A District Guide to ESSA and the Importance of Stakeholder Engagement

Participation, Preparation & What Comes Next
The Importance of Meaningful Engagement

Important changes have been made to the rights and responsibilities of districts and schools based on the U.S. Department of Education (US ED) final regulations on accountability under ESSA, released on November 28, 2016. Under these regulations, SEAs have two new deadlines for submitting their consolidated state plans (State Plans): April 3, 2017 or September 18, 2017. Further final regulations are pending as of the publication date of this District Guide.

This decision to extend the due dates to April and September, 2017 will allow districts an additional year to implement the accountability systems under ESSA, including gathering additional data, identifying schools in need of support and improvement, and determining the strategies for support and intervention for identified schools. See page 6 for more information.

Why is Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement Important?

With increased flexibility for states and districts under The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) comes raised stakes for the nation’s most vulnerable children. Recognizing that the advancement of equity and excellence in education requires meaningful and informed stakeholder engagement, ESSA requires state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) to meaningfully engage with a range of stakeholders throughout the processes of policy planning and implementation. A range of actors – states, districts, schools, and other educational leaders – in our educational systems will need to protect equitable access to meaningful educational opportunities for all children throughout the implementation of ESSA.

Who is Needed for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement?

Government and non-government entities, on both the state and local levels, are responsible for collaborating on a broad range of activities throughout ESSA planning and implementation, including the drafting of their SEA’s draft State Plans, and local educational agencies’ (LEAs) drafting of Local Consolidated Plans.

- **State Entities:** SEAs, State Boards of Education, Governor’s offices, legislative committees, state-based coalitions, grant-making organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- **Local Entities:** LEAs, county leaders, school leaders, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), and local student and parent associations.

Who else is playing a role?

- US ED and the federal government must continue to prioritize the statutory provisions in ESSA around equity, accountability, transparency and stakeholder engagement with guidance, evaluation, technical assistance and support.

- Philanthropy plays a critical role in strengthening dedicated public and private infrastructure and grantee/advocacy.
Partners for Each and Every Child

What is the District Guide?
This District Guide is an introduction to a series of district-focused efforts to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) as they begin to understand their responsibilities under ESSA and to invest in and build a stakeholder engagement strategy over the coming months.

Partners for Series: District Support
Partners for will be helping SEAs to support LEA efforts in our anchor states1 over the coming months through a series of network-informed resources and technical assistance:

Part I (December 2016)
The District Guide to ESSA and the Importance of Stakeholder Engagement: Participation, Preparation, and What Comes Next

What is in This District Guide?

- Principles of Meaningful Engagement
- Participate - State Plan Development and State Support for LEAs
- Prepare - Setting the Stage: Supporting a Strategy for Meaningful Engagement
- What Comes Next - LEA Responsibilities Under ESSA
- Engagement Requirements under ESSA: Statutory and Regulatory Provisions
- Appendix A: Stakeholders to Engage
- Appendix B: Additional Resources on Stakeholder Engagement

Part II (Winter 2017)

Part III (Beginning Spring 2017)
State-Specific Toolkits for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement: Resources, tools, best practices, and decision points for LEAs and school leaders, given specific requirements in ESSA State Plans

1. Partners for Anchor States: California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, New Jersey, Ohio
2. Partners for has produced two guides – A Handbook for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement: A Tool to Support State Education Agencies in Planning and Implementation of ESSA and "In Consultation With..." The Case for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement – to help SEAs advance educational excellence and equity by taking a strategic approach to the various provisions in ESSA that call for stakeholder engagement.
## Five Principles of Meaningful Engagement

### Principle 1: Hold stakeholder engagement and the pursuit of equity and excellence as inseparable endeavors that must be practiced and reflected throughout the full decision-making and implementation process. *Living up to this Principle means:*

- Create systemic structures and expectations that embed stakeholder engagement throughout the policy planning process, in a regular and ongoing manner.
- Prioritize more equitable outcomes for students throughout all policy and reform efforts, taking into account both the immediate and cumulative impact of reforms on classrooms and school practice, and the improvement of key programs and activities.

