

**APPENDIX**

Testimony to Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
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Good morning. Thank you Senator Rice, Assemblywoman Jasey and members of the committee for inviting me to testify on this important topic.

My name is Charmaine Mercer, and I am the Director of the Washington DC office of the Learning Policy Institute. The Learning Policy Institute is a national, nonpartisan research and policy organization that uses high-quality research to shape policies that improve learning for each and every child. My background is in federal education policy, as both a researcher and policy advisor. Prior to joining LPI, I was Vice-president for Policy with the Alliance for Excellent Education, a Washington DC based organization focused on improving secondary schools. I have also served as a Senior Education Specialist for the Congressional Research Service as well as a congressional staffer for both the authorizing and appropriations committees of the US House of Representatives. In my remarks today, I will provide a general overview of the notable requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), with a particular focus on accountability.

ESSA is viewed by many, including Senate HELP Committee Chairman, Lamar Alexander, as a “fix” to No Child Left Behind. It represents what was politically possible, it is not a blueprint for the education system that is needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ESSA largely maintains NCLB’s basic architecture in that it focuses on English Language Arts and Math; proficiency and graduation rates. One of the biggest shifts from NCLB to ESSA is that it returns a lot of decision making authority to states. Throughout my remarks I will highlight those areas where the expectations and/or the decision making has shifted from under NCLB.

### Standards

Standards and assessments are the foundation of a state’s accountability system. It is important for the state to critically consider how standards, assessments align with its accountability system, and how the pieces fit together to support the state’s vision for teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Similar to NCLB, states are required to have challenging academic content standards that are aligned with its academic assessments, and they must apply to all public schools and public school students in the state. Unlike NCLB, ESSA requires that the standards be aligned with entrance requirements for credit-bearing coursework at state higher education institutions and with relevant state career and technical education standards. Further, states must have academic standards for math, reading or language arts, and science, that contain at least three levels of achievement. States are allowed to adopt alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant disabilities, provided the standards align with state academic standards and promote access to the general education curriculum consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

States must also show in their plan that they have adopted English language proficiency standards. English language proficiency standards must be derived from four domains (speaking, listening, reading and writing), address the different proficiency levels of English learners, and be aligned with the challenging state academic standards. It is important to note that under ESSA, language acquisition for English learners is a required indicator of a state's accountability system.

### Assessment

As was the case under NCLB, states are required to implement a set of high-quality student academic assessments in math, reading/language arts, and science, and be aligned with the state standards. ESSA maintains NCLB's schedule of federally required statewide assessments: math and reading/language arts have to be assessed yearly in grades three through eight, and once in grades nine through 12. Science is newly added under ESSA, and these assessments must be administered at least once in grades three through five, grades six through nine, and once in grades 10 through 12.

ESSA further requires that the assessments include measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding, which may include measures of student growth and may be partially delivered in the form of portfolios, projects or extended performance tasks.

The assessments can be administered through a single summative assessment or through multiple assessments during the course of the academic year.

The result is a single summative score that provides valid, reliable, and transparent information on student achievement or growth.

Assessment results are still required to be disaggregated at the state, district and school level by:

- Race and ethnicity;
- Economically disadvantaged students;
- Students with disabilities;
- English language learners;
- Gender; and
- Migrant status

Alternate assessments are permissible, but must be aligned with alternative academic standards and achievement goals. Only one percent of the total number of all students in the state can be assessed using these alternate assessments.

Districts may administer a nationally-recognized high school academic assessment in place of the statewide assessment. Depending upon the final assessment regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Education within the next month, these types of assessments might be those that are included as part of the International Baccalaureate programs, a rigorous performance-based assessment, or PARCC or Smarter Balanced assessments, as long as it is approved by the state and meets all of the federal assessment requirements.

### Accountability

As state leaders transition to ESSA, there is an opportunity to depart from NCLB's accountability model based on measuring, sorting and labeling schools to a more coherent system where information collected is thoughtfully and deliberately tied to desired outcomes based on your state's unique context. ESSA requires that a state's accountability system must be based on its adopted academic standards, and that each state establish long-term goals that include interim measurements of progress toward those goals for all students, and for subgroups of students.

As states begin designing and building their accountability and improvement systems, it's important that there is clarity about the theory of action and the role of standards, assessments, accountability, and improvement.

There should be a shared understanding of how each will be used to drive and support the college and career ready goals the state set for students. The Council of Chief State School Officers provides excellent tools to guide states through this process.

When designing accountability and improvement systems, consideration should be given to selecting the constellation of measures and indicators that best support teaching and learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, while also supporting the state's vision and theory of action. We suggest that states evaluate their current accountability and improvement systems and determine which indicators are most effective at measuring college and career readiness and providing actionable data for continuous improvement. If the measures are operating effectively in terms of improving teaching and learning outcomes, they should be included in the new system. If the measures are ineffective or otherwise unaligned with the new vision, they should be discarded. Finally, the new accountability systems should be accompanied by a process and system to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of indicators in the accountability system and make changes as necessary. This is essential to continuous improvement.

ESSA specifies that states must use multiple measures of student and school performance in their accountability systems. It allows states considerable latitude in selecting measures beyond test scores, English language proficiency, and graduation rates that are required. States have the opportunity to consider which indicators could best leverage improvements in teaching and learning.

#### *Technical Requirements of Indicators*

Chosen measures must meet the requirements of ESSA. Measures must be valid, reliable, and comparable across all school districts, and they must be calculated the same for all schools. They must also allow for subgroup disaggregation, and meaningful differentiation between schools.

ESSA requires five separate measures, which may consist of multiple indicators.

1. The first is a measure of academic achievement using annual assessments in English language arts and math
2. For elementary and secondary schools there must also be a second academic measure, which can be a measure of student growth.

3. The third measure must be the 4-year graduation rate for high schools (states may also include the extended-year graduation rate)
4. The fourth is a measure of progress in language proficiency for English language learners
5. And last but not least, one or more measures of school quality or student success.

The state must annually measure and report these data for all students and, separately, for each identified group of students.

The law requires each state to meaningfully differentiate the performance of its schools on an annual basis, using all of the aforementioned indicators. In making the determinations, the state must give “substantial weight” to the first 4 indicators (growth and achievement, English language proficiency, and graduation rates), and in the aggregate, “much greater weight” than it provides to the school quality and student success indicator(s).

It’s worth noting that the U.S. Department of Education’s proposed regulation, which are not yet final, further require a single summative rating overall for the school and that each indicator receives a rating, with both the summative and indicator ratings each having at least three performance levels. It is important to note that this does not preclude a state from using a dashboard system or decision rules to help ensure that schools in need of comprehensive support and intervention are identified.

### Choosing indicators

What indicators might a state consider? ESSA creates opportunities for states to design accountability systems that provide a more comprehensive picture of student outcomes and opportunities to learn. While the indicators required by ESSA reflect a minimum standard, states can take the initiative to design systems that capture more information about the factors that matter most for student success and that provide the most useful incentives for school improvement in these areas. Measures of college and career readiness, student engagement, social-emotional competency, access to a rich curriculum, and school climate, all provide information about the broader set of outcomes and opportunities that shape student success.

It's worth noting that the accountability system can include some indicators that are reported and used only to offer diagnostic information for improvement, and others that guide decision-making about schools for purposes of intervention. In some states, local districts may add indicators for their own purposes that are distinct from the state system.

I will provide a few examples of specific indicators a state might consider to evaluate and support student and school progress, as well as state and district examples where appropriate.

### *ELA/Math*

To measure academic achievement in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science, states may use a single summative assessment or "multiple statewide interim assessments during the course of the academic year that result in a single summative score that provides valid, reliable, and transparent information on student achievement or growth." These can include traditional sit-down tests or performance tasks.

Since New Jersey is using PARCC, the state might consider including the short performance tasks that require students to investigate questions, find and evaluate evidence, and use critical thinking in written analyses, as well as to engage in modeling and complex problem solving in mathematics tasks.

The Performance Assessment Resource Bank is an excellent resource for states wanting to develop or strengthen existing performance tasks. It's an online resource that provides performance tasks within key subjects and across disciplines linked to new standards and learning progressions. The tasks are developed with educators across the country, and the tasks have been piloted, vetted for quality, and are accompanied by rubrics and scoring protocols.

New Hampshire, Colorado, and Virginia are among the states planning to use the Bank as part of their assessment system. New Hampshire's PACE (Performance Assessment for Competency Education) pilot system uses the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts and math assessments once per grade span, and state-developed common performance tasks in intervening years, supplemented by local performance tasks.

