)(A)).
- *LEA plans*: In its plan, each LEA shall describe the strategy it will use to implement effective parent and family engagement under section 1116 ... and how teachers and school leaders, in consultation with parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, and specialized instructional support personnel, in schools operating a targeted assistance school program under section 1115, will identify the eligible children most in need of Title I services (Sec. 1112 (b)(9)).

Title I, Section 1202 – State Option to Conduct Assessment System Audit

- *Application:* Applications for state assessment audit grants must include information on the stakeholder feedback the State will seek in designing the audit (Sec. 1202(d)(1)(B)).
- *State assessment system audit:* Each State assessment system audit shall include feedback on the system from stakeholders including, for example- how teachers, principals, other school leaders, and administrators use assessment data to improve and differentiate instruction; the timing of release of assessment data; the extent to which assessment data is presented in an accessible and understandable format for all stakeholders (Sec. 1202(e)(3)(C)).

Title I, Section 1204 – Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority

- *Application:* Applications for innovative assessments must demonstrate that the innovative assessment system will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, and other vulnerable children; teachers, principals, and other school leaders; LEAs; parents; and civil rights organizations in the State (Sec. 1204(e)(2)(A)(v)). The application shall also include a description of how the SEA will inform parents about the system at the beginning of each year of implementation (Sec. 1204(e)(2)(B)(v)), and engage and support teachers in developing and scoring assessments that are part of the innovative assessment system (Sec. 1204)(e)(2)(B)(v)).

Title I, Section 1501 – Flexibility for Equitable Per-Pupil Funding

- *Assurances:* LEAs interested in applying for the weighted student funding flexibility pilot shall include in the application an assurance that the LEA developed and will implement the pilot in collaboration with teachers, principals, other school leaders, administrators of Federal programs impacted by the agreement, parents, community leaders, and other relevant stakeholders (Sec.1501(d)(1)(G)).

Title II, Section 2101 – Formula Grants to States

- *Application:* Each SEA shall meaningfully consult with teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instruction support personnel, charter school leaders, parents, community partners, and other organizations or partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise, and seek advice regarding how to best improve the State’s activities to meet the purpose of this title (Sec.2101(d)(3)(A)).

Title II, Section 2102 – Subgrants to LEAs

- *Application:* In developing the application LEAs shall meaningfully consult with teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, charter school leaders, parents, community partners, and other organizations or partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise and seek advice regarding how to best improve the State’s activities to meet the purpose of this title (Sec. 2102(b)(3)).

Title III, Section 3102 – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

- *Assurances:* SEA and specifically qualified agency plans must provide an assurance that the plan has been developed in consultation with LEAs, teachers, administrators of programs implemented under this subpart, parents of English learners, and other relevant stakeholders.

Title III, Section 3115 – Subgrants to Eligible Entities

- *Local Plans:* Local grants must describe how the eligible entity will promote parent, family, and

community engagement in the education of English learners and contain assurances that the eligible entity consulted with teachers, researchers, school administrators, parents and family members, community members, public or private entities, and institutions of higher education in developing the plan.

Title III, Section 3131 – National Professional Development Project

- Grant use: Grants awarded under this section may be used to support strategies that strengthen and increase parent, family and community member engagement in the education of English learners (Sec. 3131(3)).

Title IV, Section 4106 – LEA Applications

- *Applications*: an LEA, or consortium of LEAs, shall develop its application through consultation with parents, teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, students, community based organizations, local government representatives (including law enforcement, local juvenile court, local child welfare agency, or local public housing agency), Indian tribes or tribal organizations, charter school teachers, principals, and other school leaders, and others with relevant and demonstrated expertise in programs and activities designed to meet the purpose of this subpart. The LEA or consortium shall engage in continued consultation with the entities described above (Sec 4106(c)(1)).

Title IV, Section 4203 – State Application

- *Applications*: SEAs shall submit an assurance that the application was developed in consultation and coordination with appropriate State officials, including the chief State school officer, and other State agencies administering before and after school programs and activities, heads of the State health and mental health agencies or their designees, statewide after-school networks and representatives of teachers, LEAs, and community based organizations and a description of any other representatives of teachers, parents, students, or the business community that the State has selected to assist in the development of the application if applicable (Sec. 4203(a)(13)).