### Principle 2: Include diverse groups of stakeholders, with a commitment to engaging historically excluded voices. Such a commitment goes beyond a more diverse invite list, and considers the structures, norms, timelines, languages, etc. that may unintentionally elevate some voices over others. *Living up to this Principle means:*

- Work with key community leaders and networks to identify and prioritize opportunities for stakeholder engagement, not only to understand and identify program challenges, but also as part of decision-making processes on funding, accountability, supports, interventions, data reporting and assessment.
- Assess local community histories, needs, and resources to develop a map of stakeholders that considers their knowledge, background, and expertise to inform key decisions.
- Invest in diverse channels and mechanisms to build public awareness and solicit feedback. Actively engage and support stakeholders that best represent the demographic, geographic, language, and political diversity of the state and make up a cross-section of community perspectives and experiences.

### Principle 3: Support stakeholder engagement that is well informed by developing and distributing necessary background information and by offering preliminary thoughts about key decision points and implications for program resource allocation, assessment and accountability. *Living up to this Principle means:*

- Be intentional about making time and space for learning and discussion among a diverse group of stakeholders throughout the process of designing, implementing, assessing, and refining reform efforts.
- Engage communities to review information and recommend and design improvements that reflect collaborative approaches towards building consensus.

### Principle 4: Focus on continuous improvement as an essential paradigm/framework for engagement, including reflection on key decisions and implementation, as well as on the stakeholder engagement process itself. *Living up to this Principle means:*

- Commit to transparent, evidence-based decision-making including establishing and following clear and consistent decision-making processes and timelines.
- Establish a cycle of identifying opportunities for improvement, taking action through planning and implementation, and assessing impact to inform next steps.
- Determine how collaboration and engagement will inform an ongoing continuous improvement cycle regarding state ESSA plans and related state policy; ensure that stakeholder engagement generates input and insight at key reflection and decision points.
- Adapt strategies, allowing them to evolve based on new data, information, needs, and resources; remain fluid and flexible in response to stakeholder input.

### Principle 5: Seek to build consensus pragmatically; effective collaboration doesn’t always mean full consensus. *Living up to this Principle means:*

- Strive to find common ground, be willing to work across political divides, and build on each other’s expertise.
- Commit to an understanding that the end product will result in some give-and-take on all sides.
Participate:
What is Happening at the State Level?

State Support for LEAs

As your SEA develops the ESSA State Plan, they must engage in “timely and meaningful” consultation with LEAs on a number of key decision points in the law. **To make engagement efforts meaningful and impactful, SEAs must commit to:**

- Supporting LEA involvement in development of the ESSA State Plan;
- Capacity-building as LEAs seek to understand and articulate substantive areas of the law;
- Providing technical assistance for LEAs as they embark on their own implementation efforts, including robust and sustainable stakeholder engagement strategies; and
- Fostering ongoing engagement and linking efforts across the state.

**Partners for will be supporting these efforts** in our anchor states over the coming months through a series of network-informed resources and technical assistance (*Parts I-III described on Page 2 of this document*).

How are you Engaging with your SEA in State Plan Development?

Each SEA is required under ESSA to engage stakeholders. **Consider the following questions as you determine how to participate:**

- What is the state agency and staff or department that is managing ESSA State Plan development? How can I contact them?
- Where is ESSA information for my state centrally located (online)?
- What is the timeline that the SEA is following? Is this timeline based on legislative or policy-based obligations? When will a state plan draft be available?
- What are the other organizations involved in ESSA State Plan development? Do they sit on a committee at the state level? Operate independently? What consensus do they support or speak for?
- What national resources are available that can help to inform my own opinions and, ultimately, input?
- What other state legislation, code, or strategic decision making will influence or be influenced by ESSA (e.g. a strategic plan)? What are the parameters for implementation of ESSA in the state? What decisions have already been made? Where is there flexibility?

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3. Section 1111(a)(1)(A) State Plans – Consolidated state plan
Participate: What is Happening at the State Level?

Final Regulation: Implications for Districts and Schools

Final regulation on state plans, school accountability, data reporting released November 28, 2016:

- State Plan submission date extension: April 3, 2017 or September 18, 2017
- Timeline for states to identify schools in need of comprehensive and targeted support has been updated: 2018-19 school year (using data from 2017-18)
  - In advance of the 2018-19 school year, districts must develop Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans for identified schools, including evidence-based strategies and a resource equity analysis, in collaboration with specifically identified stakeholder groups, including students. These plans must be approved by the district and the SEA; and must be monitored and reviewed by the SEA.
  - In advance of the 2018-19 school year, schools must develop Targeted Support and Improvement Plans for identified schools, including evidence-based strategies, in collaboration with specifically identified stakeholder groups, including students. These plans must be approved and monitored by the district.

Districts and schools will now have additional time to engage with local community members around the collection of essential data and new systems of identification and support.