### *Elementary/Middle School*

ESSA allows states to report on student growth as a second measure of academic achievement. Simply measuring status at certain cut points, as was done with NCLB, is not sufficient for measuring student growth and achievement because it does not account for student progress and learning over time. Scale scores help reveal how much learning is occurring and is a more accurate measure of progress.

Many states, including New York are moving to include these types of scaled measurements. The School Quality Guide, developed by New York City's Department of Education measures student achievement and student growth at both the elementary and middle school levels. Student growth and performance on state tests are used in conjunction with 6<sup>th</sup> grade core course pass rates to measure achievement at the elementary school level. At the middle school level, student growth and performance on state tests are used in conjunction with core course pass rates, high school credit earned by 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade credit accumulation to measure student achievement.

### *High School*

At the high school level, states are required to include four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates as their additional academic indicator. States may also choose to include an extended year adjusted cohort graduation rate. This creates positive incentives for schools to admit, keep, and support students with challenges that prevent them from graduating in the standard four years. Including extended-year graduation rates provides an important protection against the perverse incentives that existed under NCLB for schools to exclude lower-performing students in order to boost accountability metrics.

### *ELs*

The best measures of progress for English language proficiency are individually administered assessments of listening and speaking as well as reading and writing within content areas. This allows mastery of academic language to be assessed. Using students' gain scores along a continuum of proficiency, rather than a metric such as "percent proficient," can better assess the full range of English learners and their needs. This can also incentivize schools to provide support to English language learners at all stages of language acquisition.

### *School Quality/Student Success*

A system that focuses on the whole child and the whole school requires a more comprehensive set of indicators that measure the range of skills and competencies students need to be successful upon graduating from high school. The resources and conditions that support students' opportunities to learn must also be included. When systems include information about school resources and supports, the staff can readily identify inequities and respond appropriately with supports to aid improvement.

The final indicator, commonly known as "the 5<sup>th</sup> indicator", we describe as representing "**opportunities to learn**" and "**engagement and support.**"

By looking at students' opportunities to learn, state accountability systems can provide information about the resources and conditions that influence student learning outcomes. In addition, opportunity-to-learn outcomes can be used to hold the districts and the state accountable for providing the resources necessary for schools to meet ambitious goals for student learning. Examples of possible indicators include: Access to rigorous and engaging curriculum; Access to resources; and Access to qualified teachers.

In *Monroe County, Georgia*, the district adopted a comprehensive set of indicators of school conditions that influence students' opportunities to learn: such as the quality of facilities; internet access; new teacher retention; staff attendance; and professional learning.

This information can be used by educators at the school, district, and state level to ensure all students have access to equitable and adequate opportunities to learn, and that educators are supported in working with students.

The second group, indicators of **engagement and support**, can provide information about the culture and climate of schools, including data on parent and community involvement, safe and supportive school conditions, student participation and engagement in schooling, and measures of social-emotional learning. States can choose to include indicators of engagement to meet or exceed the requirements of ESSA, which requires only one indicator of school progress or student success.

*California' CORE districts* developed a student survey and a teacher documentation system, after reviewing research on the social-emotional factors that promote long-term learning. As part of this process, they identified 4 key factors considered important for students' academic performance, that were also measurable and actionable predictors of student success. The 4 factors are: Growth mindset; Self-efficacy; Self-management; and Social awareness. These are just a few options that could be used.

There are two ways to think about including these types of measures in an accountability system: One, using social-emotional indicators as part of a multiple measures system of accountability encourages a broader definition of student success; and two, it incentivizes schools to create opportunities for meaningful learning that will foster students' growth as self-directed learners.

The biggest considerations when selecting measures for the 5<sup>th</sup> indicator are: identifying those that are most actionable, discouraging negative incentives, and selecting measures that allow for meaningful differentiation. For example, attendance rates are generally viewed as an indicator of engagement because it's assumed that students who are engaged attend class, and those who are not, don't. This assumption is supported by high attendance patterns nationwide. Most schools report having 80% and higher attendance rates, which does not allow for meaningful differentiation between schools. Combining attendance with chronic absenteeism, however, would allow for greater differentiation and provide a more accurate indication of student engagement.

#### School Support and Improvement Activities

When designing accountability systems that meet ESSA requirements, states should also be cognizant of how these measurements will be used to inform school improvement and support under ESSA. The state accountability system should signal to every school their areas of strength and areas in need of support and growth, and also provide districts needed information about where major interventions need to occur. States are expected to identify the level of support they will provide to districts and schools along the spectrum of need. The new law provides states with significant flexibility to reimagine how to provide supports to schools.

ESSA requires that by school year 2017-2018, states must establish a methodology for identifying schools in need of comprehensive support and improvement, which will include:

- the lowest performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I funds; and
- any high school failing to graduate 1/3 or more of their students.

Following school year 2017-2018, identification of such schools must occur at least once every three years. States must notify a district when any school within that district has a subgroup of students that is consistently underperforming. This will result in a school-level targeted support and improvement program.

When an SEA notifies a district of any school within its jurisdiction that is identified for comprehensive support and improvement, the LEA, in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers, and parents) will locally develop and implement a plan to improve student outcomes. The plan will be informed by each indicator, including student performance against state-determined long-term goals, the use of evidence-based interventions, a school-level needs assessment, and identified resource inequities. The plan will then be approved by the school, the LEA, and the SEA.

To ensure continued support for school and LEA, the SEA must establish statewide exit criteria for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that, if not satisfied within four years, shall result in more rigorous state-determined action. For schools identified for support, where subgroups of students are not succeeding, the SEA must review resource allocations to support school improvement and provide technical assistance. States may initiate additional improvement in LEAs with large numbers of schools needing improvement and establish alternative, evidence-based strategies that are consistent with state law, to be used by the LEAs to assist schools.

#### Evidence based intervention

States must demonstrate that the selected interventions are evidence-based. ESSA defines "evidence-based" as an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving outcomes.

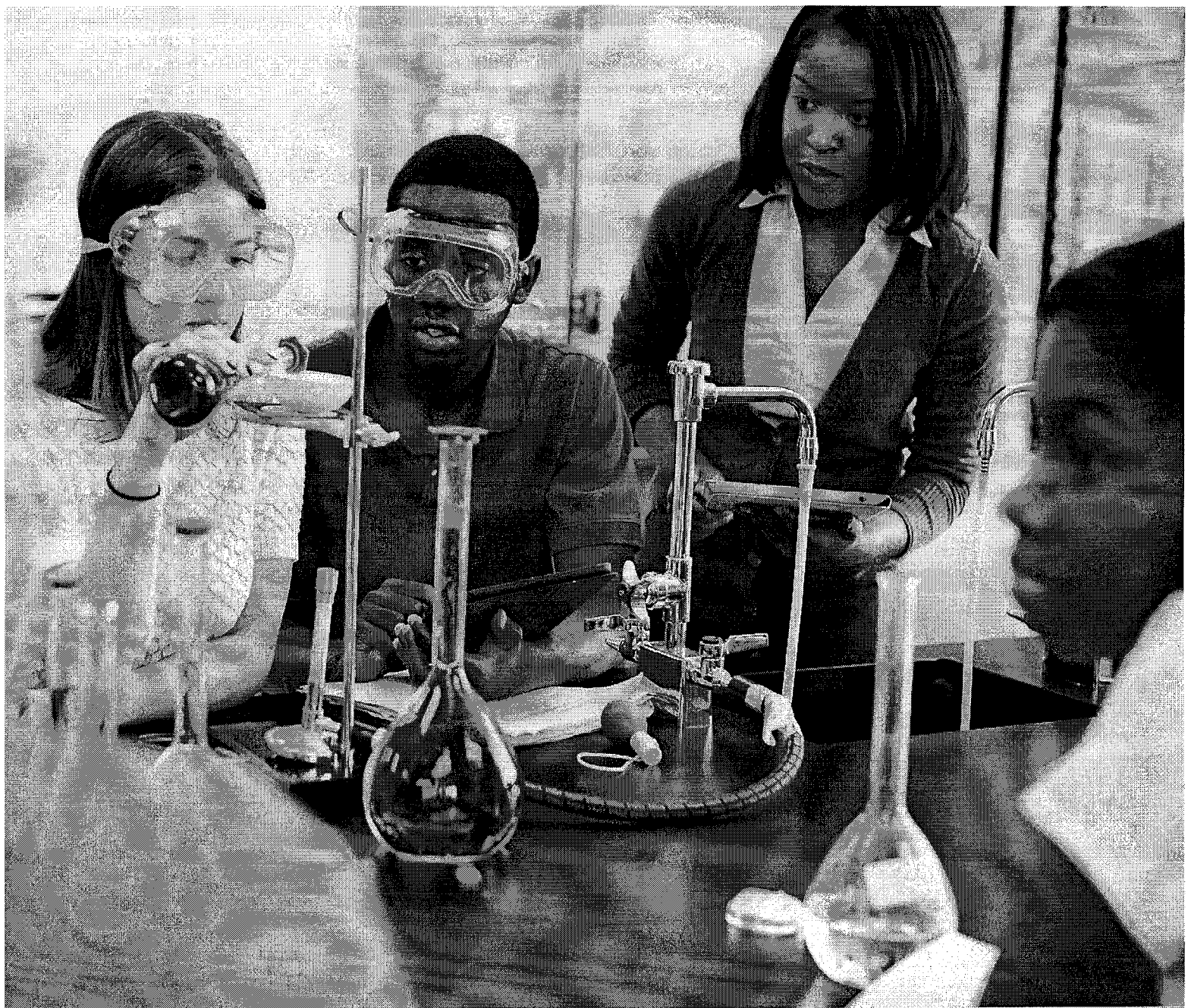
This must be based on strong, moderate, or promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study, or a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that suggests a particular intervention is likely to improve outcomes. States have flexibility to allow schools and districts to determine which evidence-based interventions are most likely to work in which contexts and with which students.