Title IV, Section 4624 – Promise Neighborhoods

- *Application*: Eligible entities desiring a grant under this part must include in their application an analysis of the needs assets of the neighborhood identified including a description of the process through which the needs analysis was produced including a description of how parents, families, and community members were engaged (Sec. 4624(a)(4)(B)), and an explanation of the process the eligible entity will use to establish and maintain family and community engagement including how a representative of the members of such neighborhood will be involved in the planning and implementation of the activities of each award granted (Sec. 4624(a)(9)(A)).

Title IV, Section 4625 – Full Service Community Schools

- *Grant awards*: in awarding grants under this subpart, the Secretary shall prioritize eligible entities that are consortiums comprised of a broad representation of stakeholders or consortiums demonstrating a history of effectiveness (Sec.4625(b)(2)).

APPENDIX B: Resources for Further Information about ESSA

The following are overviews and analyses of ESSA from Partners for Network partners and others who have contributed to the national and local conversations about ESSA implementation. This list is not exhaustive, and will be updated as resources become available. We welcome your input on expanding and revising this list.

The Alliance for Excellent Education (The Alliance) is a nonpartisan policy and advocacy non-profit that focuses on high school transformation and policy implementation recommendations. They have produced valuable summary materials - both print and video - summarizing ESSA's implications for **accountability, assessments, high schools, teachers and school leaders, and Linked Learning**. These materials and more can be found at all4ed.org/essa. The Alliance is part of the Partners for advisory group, leading our national issue-based group in governance and accountability.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is a national teachers union that represents 1.6 million members nationwide. AFT resources on ESSA can be found at aft.org/position/every-student-succeeds-act. The AFT is a member of the Partners for advisory group focused on teaching, leading and learning.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. They have produced several materials, including a [FAQ on ESSA](http://ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Every_Student_Succeeds_Act.html), which can be found at [ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Every Student Succeeds Act.html](http://ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Every_Student_Succeeds_Act.html). CCSSO is working with Partners for on ESSA implementation efforts in several states.

EducationCounsel (EdCounsel) is an education consulting firm that focuses on policy strategy, research, and implementation at the national level for all students. In December 2015, EdCounsel produced a [Summary Analysis of the Every Student Succeeds Act](http://educationcounsel.com) immediately following the passage of the law, and has since produced an analysis of the Law's [opportunities and risks](http://educationcounsel.com). These and more can be found at educationcounsel.com. EdCounsel is working with Partners for on analysis of federal policy, and is part of our advisory group focused on early childhood education.

Education Trust (EdTrust) is a national non-profit advocacy organization that promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels, particularly for students of color and low-income students. EdTrust has many resources that can be found at edtrust.org/issue/the-every-student-succeeds-act-of-2015/, including an [overview](http://edtrust.org/issue/the-every-student-succeeds-act-of-2015/) of the law as it relates to Equity.

The National Education Association (NEA) is a national teachers union representing 3 million members nationwide. NEA's resources on ESSA can be found at nea.org/essabegins. The NEA is a member of the Partners for advisory groups focused on teaching, leading and learning, and governance and accountability.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is a nonpartisan voice for Latinos, leading research, policy analysis, and state and national advocacy efforts in communities nationwide. NCLR's resources on ESSA can be found at nclr.org, and include a webinar focused on [what the ESSA means for the Latino community](http://nclr.org), and an [article](http://nclr.org) on the same topic.

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute (The Fordham Institute) is a national non-profit research organization that aims to challenge and frame the educational debate, specifically around standards, school quality and choice, and capacity-strengthening for more effective, efficient, and equitable education. The Fordham Institute put together a video panel about ESSA called [Implementing ESSA: What to expect in 2016](http://edexcellence.net). This and other resources can be found at edexcellence.net.

The National Urban League (NUL) is a national non-profit focused on research and advocacy efforts that are grounded by the direct service and program experience of over 90 affiliates nationwide. The NUL produced a [series of webinars](http://nul.iamempowered.com) focused on ESSA that includes an [Overview of ESSA](http://nul.iamempowered.com). These and other resources can be found at nul.iamempowered.com.

The U.S. Department of Education (US ED) produced a [set of FAQs on ESSA](http://ed.gov/essa). This and other US ED resources can be found at ed.gov/essa.

These resources and More can be found at the
Partners for Each and Every Child website ([Click Here!](#))