SEA Timeline of State Plan Development

1. States must submit by April 3, 2017 in order to receive Federal fiscal year 2017 funds for programs that US ED indicated may be included in the State Plan: Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part D; Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Title IV, Part A; Title IV, Part B; Title V, Part B, Subpart 2; and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. (source CCSSO)
Participate: What is Happening at the State Level?

### Timeline for LEAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participate During State Plan Development</th>
<th>Prepare Now and Following Submission</th>
<th>What Comes Next: First Year of Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in ESSA State Plan Development:</td>
<td><strong>Draft Plan Submitted to the US ED</strong></td>
<td>Identify and write plans for schools in need of support and improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Engage with SEAs as they make decisions about what to include in the ESSA State Plan</td>
<td>Begin to Make Local Decisions:</td>
<td>Write LEA consolidated plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support your local constituents so that they can also participate (information-sharing; notification about opportunities to engage) Apply to relevant Pilots under ESSA</td>
<td>• Understand and map local decisions based on the ESSA State Plan</td>
<td>Gather data required under state and local accountability systems</td>
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<td>• Write Consolidated LEA Plans</td>
<td>Implement Pilots (where relevant)</td>
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<td>• Start considering the needs of schools most likely to be identified as needing support and improvement.</td>
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<td>• Align budget/allocation</td>
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### Stakeholder Engagement

**Organize a local stakeholder engagement strategy:**

- **Use the Partners for LEA and School Leader Handbook (Jan 2017)**
  - Determine internal structures and staff to support stakeholder engagement
  - Determine local partners and stakeholders to engage
  - Begin to map decision-making to stakeholders who will most benefit from inclusion and who will provide the most local support
  - Build up local network of stakeholders to reach - through support for participation in the State Plan development

**Engage Local Stakeholders to Make Local Decisions:**

- **Use the Partners for LEA toolkit (Spring 2017)**
  - Inform stakeholders about state and local decisions
  - Provide explicit questions and mechanisms for input
  - Work with offices of budget and funding management to align allocation with plans for implementation in collaboration with stakeholders

**Engage with Schools and Families to Support Their Understanding of Decisions Made:**

- Report cards
- Schools identified for support and improvement
- Support and improvement strategies
- New data and information being gathered
- Funding and Resources

### Ongoing:

Engage in Ongoing efforts for stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement:

Feedback and information-sharing, along with technical assistance and support for practitioners throughout implementation.
Prepare: Supporting Local Engagement

What Can LEAs and School Leaders Do Now to Support Local Stakeholder Engagement?

As key decisions are made at the state level over the next few months that will affect local decision-making, LEAs have the opportunity to begin to set the stage for meaningful engagement at the local level now and over time. While not all decisions facing LEAs are solidified, LEAs can begin to build structures to support decision making moving forward.

Setting the Stage: Building a Community Team to Support Meaningful Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a commitment and a process that, in order to be done well, incorporates dedicated leadership, thoughtful preparation, and adequate authority. Begin by identifying a team of key staff and local Partners who will have the capacity and authority to develop and project-manage a comprehensive approach to stakeholder engagement.

For LEAs and school leaders, partnership will be essential for building the capacity of this group to engage in meaningful engagement and make determinations about various aspects of the law. Partners should include leadership that represents the various stakeholder groups represented in local context, and should include representatives that can support both engagement efforts and technical assistance for implementation, including legislative and community implementation support.

This community team will be tasked with initial assessment and mapping of current and potential engagement opportunities, as well as having a preliminary understanding of the major areas of consensus and disagreement across a diverse group of perspectives.

Setting the Stage: Questions to Consider

Identify an internal team

- Who is the primary internal team to drive a comprehensive process (project management) of ESSA design and stakeholder engagement? How might you identify this group early to ensure that staff have time to plan and prioritize the process and understand related expectations?

- What are the internal resources and potential stakeholder networks and resources that can support an explicit stakeholder engagement strategy? Have resources and supports for the strategy been identified for previous policy efforts that could be useful in this context?

- Internally is there money and/or human capital dedicated to stakeholder engagement efforts in your LEA?

- Are there opportunities to engage with outside advocacy organizations or philanthropic dollars/leaders to help design and support the engagement process? Who will be core local Partners?