### Stake holder Engagement

Last, but certainly not least, is stakeholder engagement. Input from stakeholders is a requirement under the new law, but it is also a good strategy to generate support and create meaningful implementation. The process of gathering input is an opportunity for states to identify partners who will help implement changes and communicate with the state about its vision, mission, and implementation strategy.

ESSA creates an opportunity for stakeholders to play a more active role in the creation of state policy and for SEAs to build new relationships they can continue to foster through implementation, evaluation and into the launch of new initiatives. States can use ESSA stakeholder engagement strategies to excite communities about statewide education plans and collaborations with state and local leaders to improve student outcomes. Such engagement strategies could look like the town hall meetings Kentucky Commissioner of Education, Stephen Pruitt, is holding across the state to determine how Kentuckians define school success, or the set of principles released in early April 2016 by Washington D.C.'s Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) for what an accountability system should look like, that was used to guide stakeholder discussions. Both are great examples of meaningful stakeholder engagement. According to New Jersey's DOE website, the SEA has several meetings scheduled to discuss select aspects of ESSA. This could be an opportunity for New Jersey's DOE to engage stakeholders in a way that will have a positive effect on student outcomes.

There is obviously more that I can say about ESSA, as it is a very large bill, but I want to leave time for questions, which I am happy to answer. Thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the Every Student Succeeds Act.



# **Pathways to New Accountability Through the Every Student Succeeds Act**

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# Pathways to New Accountability Through the Every Student Succeeds Act

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the options available to states to redefine their accountability systems as they begin to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The new law provides the possibility that states can create more balanced systems of support and accountability focused on educating young people so they can become productive, engaged citizens who are prepared for 21st century college and careers. We examine these possibilities, beginning with an overview of the law's requirements, including its allowances for indicators of school progress, methods of identifying schools for support and intervention, and requirements for the use of evidence-based interventions. We then look more closely at the range of indicators that might be considered in a multiple measures accountability system as evidence of learning, opportunities to learn, and student engagement. Next we discuss how these indicators might be combined to identify schools for intervention and support, and how they could be used within a continuous improvement system that also examines school practices through school visits and observations. We close with a discussion of research supporting evidence-based interventions that may be worth considering to support school improvement in a new accountability system.

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# Pathways to New Accountability Through the Every Student Succeeds Act

## Introduction

In December 2015, President Obama's signature reauthorized the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which opened up new possibilities for how student and school success are defined and supported in American public education. One of the most notable shifts from ESSA's immediate predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), is that states have greater responsibility for designing and building their state accountability systems and for determining supports and interventions for schools and districts.

For more than a decade, the federal government has attempted to drive student achievement through the use of targets and sanctions tied to a narrow definition of student success—i.e., student test scores in reading and math and, later, high school graduation rates. Although graduation rates improved during the NCLB era,<sup>1</sup> concern has grown that test-based accountability has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum through an emphasis on math and reading at the expense of untested subjects like science, history, art, and music.<sup>2</sup> In addition, instruction has tended to focus on the format of the required multiple-choice tests. It has emphasized the recall and selection of right answers on tests of low-level skills at the expense of deeper analysis and problem-solving; research and inquiry; oral and written communications; and uses of technology and other tools to develop, evaluate, and use knowledge in real-world applications.

Despite gains on state tests that were the focus of these accountability efforts, progress slowed on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), where the rate of gain was about half that of the pre-NCLB era. And on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)—a more open-ended test that evaluates how students apply their knowledge and demonstrate their reasoning—U.S. performance declined in math, reading, and science between 2000 and 2012, both absolutely and in relation to other countries.<sup>3</sup>

Policymakers learned that the reliance on student test scores as a measuring stick for gauging school effectiveness did not always translate into schools that were teaching students the relevant skills needed to apply knowledge to real-world situations. Instead, in many cases, improved scores signaled the greater use of test-taking strategies, rather than more durable learning; sometimes, gains were also achieved by eliminating low-scoring students from the testing pool.<sup>4</sup>

ESSA marks an important move toward a more holistic approach to accountability by encouraging multiple measures of school and student success. This shift creates new opportunities for local innovation by giving states the opportunity to create new approaches to accountability and improvement. The law also gives state leaders the challenging responsibility of designing systems that can address enduring inequalities in student learning opportunities and outcomes.

## Principles for a New Accountability

While the approach of NCLB was problematic, its intent was to ensure that the success of traditionally underserved students mattered as much as that of other students. Now, under ESSA, states are largely responsible for creating a system that supports the success of all students. Figuring out how to use the new flexibility to achieve both greater equity and deeper learning is the challenge for the new ESSA.

ESSA eliminates NCLB's Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) system. This system set unrealistic targets for improving student performance based solely on test scores in two subjects, attached to sanctions for failing to reach those targets, thereby focusing schools' attention almost exclusively on those tests. States can now select indicators beyond those the federal government requires, including additional measures of student outcomes, school functioning, and students' opportunities to learn. They can also establish goals and determine school interventions based on their own contexts rather than adhering to a one-size-fits-all nationwide metric.

This transition could enable states to build systems of accountability that contain more robust measures of student learning and achievement aimed at preparing students for life after graduation; that provide educators with information to improve their practice; and most importantly, that support schools' capacities to reflect on and adjust their efforts to support students and educators.

This more expansive view of accountability systems is based on a perspective that accountability should be designed to help leverage improvement, not just to label or sanction schools. Given that there are multiple outcomes of schooling that we care about, and that outcomes can only be understood in relation to inputs and processes, a helpful accountability system will consider inputs, processes, and outcomes simultaneously, and enable its users to begin to understand the relationships among them, so that they can pursue useful changes. Furthermore, a productive accountability system should acknowledge that schools, districts, states, and the federal government bear different responsibilities for inputs, processes, and outcomes. Accountability strategies should be structured so that each level of the system is expected to wield the levers it controls to create equity and quality.

Achieving an equitable school system that leads to meaningful, relevant, and engaging learning opportunities for all children will require, for example, that states and districts provide funding and other resources that target the schools and districts serving high populations of students who live in poverty, have special needs, or are English language learners. It will also require that states, districts, and schools undertake the different tasks—such as curriculum design, access to materials, and educator development—that will enable these students to develop much richer learning supported by quality instruction.

A system that focuses on the whole child and the whole school requires a more comprehensive set of indicators that measure the range of skills and competencies students need to be successful upon graduating from high school. These include the mastery of core academic content; the ability to think critically, collaborate, and communicate; the development of academic mindsets; and the capacity for independent learning. The resources and conditions that support students' opportunities to learn must also be included. When systems include information about school resources and supports, the staff can readily identify inequities and respond appropriately with supports to aid improvement.

