

# **5. Glossary of Terms**

# Glossary of Key Stakeholder Engagement Terms

**Access:** The ways in which educational institutions and policies strive to ensure that students have equal opportunities to take full advantage of their education. Factors such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, perceived intellectual ability, past academic performance, special-education status, English-language ability, and family income or educational-attainment levels—in addition to factors such as relative community affluence, geographical location, or school facilities—often contribute to barriers to “access” to educational opportunities.<sup>iv</sup>

**Accommodations:** Changes made to classroom instruction or assessment as required by law for students with disabilities or English learners. These changes allow a student to participate in class and demonstrate their knowledge on assessments just as their native English speaking peers or those who do not have a disability. Examples include extended time to take a test, larger print on a classroom assignment, or a seat closer to the teacher. Students and other stakeholders may require accommodations inside and outside the school building.<sup>i</sup>

**Additional targeted support and improvement schools:** These are schools that have been identified for additional targeted support and improvement under new state accountability systems because one or more subgroups of students in the school are performing at the same level as the lowest performing 5 percent of schools in the state. These schools must develop an improvement plan in consultation with stakeholders that is approved by the district.<sup>i</sup>

**Adjusted cohort graduation rate:** The percent of students who graduate from a high school with a diploma four years after entering, excluding those who transferred to another school.<sup>i</sup>

**Chronic absenteeism:** Missing at least 10 percent of school days in a school year for any reason, excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism is a cause of low academic achievement and is considered a powerful predictor of students who may eventually drop out of school.<sup>ii</sup>

**Comment period:** A period of time following the release of draft regulations or guidance when any person, organization, or group of organizations can send in comments, questions and/or concerns to influence what is included in the final regulation or guidance. Comment periods are often iterative, and typically open for 60 or 90 days.<sup>i</sup>

**Comprehensive support and improvement schools:** Schools in which a large share of students are not meeting state goals. These include schools in the bottom 5 percent of all schools in the state, schools with graduation rates below 67 percent, and targeted support and improvement schools that have not improved over a period of years. These schools must design and implement a support and improvement plan which is comprehensive and designed to raise achievement for all students in the school.<sup>i</sup>

**Consolidated state plan:** A state’s plan for complying with the requirements of ESSA. A state has the option of submitting plans separately for each title (e.g. Title I plan, Title III plan) or for submitting a plan which describes what the state intends to do to comply with the requirements of the entire law. These plans must be developed in consultation with stakeholders, be available for public comment, and be submitted to and approved by the U.S. Department of Education. ESSA includes various requirements for the information included in a state’s plan such as the plan for publicly reporting graduation rates for students in foster care, the statewide accountability system which must be in place, and the state’s strategy for reducing the use of seclusion and restraint. This plan must be revisited and revised periodically.

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**Curriculum:** The lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. An individual teacher’s curriculum, for example, would be the specific lessons, assignments, and materials used to organize and teach a particular course. <sup>i</sup>

**Direct Student Services:** A provision in ESSA that allows states to set aside 3 percent of Title I funding and award these funds to districts with a high number of schools identified for improvement. To receive funding from the states, schools must demonstrate commitment to offering more meaningful learning opportunities, activities, courses and services not otherwise available to students.<sup>iv</sup> More generally, direct student services include programming or services that directly impact student health, learning, or engagement, such as access to a computer, additional course or staff, or after-school programs.

**Educational Equity:** The condition under which every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, taking into account race, gender, ethnicity language, disability, family background, or family income. Meaningful progress toward equity in education does not often mean equal resources for all, since many students from historically disadvantaged students start with less than their peers, and require additional resources to achieve the same level of success as a result. In an equitable system, all individuals attain sufficient knowledge and skill to pursue the college and career path of their choice and become active and contributing members of their communities.<sup>v</sup>

**English learner (EL):** A student between the ages of 3-21 in elementary or secondary school who was not born in the U.S. and/or whose native language is a language other than English, and who has not yet achieved proficiency or fluency in English. EL students might also be migrant, Native American or Alaska Native, multi-lingual or have difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language. <sup>i</sup>

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015:** The latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which replaces No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. ESSA provides federal funding to schools, districts, and states to raise achievement for low-income students and other historically disadvantaged students, and to implement various specific programs. Funds allocated to schools, districts, and states must be spent in accordance with the law.