5. Please see our Handbook for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement: A Tool to Support SEAs for a detailed framework on how to build an effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement strategy under ESSA. This framework, which was written to support SEAs as they write their ESSA State Plans, can be used to develop a strategy under any legislation and at any level.
Prepare:
Supporting Local Engagement

Setting the Stage: Questions to Consider

Create a big-picture map: Determine some of the key issues and decision points for engagement in your LEA

• How does your local strategic plan, existing achievement gap(s), and accountability data inform the LEAs's understanding of equity priorities? While many of the decision points under ESSA are yet to be determined at the local level, what are areas of importance for your district or school?

• How have key constituencies prioritized these areas? Where are the areas of broad consensus? of major division?

• What is the level of understanding that internal staff have about the key decision points for your school or district and their stakeholder implications, including available background materials, overviews or guides to the law, etc.? What is the level of understanding that internal staff and strong or core partners have about the local areas of concern and their stakeholder implications, and how might you build internal or partner knowledge of these issues and potential implications and/or solutions?

Identify LEA and School Roles and Stakeholder Groups: Clarify staff and partner roles and responsibilities & solicit input from a more diverse group of stakeholders

• Who, within the LEA, is implicated in the issues and will need to share responsibility for meaningful stakeholder engagement? How might you use current capacity (including partnerships) to support engagement, rather than creating entirely new avenues for implementation?

• Do you think you have a strong handle on key stakeholder groups in your district or school community that represent a diverse group of stakeholders? And do you know how to reach them directly and/or have second-degree contacts who can reach them? How might your list of stakeholders grow over time?

• Who are the stakeholders that you will engage in determining these issues? Which partners and stakeholders are you able to leverage to ensure that underrepresented stakeholders are included? Which of these partners are most able to help to build internal capacity and support ongoing engagement efforts?

• Which stakeholders are most invested and involved in the issues of importance to your district or school community? Can you anticipate their interests, areas of consensus, and areas for further discussion? Has there been a clear articulation of how their engagement impacts/influences decision-making?

Identify diverse mechanisms for stakeholder engagement

• What are some ways to leverage relationships with existing stakeholders to co-brand engagement activity and share resource costs related to engagement (e.g., holding events at facilities owned/managed by different stakeholder groups; working with organizations that can provide childcare or simultaneous interpretation or translation of materials)? How might local philanthropy support these efforts?

• What are mechanisms of engagement that have been effective in the past? What mechanisms might be most useful for your district or school community?

Articulate an approach to decision-making

• Have you developed a process map that identifies how, where, and when stakeholder engagement will factor into federal, state, and local guidelines for ESSA implementation?
What Comes Next:
LEA Responsibilities Under ESSA

Key Decision Points for LEAs under ESSA

States are working now with stakeholders to make determinations about the state accountability system and to write the ESSA State Plans, which will clarify district and school roles and decision points moving forward.

What is Underway in Your State? Key Decision Points for SEAs

As SEAs develop their ESSA State Plans for submission to US ED, they will be grappling with many key decision points that will affect local communities across the state, and are are required by statute to invite participation from all stakeholders – including LEAs.

School Finance and Efficiency
- Funding: Allocation; Grant Programs

Teaching Leading and Learning
- Assessments
- English Learner Identification, Support, and Redesignation
- Accommodations and Supports; Data Collection and Reporting for Students with Disabilities
- Foster and Homeless Student Supports, Data Collection and Reporting
- Teacher and Leader Quality
- Educator Equity

Early Childhood Education
- Early Childhood Education

Mitigating Poverty’s Effects
- School Improvement Supports
- School Environment (e.g. Suspension/Expulsion)

Governance and Accountability
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Goals for Student Achievement
- Accountability Indicators and N-Size
- Report Cards and Data Reporting
- Charter School Organization and Accountability

What Does ESSA Mean at the Local Level? Key Decision Points for LEAs

While decisions are being made at the state level, LEAs and school leaders can both participate in state decision-making, and begin to understand their roles moving forward by anticipating some of the decision points facing local communities. The following list is not exhaustive.

- Accountability
- Assessment
- Teachers and Leaders
- English Learners
- Foster and Homeless Youth
- Supporting 21st Century Students
- Early Childhood Education
- Charter Schools
- Weighted Funding Flexibility Pilot

6. For more information about state-specific engagement efforts, please see partnersforeachandeverychild.org.
7. For more details regarding key decision points, please see the SEA Handbook, Part A.
What Comes Next: LEA Responsibilities Under ESSA

District and school leaders will need to Participate in state decision-making, and Prepare now by developing a strategy for engaging stakeholders and making decisions about What Comes Next at the local level.