To meet these goals, some states are utilizing a framework that proposes a new paradigm for how to view educational accountability, illustrating how a hypothetical “51st state” might construct and implement policy strategies to ensure students are college-, career-, and life-ready.<sup>5</sup> A redesigned accountability system that accomplishes these goals for students would rest on three key pillars:

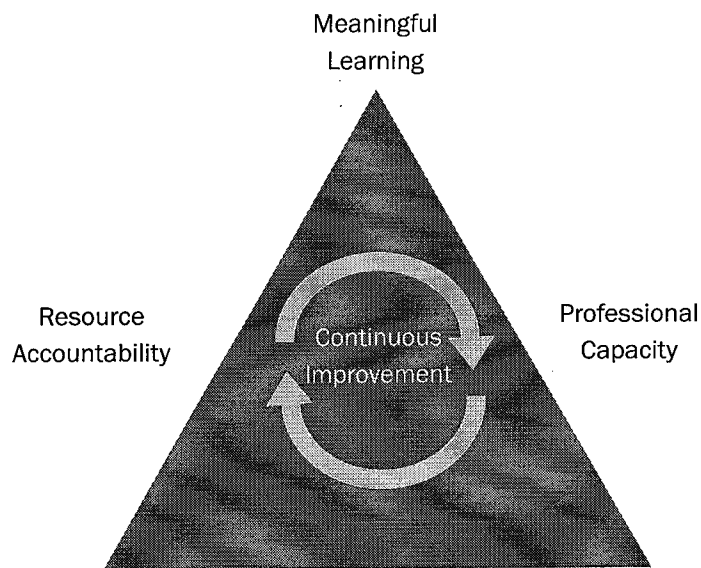
1. A focus on meaningful learning.
2. Professionally skilled and committed educators.
3. Adequate and appropriate resources that enable and support the first two pillars.

Such a system of accountability should be animated by processes for continuous evaluation and improvement that lead to problem-solving and corrective action at the local level, and that are supported by the state (see Figure 1). The system should be:

- reciprocal and comprehensive, with each level of the system—school, district, state, and federal government—held accountable for the contributions it must make to produce an effective system;
- focused on capacity building, including the knowledge, skills, and improvement processes needed to support high-quality education;
- performance based in its means for gauging progress and success; and
- informed by multiple measures that illuminate what is working and what needs to be improved or fixed.

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Figure 1: **Key Elements of an Accountability System**



An ideal accountability system should highlight and measure both the things that matter most for student success and those that provide the most useful data and incentives for school improvement. Thus, states should thoughtfully consider how each element of their accountability system creates incentives and opportunities to move school practices forward in ways that better ensure that all students are successful in their learning and their lives beyond school. Part of this process is identifying what kinds of conditions and practices have been found to lead to better outcomes for students. Those that have greater influence on student success should have special consideration as potential indicators. Furthermore, measures of learning should seek to capture the aspects of student performance that have greatest traction for later success—including those that evaluate higher-order thinking and performance capacities.

Transparency is a critical component of any accountability system, as data drawn from well-chosen indicators provides public access to information while enabling more intelligent problem solving. Data dashboards using multiple measures can track information about inputs, processes, and outcomes to inform a diagnosis of what is and what is not working in schools and for which students. The data can be supplemented by school quality reviews that provide a qualitative look at school functioning. Such reviews can occur on a periodic basis for all schools or more frequently for schools in need of improvement to guide them in planning and developing new strategies.

Our aim in this paper is to illuminate potential approaches to developing more balanced systems of support and accountability focused on educating young people so they can become productive, engaged citizens armed with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to participate fully in our society. We examine how these approaches can take advantage of the new flexibility under ESSA, beginning with an overview of the law's requirements and allowances for indicators, school identification, and evidence-based interventions. We then look more closely at the range of indicators that might be considered as evidence of learning, opportunities to learn, and student engagement. Next we discuss how these indicators could be used within a continuous improvement system and how they might be combined to identify schools for intervention and support. We close our paper with a discussion of research supporting evidence-based interventions that may be worth considering in a new accountability system.

## What Does ESSA Require and Allow?

The concept of student learning under ESSA is much broader than it was under NCLB. States are required to implement assessments that measure “higher-order thinking skills and understanding.” The law explicitly allows the use of “portfolios, projects, or extended performance tasks” as well as adaptive assessments.

In addition, states must use multiple measures of student and school performance in an accountability system they design. The act allows states wide latitude in selecting measures beyond the test scores and graduation rates that are required, limiting the authority of the Department of Education to influence decisions about indicators and how they are used. The law states that the Secretary of Education may not prescribe the indicators that states must use, the weight of measures or indicators, or the specific methodology used to differentiate or identify schools using these indicators. Thus, states have the opportunity to consider which indicators could best leverage improvements in teaching and learning.

### Indicators

ESSA requires that a state’s accountability system must be based on its adopted academic standards. Each state must establish long-term goals that include interim measurements of progress toward those goals for all students, as well as for certain subgroups of students—i.e., economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English language learners.

The law specifies that, at a minimum, the state’s accountability system must have the following indicators:

- Academic achievement as measured by proficiency on annual assessments in English language arts and math (in each of grades 3–8, plus one grade in high school).
- Another “valid and reliable statewide academic indicator” for elementary and middle schools, which can be a measure of student growth.
- The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for high schools (states may add an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate if they choose).
- A measure of progress in English language proficiency for English language learners (in each of grades 3–8, plus one grade in high school).
- At least one measure of school quality or student success that is valid, reliable, and comparable across the state and allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance. These measures may include student engagement, student access to advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate and safety, or other measures.

The state must annually measure and report these data for all students and, separately, for each identified group of students. However, the law does not limit the number or kinds of indicators, nor does it require that the indicators be rolled up into a single index or letter grade. As we describe below, states can include multiple indicators of school quality and success to inform the identification of schools for intervention and support and for diagnostic and school improvement purposes.

## Identifying Schools for Assistance

ESSA requires states to identify the “lowest performing” 5% of all public schools that receive Title I funding, all public high schools that fail to graduate one-third or more of their students, schools previously identified by the state for support and improvement that have not satisfied the state-determined criteria for exit within the period specified by the state (which shall not exceed 4 years), and any additional statewide categories that a state deems appropriate. For schools that fall into one of these categories, school districts must complete a **comprehensive support and improvement plan** that:

- is informed by the indicators and long-term goals from the state’s accountability system;
- includes evidence-based interventions;
- is responsive to a school-level needs assessment; and
- identifies resource inequities that will be addressed.

In identifying schools for intensive assistance (which must be done at least once every three years), each of the first four indicators previously listed should be of “substantial weight.” In the aggregate, the academic indicators must be of “much greater weight” than the other school quality indicator(s).

There are a number of ways that indicators can be given weight within the context of a multiple measures framework. For example, the state could pay greater attention to certain indicators within the set of multiple measures in the way it responds to school performance or identifies schools for additional assistance. We describe such strategies later in this paper.

The plan must then be approved by the school, district, and state education agency and periodically monitored and reviewed by the state education agency. In addition to those schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement, on an annual basis the state must identify schools where there are consistently underperforming subgroups of students. The district is then responsible for supporting the school in creating a school-level targeted support and improvement plan. Similar in structure to the comprehensive plan, the targeted support plans require evidence-based interventions and must be approved and monitored by the school district.<sup>6</sup>

## Evidence-based Interventions

States must demonstrate that the selected interventions are evidence-based. ESSA defines as “evidence-based” an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student (or other relevant) outcomes based on strong, moderate, or promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study, or a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation which suggests the intervention is likely to improve outcomes. States have flexibility to allow schools and districts to determine which evidence-based interventions are most likely to work in which contexts and with which students.<sup>7</sup>

## What Indicators Might States Consider?

ESSA creates opportunities for states to design accountability systems that provide a more comprehensive picture of student outcomes and opportunities to learn. Although the indicators required by ESSA reflect a minimum standard, states can take the initiative to design systems that capture more information about the factors that matter most for student success and that provide the most useful incentives for school improvement. Indicators of college and career readiness, student engagement, social-emotional supports, access to a rich curriculum, school climate and organizational functioning, and access to qualified teachers all provide information about the broader set of outcomes and opportunities that shape student success.

In this section, we provide examples of specific indicators states might consider to evaluate and support student and school progress, and we offer existing state and district examples to illustrate how these indicators are currently being used. Table 1 provides examples of three kinds of indicators that could be part of a balanced system of accountability and support: academic outcomes, opportunities to learn, and engagement. We then provide examples of how specific systems define and use these kinds of indicators.