**High-needs students:** Students in need of special or multiple forms of assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, who attend high-minority schools, who are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English learners.<sup>vi</sup>

**Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA):** A law ensuring services to children with disabilities across the country. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth-2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B. Funding for IDEA is authorized under ESSA.<sup>vii</sup>

**Local educational agency (LEA):** The formal name for governmental bodies that are legally sanctioned by the state to administer elementary or secondary schools (e.g. school district, charter school that is also a district) in a community.<sup>i</sup>

**Low-performing schools:** Schools that have demonstrated poor performance over time on any of a number of indicators, including student performance on standardized assessments. This also includes schools with persistent or significant achievement gaps.

**“Meaningful” stakeholder engagement:** The process used by an organization to engage individuals and/or groups in a way that acknowledges their unique needs and creates value for both the organization and all the stakeholders involved.

**Needs assessment:** A systematic approach that progresses through a defined series of phases. Needs Assessment focuses on the ends (i.e., outcomes) to be attained, rather than the means (i.e., process).<sup>x</sup>

**Personalized learning (also personalization, differentiated, or student-centered learning):** A diverse variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies that are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.<sup>i</sup>

**Rigor:** Instruction, schoolwork, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging. Rigorous learning experiences, for example, help students understand knowledge and concepts that are complex, ambiguous, or contentious, and they help students acquire skills that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives.<sup>i</sup>

**School culture:** Generally, the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity.<sup>i</sup> School Culture is often impacted by behavioral norms of students and school personnel, including discipline codes or practices.

**Stakeholder:** Individuals or collective entities who are invested (has a “stake”) in the welfare and success of a group or policy. In the case of a school and its students, all members of a community should be considered stakeholders. ESSA requires that states and districts engage specific stakeholders among state policymakers and agencies, district and school staff and families and communities during plan development. Under the law, LEAs must engage teachers, principals, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, administrators, English learner administrators, charter school leaders, parents/families, students, civil rights organizations and community based organizations representing historically marginalized students and families, community partners/organizations, Tribal organizations, researchers, educator preparation programs and researchers.<sup>ix</sup>

**State educational agency (SEA):** The formal name for governmental bodies that are legally sanctioned by the state to provide information, resources, and technical assistance to schools, districts, and people in the community served by schools (e.g. state department of education).<sup>i</sup>

**Student attendance:** During the regular school year, the average percentage of days that students are present for school. Students should not be considered present for excused absences, unexcused absences, or any period of time that they are out of their regularly assigned classrooms due to discipline measures (i.e., in- or out-of-school suspension).<sup>vi</sup>

**Student engagement:** The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.<sup>i</sup>

**Targeted support and improvement schools:** Schools that are identified through the state rating system because they have one or more groups of students who are consistently underperforming. These schools must design and implement a targeted support and improvement plan which is approved by the district and is designed to raise achievement for the group(s) of students that is (are) consistently underperforming.<sup>i</sup>

#### Glossary Notes:

- i. <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/education/2016-07-25-Education-Policy-Glossary-of-Terms.pdf>
- ii. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/index.html>
- iii. <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/education/ESSA/ESSA-Guide.pdf>
- iv. <http://chiefsforchange.org/dss-resources/>
- v. <http://www.ccsso.org/equity>
- vi. <https://www.ed.gov/race-top/district-competition/definitions>
- vii. <http://idea.ed.gov/>
- viii. <http://edglossary.org/student-engagement/>
- ix. <http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2016/ESSA/CCSSOStakeholderEngagementGuideFINAL.pdf>
- x. <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/compneedsassessment.pdf>