Accountability

Participate: As a core part of their ESSA State Plans (Consolidated State Plans), states will be determining systems of accountability – including accountability indicators; school and district report card content and structure; guidelines for identifying and determining interventions for struggling schools, timelines for these interventions, and the data that will be required to make related determinations; a system for evaluating local plans for support and intervention. SEAs are encouraging the participation of LEAs and school leaders in making these determinations. LEAs should provide input based on local context and an awareness of local capacity and community engagement in responding to these state-level decisions.

Once these plans are submitted, SEAs will be working with LEAs and other stakeholders to continually evaluate their ESSA state plans and revise them to better support schools and students over time. LEAs should participate in the writing and ongoing revision processes, and should support their local communities in understanding this process and participating, as well.

Prepare: LEAs will need to begin thinking about writing their own ESSA Local Plans (Consolidated LEA Plans), Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans, and will need to evaluate and approve Targeted Support and Improvement Plans written by schools. These Plans will outline the strategic priorities for each LEA or school and must be written in collaboration with stakeholders. The substance of these plans will be contingent on the decisions made in the ESSA State Plan, and will require the support and technical assistance of SEAs.

REGULATORY UPDATE: Final regulations require that every district that receives federal funds for school improvement must receive a minimum of $50,000 for each targeted support and improvement school it serves and $500,000 for each comprehensive support and improvement school it serves. SEAs are allowed to reduce these amounts in specific cases, based on school size and other factors.

REGULATORY UPDATE: Final regulations require that districts consult with parents in designing report cards. The report cards have to be made public by December 31 of each year beginning in December 2018, and are to include information on district- and school-level per-pupil expenditures in a timely manner (by no later than June 30 of the following year).

What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?

- Develop a Consolidated LEA Plan, either in addition to or incorporated into a strategic plan for each LEA.
- Develop Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans for all schools identified by the state as part of the new accountability system in the ESSA State Plan, including a needs assessment, a communication strategy to notify students and families, and systems to monitor the implementation of Plans.
- Identify and support schools in the development of their Targeted Support and Improvement Plans, including technical assistance and capacity-building for effective, "evidence-based" supports and interventions, and to determine the number of years before schools must exit this category or be re-classified.
- Implement school and district report cards and support community understanding of these tools.
- Refine existing systems and develop new data to support accountability and continuous improvement.
What Comes Next: 
LEA Responsibilities Under ESSA

Assessment

Participate: SEAs are making decisions about standards and assessments, including high school alternative assessments (such as the ACT or SAT), identification of students eligible for alternative assessments, and participation in assessment pilots. Each LEA should begin to think about how these decisions will affect local context and provide input to the state.

Prepare: LEAs will also be responsible for determining where, how, and to whom alternative and native language assessments will be administered, and should begin to analyze how many students might be affected by decision-making, and how to best support families and communities to understand the decisions made about – and the importance of – assessments.

What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?

- Support schools in maximizing participation in assessments, including providing necessary monitoring and support around technology, testing schedules, and communications.
- Ensure, in collaboration with the state, that alternative and native language assessments are made available to locally-identified students.

Teachers and Leaders

Participate: Under ESSA, SEAs must develop, improve, or provide assistance to LEAs to support the design and implementation of educator and/or school leader evaluation and support systems, and must also develop, improve, and implement mechanisms to assist LEAs and schools in effective and meaningful recruitment and professional development strategies. LEAs should take advantage of these resources and help to guide the state strategies in determining the framework for this support.

Prepare: LEAs should begin to assess teacher and leader data, as well as educator equity efforts, and begin to think about how changes under Title II will affect the opportunities afforded to districts moving forward, as well as the latest evidence-based strategies for addressing the teacher recruitment, preparation, professional development, and retention.

What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?

- Develop Title II plans that outline how they will use data to create, implement, and continually improve programs and strategies to strengthen the professional capacities of educators and school leaders. This might include partnering with professional organizations, institutions of higher learning, or non-profit organizations to build capacity in areas unique to the needs of the LEA.
- Determine whether to apply for subgrants under the Title II Literacy Program.
What Comes Next: LEA Responsibilities Under ESSA

**English Learners**

**Participate:** As states begin to solidify systems of support and accountability for English learners (ELs), LEAs should participate in developing these systems – including prioritized programming and partnerships – based on local context.

**Prepare:** As states make decisions about data collection, LEAs should begin to disseminate this data to communities, and interpret this information, in order to meaningfully impact support and intervention strategies.

**What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?**

- Identify and align explicit funding for programs, strategies, and systems that enhance or supplement language instruction or educational programs that serve the needs of ELs and their families.
- Build capacity and strengthen relationships with EL families and communities.