The accountability system may include some indicators that are reported and used only to offer diagnostic information for improvement, and others that guide decision-making about schools for purposes of intervention. In some states, local districts may add indicators for their own purposes that are distinct from the state system. The indicators below could be used in any of these distinctive ways.

### Indicators of Academic Outcomes

ESSA requires all states to collect and use at least two indicators of academic achievement and one indicator of English proficiency. As with NCLB, mathematics and reading/language arts assessments must be administered in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 9 through 12. Science assessments must be administered at least once in grade 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12. States may choose when and how to assess any additional content areas, as long as assessment results can be broken out by subgroup and allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance.

- **Measures of academic achievement.** To measure academic achievement in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science, states may use a single summative assessment or “multiple statewide interim assessments during the course of the academic year that result in a single summative score that provides valid, reliable, and transparent information on student achievement or growth.” These can include traditional sit-down tests or performance tasks. This strategy might allow schools to better integrate assessment into curriculum and to provide timely information to inform instruction. An additional benefit is that when teachers use and score performance assessments, they can also develop a deeper understanding of academic standards and their implications for classroom practice.<sup>8</sup>

The law encourages states to consider including measures of performance to evaluate critical abilities—such as critical thinking, inquiry, communication, and collaboration—that are part of the new standards most states have adopted and essential for student success, but poorly measured by many traditional tests.<sup>9</sup> To support comparability, states can use

Table 1: **Potential Indicators for a Multiple Measures System**

Academic Outcomes	Opportunities to Learn	Engagement
<p><b>Achievement on Assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardized test results, reported in terms of status and growth for individual students and/or student cohorts</li> <li>Performance assessment results from common state tasks</li> <li>Progress toward English language proficiency/EL reclassification rates</li> <li>Students meeting college standard on AP/IB or other college-readiness tests or dual-credit college coursework</li> </ul> <p><b>Graduation/School Progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-, 5-, and 6-year adjusted cohort graduation rates</li> <li>Proportion of 8th graders who progress to 9th grade</li> <li>Dropout rates</li> </ul> <p><b>Career and College Readiness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students completing college preparatory coursework, approved career technical education (CTE) sequence, or both</li> <li>Students meeting standard on graduation portfolios, industry-approved certificates, licenses, or badges recognized by post-secondary institutions and businesses</li> </ul>	<p><b>Curriculum Access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to a full curriculum, including science, history, and the arts, as well as reading and math</li> <li>Availability of and participation in rigorous courses (e.g., college preparatory, Advanced Placement), programs, etc.</li> <li>Availability of standards-based curriculum materials, technology resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Access to Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratios of students to counselors and specialists to students</li> <li>Teacher qualifications</li> <li>Safe, adequate facilities</li> </ul> <p><b>School Climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence from student and staff surveys about school offerings, instruction, supports, trust, and belonging</li> </ul> <p><b>Teachers' Opportunities to Learn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to and participation in professional development and support</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average daily attendance/chronic absenteeism rates</li> <li>Suspension and expulsion rates</li> <li>Student perceptions of belonging, safety, engagement, and school climate per student surveys</li> </ul> <p><b>Social-Emotional Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student attitudes towards learning (e.g., academic mindset)</li> <li>Indicators of social-emotional skills from student assessments</li> <li>Indicators of social-emotional supports from student surveys</li> </ul> <p><b>Parent/Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicators of participation and engagement from parent surveys</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicators of participation and engagement from teacher surveys</li> </ul>

common performance tasks or common scoring criteria with training that ensures consistency in applying standards.

Both the Smarter Balanced and PARCC (Partnership for Assessing Readiness for College and Careers) tests include short (1-3 hour) performance tasks that call on students to investigate questions, find and evaluate evidence, and use critical thinking in written analyses, as well as to engage in modeling and complex problem solving in mathematics tasks. Many countries and some states use more extended performance tasks, including projects lasting several days or weeks, to evaluate students' abilities to design and conduct investigations, frame and solve problems, and produce designs or products as well as written and oral responses. The same is true of systems like the International Baccalaureate (IB) and a subset of Advanced Placement (AP) examinations that include written essays (e.g., English, world languages, history), performance tasks (new science courses), and portfolios (art). The new AP senior seminar course includes a set of embedded performance assessments that teachers organize and score throughout the year.

There is a substantial knowledge base about how to develop, administer, and score reliable and valid performance assessments from the United States and around the world.

There is a substantial knowledge base about how to develop, administer, and score reliable and valid performance assessments from the United States and around the world.<sup>10</sup> Although tests of these skills became rare in the United States during the NCLB era, many countries and provinces, ranging from the United Kingdom and Australia to Singapore and Hong Kong, use such tasks in their examination systems. Teachers trained to evaluate responses reliably score the products students produce—essays, mathematics tasks, research papers, scientific investigations, literary analyses, and artistic exhibitions.

During the 1990s, many states developed systems of assessment that included performance tasks and portfolios requiring students to demonstrate their learning through research, analysis, writing, quantitative displays, oral presentations, and uses of technology. Those who stayed with the assessments over time succeeded in developing well-designed tasks that were comparable across settings and in training teachers to score them reliably. For example, a study of Kentucky's writing portfolios, which included three writing samples in different genres, with specific guidelines and scoring rubrics for each task, found rates of agreement between teacher raters and auditors of 99% for exact or adjacent scores.<sup>11</sup> Studies in states including California, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Vermont, and Washington<sup>12</sup> found that these assignments improved the quality of instruction and improved achievement on both traditional standardized tests and more complex performance measures.<sup>13</sup>

An important tool for states wanting to develop richer tasks is the **Performance Assessment Resource Bank**,<sup>14</sup> which is a joint project of the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) Innovation Lab Network. This online resource provides performance tasks within key subjects and across disciplines linked to new standards and learning progressions. Developed with educators across the states, these tasks have been piloted and vetted for quality and offered with rubrics and scoring protocols. The

site also includes portfolio frameworks, learning progressions, curriculum units in which tasks are embedded, and tools to help educators design and review tasks, and score them with consistency.

New Hampshire, Colorado, and Virginia are among the states planning to use the bank to support their performance assessment strategies. New Hampshire's Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE) pilot may be the most developed; it involves a growing number of districts in a combination of state and local performance-based assessments under a federal flexibility waiver from NCLB requirements. The PACE system relies on a competency-based approach to instruction, learning, and assessment. In addition to the use of the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments once per grade span, participating districts use state-developed common performance tasks in intervening years, supplemented by local performance tasks designed to support deeper learning.<sup>15</sup>

Another approach has been used in Washington, where the state provides districts and schools with common curriculum-embedded performance tasks in subjects other than ELA and math—including civics, the arts, physical education, science, social studies, and others—along with rubrics and specifications for scoring. Local districts administer the tasks and organize the scoring. These are not currently part of the accountability system but could be under ESSA.

- **Measures of high school graduation.** At the high school level, states are required to include four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates as their additional academic indicator. States may also choose to include an extended (e.g., 5- or 6-year) adjusted cohort graduation rate. This creates positive incentives for schools to admit, keep, and support students with challenges that prevent them from graduating in the standard four years. These include students who may have dropped out for a job or childrearing, been incarcerated, immigrated to the U.S. as teenagers with little previous education who need more time to catch up, or those who simply need more time to reach high standards. Including extended-year graduation rates provides an important protection against the perverse incentives that existed under NCLB for schools to exclude lower-performing students in order to boost accountability metrics.

In middle school, states may also include an indicator for the proportion of 8th grade students who do not drop out before 9th grade—a significant statistic in many school districts—and those who are on track to graduate. This measure can serve as an early warning, triggering intervention and support for students at risk of failing to graduate or for schools with high concentrations of students who are not on track. California's CORE (California Office to Reform Education) districts, a consortium of nine districts that received an ESEA flexibility waiver from the federal government, include an "on track to graduate" indicator that measures the percentage of eighth graders who meet the following criteria, designed to predict whether students are likely to graduate from high school on time: grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better; attendance rate of 96% or better; no D's or F's in ELA or math; and no suspensions.<sup>16</sup>

- **Measures of college and career readiness.** Collecting data on students' participation and performance in college and career pathways can serve as both a measure of students' opportunities to learn and a powerful predictor of post-secondary success. Moreover, using multiple measures of college and career readiness—including participation in college preparatory coursework, dual enrollment, and work-based experiences—provides a fuller, more accurate picture than performance on state tests alone, which are less powerful predictors of success later in life.<sup>17</sup>

To measure college readiness, states could include:

- measures of student participation in/completion of college preparatory coursework, or the proportion of those participating in AP and IB programs;
- scores on college entrance exams, including SAT/ACT or AP/IB;
- success in dual enrollment courses (concurrent enrollment in high school and community college); and/or
- post-secondary enrollment, persistence, and graduation.

To measure career readiness, indicators could include:

- the proportion of students who complete a comprehensive sequence of courses and internships in career technical education (CTE);
- the proportion of students who complete work-based learning experiences that meet certain standards; and/or
- the proportion of students reaching a defined level of achievement as documented through graduation portfolios, industry-approved certificates, licenses, and badges recognized by post-secondary institutions and businesses.

South Carolina, for example, publicly reports both college-readiness indicators (e.g., participation and success in AP/IB programs, dual enrollment) and career-readiness indicators (e.g., the number of students enrolled in work-based learning experiences, career technology courses, attending career technology centers).<sup>18</sup> Two states, Virginia and Kentucky, include in their state report cards the number of students who earn industry-recognized credentials. Starting in 2015–16, Alabama will incorporate into its new accountability system career readiness indicators such as students earning an approved industry credential. The very comprehensive National Academy Foundation Student Certification Assessment System—which certifies rigorous coursework and satisfactory performance on end-of-course exams, culminating projects, a work-based learning internship, and high graduation requirements—also performs this function and could be similarly recognized.

California Department of Education reports indicators including the percent of students who have completed the state-approved (called A-G) college preparatory curriculum and those who have completed state-approved CTE sequences of courses, including internships. Some districts also recognize the proportion of students who have completed both, as students in the state’s Linked Learning pathways academies do. An indicator that looks at students completing college and career pathways could serve as an important protection against re-creating a two-tiered system that limits students’ post-secondary choices.

Combining college and career readiness indicators can be tricky as students have different goals for their steps immediately after high school, and different pathways to achieve those goals. Some states look at the proportion of students who have completed a college or career preparatory pathway, with the goal of assuring that 100% of students have completed at least one of these and that no students are unprepared for a productive next step. Some jurisdictions have created interesting indices that are combinations of a variety of measures. We describe these in the next section.

- **Measures of English language proficiency.** All states are required to include a measure of progress in achieving English language proficiency that compares student proficiency with the previous year. The best measures are individually administered assessments of listening and speaking as well as reading and writing within content areas, so that mastery of academic language can be assessed. Using students' gain scores along a continuum of proficiency, rather than a metric such as "percent proficient," can better assess the full range of English language learners and their needs. In turn, this can incentivize schools to provide support to English language learners at all stages of language acquisition.

Although not required by the federal accountability system, some states have considered including an indicator for rates of English learner reclassification, as such as the one required by California's redesigned accountability system. Reclassification is the process whereby an English language learner is designated as a Fluent English Proficient student after meeting linguistic and academic criteria set by the state and district. In some settings, where English language learners are segregated for instruction, this redesignation can enable greater access to the core curriculum. In other contexts in which English language learners are mainstreamed for instruction irrespective of this designation, there often is not a change in instruction. However, once students are reclassified, students typically lose the additional support provided to English language learners and districts lose funding to provide special services for these learners.

Just as NCLB's emphasis on "percent proficient" encouraged schools and educators to focus on "bubble kids"<sup>19</sup>—those students just below the proficiency threshold—tallying reclassifications could incentivize schools to focus on students who score just below the cut off of English proficiency and pay less attention to those who are newcomers. It could also create incentives to reclassify students even when they are not ready to be fully independent, thereby losing them access to needed services. Thus, such indicators should be considered with care to avoid unintended negative outcomes.

### **Indicators of Opportunities to Learn**

ESSA requires that states include at least one other indicator of school quality or student success in addition to the two academic outcome and English proficiency indicators. By looking at students' opportunities to learn, state accountability systems can provide information about the resources and conditions that influence student learning outcomes. In addition, opportunity-to-learn outcomes can be used to hold the districts and the state accountable for providing the resources necessary for schools to meet ambitious goals for student learning. The legislation suggests that states could include indicator(s) of student engagement, educator engagement, student access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, or school climate and safety. In addition, access to a full curriculum, a supportive learning environment, adequate resources, and experienced, in-field, qualified, and effective teachers are all essential for student success.

In Monroe County, Georgia, the district has adopted a comprehensive set of indicators of school conditions that influence students' opportunities to learn, including facilities quality, Internet access, new teacher retention, staff attendance, and professional learning.<sup>20</sup> Some of these are also used in state accountability systems, such as those in New York and California. This information can be used by educators at the school, district, and state level to ensure all students have access to equitable and adequate opportunities to learn and that educators are supported in working with students.

- **Measures of school conditions.** Surveying parents, teachers, and students can provide information about the school conditions that support student learning and emotional well-being. A rich research base exists that describes the school conditions that matter most for improving student learning, including strong principal leadership, a coherent instructional program, parent involvement, and high levels of safety and order.<sup>21</sup> In New York City, for example, the district surveys parents, teachers, and students on academic expectations, communication, engagement, and safety and respect. These data are reported as part of a School Quality Guide (see pp. 22-24), along with indicators of student achievement, student progress, achievement gaps, and information from a school quality review. Similar indicators are used in Alberta, Canada, and the CORE districts in California (described on pp. 15-20).
- **Measures of access to a rich curriculum.** Measures of participation in or completion of college- and career-ready pathways can provide information about students' opportunities to learn in high school and indicate whether students are on track for post-secondary success. These outcome measures also gauge opportunities to learn, and thus they do double duty in expanding educational equity. In addition, as in California, states can collect information about students' access to a full curriculum, including science, history-social studies, art, music, world language, and physical education. This could provide a corrective to the narrowing of curriculum that occurred in many schools under NCLB. It could also strengthen students' long-term performance, given the evidence that literacy and critical thinking are not generic skills but instead rely on the content knowledge students have had the opportunity to learn.<sup>22</sup>
- **Measures of access to resources.** A multiple measures approach can serve as part of a reciprocal accountability system that holds schools accountable for student learning while simultaneously holding the state and district accountable for providing sufficient resources to support student learning. Including indicators of key resources—adequate funding, staffing, and facilities; up-to-date, standards-based materials and technology; qualified and experienced teachers—can help to identify schools in need of support as well as inequities in resource distribution across schools.

Access to such tools as professional learning for teachers can be an important variable associated with the expertise students ultimately encounter. Some systems examine these kinds of issues through tallies (e.g., the number of students per computer, student-teacher ratios), while others use survey data from students, teachers, or parents to report aspects of resource availability. For teachers, access to high-quality, appropriate professional development is an indicator of teaching conditions that will ultimately translate into learning conditions for students as well.

- **Measures of access to qualified teachers.** Scholars find that high-need students—low-income students, English language learners, those with low prior academic performance—are less likely to have access to highly qualified or effective teachers, whether measured by experience, training, certification for the field taught, or evaluation ratings, and are much more likely to be taught by novices and those who have not completed training.<sup>23</sup> These inequalities influence student achievement.<sup>24</sup> Schools with large numbers of inexperienced, uncertified, or out-of-field teachers place students at an acute disadvantage in their learning.<sup>25</sup> The same is true with respect to school principals, who are also inequitably distributed, although less data are typically available on this point. Including indicators of school-level access to qualified

educators (e.g., proportions of teachers who are fully certified, teaching in field, and have more than three years of experience) can encourage districts to pay attention to and take action to close gaps in access to qualified educators.

## Indicators of Engagement

Indicators of engagement can provide information about the culture and climate of schools, including data on parent and community involvement, safe and supportive school conditions, student participation and engagement in schooling, and measures of social-emotional learning. States can choose to include indicators of engagement to meet or exceed the requirements of ESSA, which requires only one indicator of school progress or student success.

- **Measures of attendance and chronic absenteeism.** The number of days that students attend school is positively associated with student achievement, affecting their grades and achievement on reading and math assessments<sup>26</sup> as well as on-time graduation.<sup>27</sup> Including attendance as part of a multiple-measures data dashboard can motivate districts to quickly respond when student attendance stagnates or declines, overall or for specific groups.<sup>28</sup>

In particular, chronic absenteeism, commonly measured as missing 10% or more of the school year, is associated with lower academic performance, lower likelihood for graduation, and increased achievement gaps in elementary, middle, and high school.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the negative effects of chronic absenteeism can increase over time, because students who are chronically absent in one year are often chronically absent in multiple years. Including this indicator in a multiple measures system, as the CORE districts do, can help to identify and provide targeted support to schools that need to develop strategies to better address the needs of chronically absent students.