**Foster and Homeless Youth**

**Participate:** SEAs are currently working to support structure for data collection for foster and homeless youth for each of the accountability and performance reporting measures that they will adopt in the spring. LEAs should participate in advocating for representation of all subgroup needs in accountability structures, including foster and homeless youth.

**Prepare:** LEAs should begin to think about what local systems have available data for foster youth and children experiencing homelessness, and which local services LEAs will be able to leverage in serving these students moving forward. LEAs should partner with local foster and homeless advocacy and/or support organizations to begin to think about local systems that have data and whether it is the correct, adequate data.

**What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?**

- Identify and designate local liaisons to ensure foster and homeless youth are supported, including for financial aid for post-secondary educational opportunities, and ensure homeless families and children can access early intervention services under, if eligible.
- Describe the services the LEA will provide to support the enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youth, including transportation services.
- Maintain health and academic records for foster and homeless students, as well as other enrollment records such as birth certificates, guardianship records and evaluations for special services or programs.
What Comes Next: LEA Responsibilities Under ESSA

Supporting 21st Century Students

Participate and Prepare: Title IV presents opportunities for SEAs, charter organizers, local practitioners, and LEAs. It will be essential that LEAs work in collaboration with other implicated groups to best apply for and distribute funds, determine meaningful programming to support students, evaluate and continually improve upon determined strategies, and support structures to share best practices across the state.

What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?

- Develop Title IV plans for Safe and Healthy Schools and Well-Rounded Education that describe how the LEA will use funds to support student and family enrichment, including programs, activities, staffing and systems to provide resources and supports for schools. This might include working in partnership with community based organizations and family-serving organizations to strengthen relationships between schools and communities.

- Determine whether to apply for competitive grant programs in partnership with community-based organizations and/or other public agencies to fund a comprehensive approach to school and community improvement, e.g. Promise Neighborhoods, Full Service Community Schools.

Early Childhood Education

Participate: SEAs are currently making determinations about whether to use ESSA funding opportunities to support early education, and if so, which ones. For example, State Title I plans must describe how states will support LEAs and schools that choose to use Title I funds to support early childhood programs. In addition, SEAs will be determining whether to use Title II teacher evaluation and professional development funding to support building up an informed and K-12 aligned workforce for early childhood education. Also note that LEAs can make their own determination at the local level about whether or not to use Title II funds to support professional development for early childhood educators. LEAs should leverage the support of local providers to participate meaningfully in this decision-making.

Prepare: LEAs should begin to look at how to take advantage of these opportunities, including how Title I funding for support and intervention might include early childhood education as a priority. Title IV also provides opportunities for LEAs to seek competitive grant funding to support early childhood education.

What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?

- Determine whether to use Title I funding for early childhood education. If so, include in plans for support and intervention a description of how the LEA will “support, coordinate, and integrate services,” and a description of how the district will support participating students to transition to local elementary schools. If LEAs do choose to use Title I to fund early childhood, they will need to follow Head Start Performance Standards.

- LEAs that receive Title I funds must develop agreements and undertake activities to increase coordination with Head Start and other early childhood programs regardless of whether they use Title I funding to provide district early childhood programs.
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What Comes Next: LEA Responsibilities Under ESSA

Charter Schools

Participate: SEAs are currently making decisions about how ESSA will affect charter programs and accountability for charter schools and authorizer responsibilities. LEAs and charter programs should participate in these decisions.

Prepare: LEAs should work with charter programs to better align services and supports for students. LEAs with charter schools in their districts should engage with these school leaders to develop the Consolidated LEA Plan. However, this does not apply where charter schools are their own separate LEAs.

What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?

- Assist the state in determinations about Title IV, Part C grants, expanding opportunities for charter schools.
- Align current accountability systems under ESSA, including developing and updating data systems and developing or strengthening financial transparency.

Weighted Funding Flexibility Pilot

Prepare: LEAs do not need to wait for state determinations to apply for this flexibility funding pilot program. For more information about this pilot, see the Thomas B. Fordham Institute’s Follow the Money: ESSA’s weighted Student Funding Pilots.

What Comes Next: What will LEAs need to do?

- Determine participation in the pilot, and potentially develop application to US ED (note that applications do not depend on ESSA State Plan development).
The following section outlines areas of the new federal law where local stakeholder engagement is required. It is important to keep in mind that while the following engagement opportunities are explicitly outlined in ESSA, all efforts to support schools and students will be more effective, meaningful, and lasting with explicit and ongoing community engagement.

**Consolidated Plans (Title I)**
- LEAs must engage a variety of stakeholders in developing their Consolidated LEA Plan, and must periodically review and revise this plan [Section 1112(a)(1)(A)].
- The Consolidated LEA Plan must describe strategies to be used to effectively transition students to postsecondary education and career, which could include coordination with institutions of higher education, employers, or other local partners. The plan must also describe how the LEA will coordinate with early childhood education programs [Section 1112(b)(6)].
- LEAs must provide transportation for the school of origin for children in foster care and develop procedures for this in collaboration with the SEA or local child welfare agency [§ 299.13].

**Assessment (Title I)**
LEAs must approve and monitor school plans to improve assessment participation rates under the law [§ 200.15].

**School Improvement (Title I)**

**Schools Identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement**
LEAs must:
- develop Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans for all schools identified by the State and must partner with stakeholders to develop and implement these plans [Section 1111(d)(1)(A); § 200.21];
- partner with stakeholders to produce a needs assessment in schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement [§ 200.21];
- notify any parents of students enrolled in schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement, including the reason for identification [§ 200.21]; and
- if a school does not meet the determined exit criteria, then conduct a new needs assessment and partner with stakeholders to amend the comprehensive support and improvement plan [§ 200.21].

**Schools Identified for Targeted Support and Improvement**
LEAs must:
- monitor each Targeted Support and Improvement Plan developed by identified schools and relevant stakeholders [Section 1111(d)(2)(B)] and these plan provisions to ensure that, among other requirements, schools identify eligible children most in need of services under targeted support and improvement [Section 1112(b)(7)]; and
- notify parents of students in schools identified for targeted support and improvement [§ 200.22].

LEA plan provisions must include strategies for implementing effective parent and family engagement strategies; supporting, coordinating, and integrating with early childhood education programs; and facilitating effective transitions to high school and postsecondary institutions [Section 1112(b)(7)]. LEAs must also support participating schools in planning and implementing family engagement strategies, potentially collaborating with other stakeholders with expertise in this area [Section 1116].
Engagement Requirements under ESSA: Statutory and Regulatory Provisions

Weighted Funding Flexibility Pilot (Title I)

With regard to Flexibility for Equitable Per-Pupil Funding, LEAs must consult with stakeholders in developing and implementing the local flexibility demonstration for weighted per-pupil funding [Section 1501(d)(1)(G)].

Teachers and Leaders (Title II)

LEAs must consult with a range of stakeholders in developing applications for Title II formula funds, seek advice on how to improve activities, and describe how data and ongoing consultation will be used to continuously improve Title II local activities [Section 2101(b)(2)].

English Learners (Title III)

LEAs must use Title III funds for parent and family engagement activities related to English learners, among other required uses of funds [Section 3115(c)(3)(A)].

For subgrants serving immigrant students, LEAs (and other eligible entities) must also describe how they will promote parent, family, and community engagement, and how they consulted with stakeholders in developing their Title III plans [Section 3115(g)(3)].

Supporting 21st Century Schools (Title IV)

LEAs must consult stakeholders in developing a Title IV plan for Safe and Healthy Schools and Well-Rounded Education, and consult them on an ongoing basis while implementing strategies and programs under Title IV [Section 4106(c)(1)], and LEAs may receive training in all family engagement policies, programs, and activities through partnerships with family engagement centers [Section 4501(1)].

An LEA may:

- use Safe and Healthy Schools funds to designate a coordinator to engage the community by building partnerships and strengthening relationships and supports between schools and communities [Section 4108(5)(H)];
- be consulted in the development of needs and assets analysis for the Promise Neighborhoods Program [Section 4624(a)(4)(B)]; and/or
- be included in an applicant’s explanation of how a Promise Neighborhood will establish and continue family and community engagement including involving representative participation from the neighborhood, among other activities [Section 4624(a)(9)(A)].