- **Measures of student suspension and expulsion.** Because evidence shows that removing students from school increases their likelihood of dropping out, many districts have committed to reducing students' out-of-class time due to suspensions and expulsions, with particular attention given to the disproportionate rates of suspension experienced by students of color. The federal Office of Civil Rights uses these measures as key indicators for its civil rights enforcement activities. California, which has included this measure in its state accountability system since 2013, has seen a precipitous drop in student suspension and expulsions rates as schools have also been adopting restorative justice programs and other alternatives to suspension.<sup>30</sup>
- **Measures of social-emotional learning.** There has been growing interest in measuring student engagement in learning using recently developed measures of student attitudes towards learning, such as indicators of a growth mindset, grit, or persistence. California's CORE districts were some of the first in the country to experiment with using social-emotional learning indicators as part of their accountability systems.<sup>31</sup> After reviewing research on the social-emotional factors that promote long-term learning, the CORE districts developed a student survey and a teacher documentation system to measure four key factors considered important

for students' academic performance that were also measurable and actionable predictors of student success:<sup>32</sup>

1. Growth mindset.
2. Self-efficacy.
3. Self-management.
4. Social awareness.

There are two ways to think about such measures: First, using social-emotional indicators as part of a multiple measures system of accountability encourages a broader definition of student success, and second, it incentivizes schools to create opportunities for meaningful learning that will foster students' growth as self-directed learners.

- **Measures of parent engagement.** Parents and community members play an essential role in supporting student and school success. Extensive research in the Chicago Public Schools, for example, has shown that parent engagement can be a critical factor for improving student learning outcomes.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the district uses parent surveys to measure engagement, thereby incentivizing schools to develop stronger ties with parents and the community.

## How Might States Use Multiple Measures in Data Dashboards?

If the purpose of accountability is to monitor progress on meaningful goals and to support continuous improvement, then it is critical to have access to accurate and up-to-date information on how well a school is progressing.

Several states have developed data dashboards that use indicators (such as those described above) to report the data needed to foster continuous improvement and identify schools requiring support. Like automobile dashboards that provide information on a car's functioning—gas gauge, engine temperature, tire pressure, and fluid gauge—a data dashboard provides critical information about what is working and what needs attention. Dashboards create transparency, a key aspect of accountability, for educators and the local community. They allow data to be accessed in a timely way to guide action. Such data also help prioritize limited resources so that they address the most pressing needs, and to recognize practices that have been proven successful in advancing teaching and learning.

In this section, we provide examples of data dashboards used in the accountability systems of Alberta, Canada; California's network of CORE districts; and the New York City Department of Education. In a later section, we provide examples of different ways to evaluate and combine data for the purpose of identifying schools for assistance.

## Alberta's Results Report

The Alberta Results Report is an online reporting tool that contains data for the province's seven sets of indicators, which are organized around three main goals in its multiple measures accountability system (see Figure 2). The goals and measures are as follows:

If the purpose of accountability is to monitor progress on meaningful goals and to support continuous improvement, then it is critical to have access to accurate and up-to-date information on how well a school is progressing.

### 1. High Quality Learning Opportunities:

**a. Safe and Caring Schools.** Based on surveys, this is measured by the percentage of surveyed teachers, parents, and students who agree that students are safe at school, learning to be caring individuals, learning respect for others, and treated fairly in school.

**b. Student Learning Opportunities.** Based on surveys, this is measured by the percentage of teachers, parents, and students who are satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies, and the percentage of teachers, parents, and students who are satisfied with the overall quality of basic education. In addition, administrative data are used to measure the percentage of students aged 14–18 registered in the K–12 system who drop out the following year and the percentage of students in the grade 10 cohort who have completed high school by the end of their third (grade 12) year.

### 2. Excellence in Learner Outcomes:

**a. Student Learning Achievement (Grades K-8).** This is measured by the percentage of students who achieve the "acceptable" standard on the Provincial Achievement Test and the percentage of students who achieve the "excellence" standard on the Provincial Achievement Test.

**b. Student Learning Achievement (Grades 9-12).** This is measured by the percentage of students who achieve the "acceptable" standard on a diploma exam; the percentage of students who achieve the "excellence" standard on a diploma exam; the percentage of students in the grade 10 cohort who have taken four or more diploma exams by the end of their third year in high school; and the percentage of grade 12 students who have met the eligibility criteria for a Rutherford Scholarship based on course marks in grades 10, 11, and/or 12.

**c. Preparation for Lifelong Learning, World of Work, Citizenship.** This is measured by the percentage of students in the grade 10 cohort who have entered a post-secondary-level program at an Alberta post-secondary institution or registered in an Alberta apprenticeship program within six years of entering grade 10; the percentage of teachers and parents who agree that students are taught attitudes and behaviors that will make them successful at work; the percentage of teachers, parents, and students who are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship; and the percentage of teacher and parent satisfaction that students are demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

### 3. Highly Responsive and Responsible Jurisdiction:

**a. Parental Involvement.** This is measured by the percentage of teachers and parents satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education.

**b. School Improvement.** This is measured by the percentage of teachers, parents, and students who indicate that their schools and the schools in their jurisdiction have improved or stayed the same over the last three years.

The Results Report details how schools in each province are performing along each metric; the report is scored and color coded to indicate performance levels (i.e., red indicates very low performance, orange indicates low performance, yellow indicates intermediate performance, green indicates high performance, and blue indicates very high performance). In addition, the report provides users with information on the trends associated with each metric. For example, educators, parents, and community members are given the numeric score for how the province schools fared on the "safe and caring school" metric for that year, along with the scores for the previous year and the previous three-year average.

Figure 2: Alberta Results Report Sample

**Accountability Pillar Overall Summary  
Annual Education Results Reports - Oct 2013  
Province: Alberta**

Measure Category	Measure Category Evaluation	Measure	Alberta			Measure Evaluation		
			Current Result	Prev Year Result	Prev 3 Yr Average	Achievement	Improvement	Overall
Safe and Caring Schools	Excellent	Safe and Caring	89.0	88.0	88.1	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent
Student Learning Opportunities	Good	Program Studies	81.5	80.7	80.7	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Education Quality	89.8	89.4	89.3	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent
		Drop Out Rate	3.5	3.2	3.9	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		High School Completion Rate (3yr)	74.8	74.1	72.7	High	Improved Significantly	Good
Student Learning Achievement (Grades K-9)	Issue	PAT: Acceptable	79.0	79.1	79.2	Intermediate	Declined	Issue
		PAT: Excellence	18.9	20.8	19.9	Intermediate	Declined Significantly	Issue
Student Learning Achievement (Grades 10-12)	Good	Diploma: Acceptable	84.6	83.1	82.5	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Diploma: Excellence	21.7	20.7	20.1	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Diploma Exam Participation Rate (4+ Exams)	56.6	56.2	54.9	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility Rate (Revised)	61.3	61.5	59.4	High	Improved Significantly	Good
Preparation for Lifelong Learning, World of Work, Citizenship	Good	Transition Rate (6 year)	56.5	58.4	59.2	High	Maintained	Good
		Work Preparation	80.3	79.7	79.9	High	Improved	Good
		Citizenship	83.4	82.5	82.0	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent
Parental Involvement	Good	Parental Involvement	80.3	79.7	79.8	High	Improved Significantly	Good
Continuous Improvement	Excellent	School Improvement	80.6	80.0	80.0	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent

Source: Alberta Education. Retrieved October 3, 2014, from [https://education.alberta.ca/media/7632276/oct2013\\_apori\\_201310\\_province\\_report.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/7632276/oct2013_apori_201310_province_report.pdf).