Additionally, Full Service Community Schools applications that include broad stakeholders – which may include LEAs – receive priority [Section 4625(b)(2)].
### Appendix A: Stakeholders to Engage

**Partners for Each and Every Child recommends including the following stakeholders in engagement efforts.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
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</table>
| Civil Rights Organizations      | Organizations that expressly support or advocate for underserved students (students of color, low-income students, ELs, students with disabilities, e.g. State Conferences of the NAACP)  
*Local:* Local affiliates (e.g. Urban League affiliates), local alliances, school-based support centers/providers, youth development organizations |                                                                                         |
| Educators                       | National union affiliates, teacher networks, state union federations (e.g. Teacher Union Reform Network, Professional Association of Illinois Educators, Educators for Excellence)  
*Local:* Local union chapters, childcare providers, early learning practitioners, Head Start and Early learning leaders, charter teacher alliances, teacher preparation programs, labor-management alliances |                                                                                         |
| Advocacy                        | Grassroots organizations, education lobbying organizations  
*Local:* Community-based organizations (CBOs), families and family organizations, early learning advocates, students and student organizations, school-based personnel, community coalitions focused on public education |                                                                                         |
| Philanthropy                    | State & Local: Local, state and national-level foundations or collaborative organizations with interest in state, district, or policy-based funding |                                                                                         |
| Business Community              | Corporations, health and social service providers, local business organizations, faith-based organizations, and GED and workforce programs |                                                                                         |
| Early Learning Leaders          | State: state Head Start association, state early learning advisory council, state child care associations or organizations  
*Local:* Head Start providers, community and faith-based preschool providers, center-based child care providers, home-based child care providers, local early childhood collaboratives, home visiting programs, Part C providers |                                                                                         |
| Higher Ed, Certification, Research | Accreditation institutions for K-12 and higher education, teacher certification programs, state university systems, historically black colleges and universities, postsecondary minority institutions, community college systems |                                                                                         |
| Professional Associations       | School boards, school business officials, school administrators, superintendents, principals |                                                                                         |
| Elected Officials               | Governor, state board members  
*Local:* Mayors, City/County Council members, school boards |                                                                                         |
| State Agencies and Governmental Bodies | Representatives from Indian Tribes, housing, health/human services, Charter Management Operators (CMOs) |                                                                                         |
| Local Agencies                  | Districts, school leadership, mental and physical health providers (e.g. clinics, preventive health, teacher consultancies, trauma-informed), CMOs, alternative and transitional education providers |                                                                                         |
| Parents, Families, and Communities | Associations and organizations representing parents and families (e.g. state PTA, statewide parent advocacy organizations)  
*Local:* Parent and community organizers and local parent/family advocacy groups, Parents, Families, Community Members |                                                                                         |
| Student Groups                  | Youth and student groups that operate at the state and local levels |                                                                                         |

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8. See the U.S. Department of Education *Dear Colleague Letter* for more information about stakeholder engagement requirements under ESSA and a comprehensive list of stakeholders.
Appendix B: Additional Resources on Stakeholder Engagement

**Partners for Each and Every Child**
In Consultation With... The Case for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement | July 2016  

**Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at American Institutes for Research**
Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide Planning for Engagement With Stakeholders in Designing Educator Equity Plans Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback | December 2014

**Coalition for Community Schools**

**Council of Chief State School Officers**
“Let’s Get This Conversation Started: Strategies, Tools, Examples and Resources to Help States Engage with Stakeholders to Develop and Implement their ESSA Plans...” | June 2016

**The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights**
Parent and Family Engagement Provisions in the ESSA | January 2016

**National Black Child Development Institute**
Parent Power Bootcamp ESSA Toolkit | May 2016

**PIE Network**

**Public Policy Institute of California**
Family Engagement Practices in California Schools | June 2016

**Widmeyer Communications**
Incorporating Authentic Parent and Family Engagement in State Plans under ESSA | June 2016

**U.S. Department of Education**
Dear Colleague Letter on the Importance of Stakeholder Engagement Throughout the Transition to ESSA | June 2016

**Martin J. Blank and Kent McGuire**
ESSA’s Success Requires Stakeholder Engagement | May 2016
Who is Partners for Each and Every Child?

The mission of the Partners for Each and Every Child (Partners for) project is to build an infrastructure of interconnected work that will encourage a growing portion of the education policy community to break down barriers to advance sound educational policies, attentive to matters of equity and responsive to the needs of at-risk, under-served, and politically underrepresented students.

A project of The Opportunity Institute, Partners for is a collaborative, nonpartisan network of education researchers, advocacy organizations, and policy experts who are committed to educational excellence for each and every child. The network grew out of the work of the Congressionally chartered national Commission for Equity and Excellence in Education.

Equity is a key strategy needed to shore up the entire nation’s standing in the global economy; we cannot compete successfully with one arm tied behind our back. Any goal of competitiveness and excellence must start with equity or be doomed to fail.

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Mississippi Association of School Administrators  
American Association of School Administrators