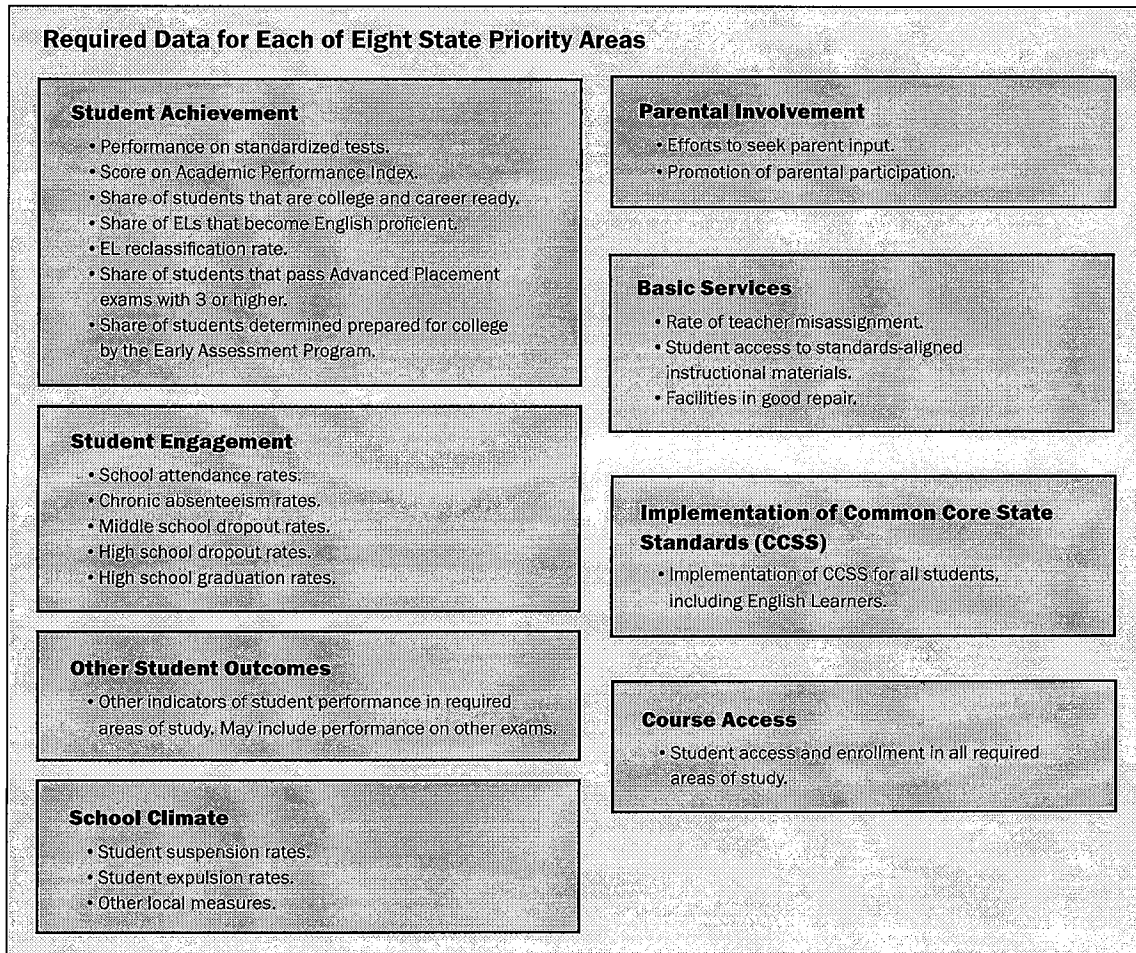
Because the Results Report is an electronic tool, users can click on each metric, which then drills down into more detailed information about the measure. For example, tables and graphs display a breakdown of how each role group (teachers, parents, students) responded to the statement that their school is safe, in addition to how parents have answered each survey item related to this measure for the last five years.

The seven sets of indicators do not roll up into a summative score; instead, the Results Report displays each individual measure and performance level. Administrators from Alberta note this is deliberate so that schools can focus on improving and prioritizing their efforts on specific areas of need that were highlighted when the performance data were disaggregated.<sup>34</sup>

### California’s State and Local Priorities

California’s new accountability system is in many ways similar to Alberta’s. The state has set eight priority areas, each of which includes several indicators regularly tracked by local districts (see Figure 3.) Indicators with comparable data are also tracked by the state. As part of their Local Control Accountability Plans, the districts set goals for areas they are working to improve and with county oversight annually assess their progress.

Figure 3: Indicators for California's State Priority Areas



Source: Legislative Analysts Office (2013). *An overview of the Local Control Funding Formula*. Sacramento, CA: Mac Taylor.

3/ox

The indicators include measures of:

- academic outcomes, including ELA and math test scores, English language proficiency, college-ready scores on AP tests or the state's EAP exam, and college and career readiness (e.g., the proportion of students who complete the A-G college preparatory curriculum and/or a state-approved career technical education sequence of courses and work-based experiences);
- opportunities to learn, including access to a full curriculum; access to materials, facilities, and teacher qualifications; implementation of new state standards; graduation rates; and middle and high school dropout rates; and
- engagement, including student attendance, chronic absenteeism, suspension and expulsion rates, and parent involvement.

Under ESSA, the state will design a combined state/federal reporting system based on a subset of these measures collected with comparable data statewide. These will be used to identify schools for intensive assistance. Local districts will add their own measures to guide their continuous improvement efforts. Rather than covering a few schools targeted for intervention, the state expects all schools to be working to improve the areas that are most high leverage for their overall progress.

### **CORE Districts' School Quality Improvement System**

In California, a group of districts joined together to work as a consortium on a variety of school improvement efforts and secured an ESEA flexibility waiver from the U.S. Department of Education that shaped their collective accountability work. Building on the foundation of the California state priorities, the CORE districts add certain indicators—such as evidence of social-emotional learning and climate surveys from schools—and present a summary of key indicators in two domains:

1. **Academic Achievement:** growth and achievement on state English Language Arts and math tests, graduation rates, and on-track-to-graduate rate (grade 8).
2. **Social-Emotional and School Culture and Climate:** measures of social-emotional skills; suspension/expulsion rates; chronic absenteeism; culture/climate surveys from students, staff, and parents; and English learner re-designation rates.

These are the main pillars of the districts' School Quality Improvement System (SQIS). The CORE districts' main focus is on continuous improvement. To that end, the consortium developed a school report card that employs a data dashboard approach so that all stakeholders are able to view the school's performance on each individual measure (see Figure 4). The report card displays the performance information for each measure, detailing the previous year's score alongside the current year's score. It also calculates a change score, which represents the difference between the two scores.

Like the Alberta Results Report, the CORE districts' school report card employs color coding to indicate performance levels (i.e., green indicates above-average performance, orange indicates average performance, and red indicates below-average performance). Arrows are used to signify trends (increasing, declining, and no change). These features are designed to make the information actionable so that school improvement efforts are data based and well informed. Similar to the Alberta Results Report, the CORE districts' school report card disaggregates the data even further to paint a more nuanced picture of school performance, such as the amount of improvement that

is needed to advance an index level, how student subgroups are performing in relation to the all-students group, and how the school is performing in comparison to the district average and the CORE-wide average. An electronic version of the school report card/data dashboard is under development and expected to be released during the 2015–16 school year.

Figure 4: CORE Districts School Quality Improvement Report Card

**SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL**

Public 3,175 students      CDS code: 01 61259 0111856      SD: 100%      AA: 8%      Ft: 0%  
 Principal Gerald Greenbrier      Sunny Valley Hillside District      EL: 19%      AVAN: 0%      Pt: 0%  
 125 Main St.      SWD: 9%      AS: 24%      WH: 4%  
 Valley Hill, CA 12345      HI: 63%      Two+: 1%

	Metric result 2014	Metric Result 2015	Change in Metric Performance from 2014 to 2015	Index Level 2015	Change in Index Level from 2014 to 2015
<b>ACADEMIC DOMAIN (see pages 14 &amp; 15 for metric descriptions)</b>					
Academic Performance English Language Arts	—	40% MEET STANDARDS	—	5/10	—
Growth English Language Arts	Coming Fall 2016				
Academic Performance Math	—	44% MEET STANDARDS	—	5/10	
Growth Math	Coming Fall 2016				
Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate (2014 Cohort)	84% GRADUATED	84% GRADUATED	0%	6/10	→ 0
Five Year Cohort Graduation Rate (2013 Cohort)	81% GRADUATED	86% GRADUATED	5%	7/10	↗ 1
Six Year Cohort Graduation Rate (2012 Cohort)	90% GRADUATED	87% GRADUATED	-3%	7/10	↘ 1
<b>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL/ CULTURE CLIMATE DOMAIN (see pages 14 &amp; 15 for metric descriptions)</b>					
Chronic Absenteeism	24% CHRONICALLY ABSENT	21% CHRONICALLY ABSENT	-3%	5/10	↗ 2
Suspension/Expulsion Rates	8% SUSPENDED/ EXPELLED	8% SUSPENDED/ EXPELLED	0%	6/10	→ 0
English Learner Re-designation	10% RE-DESIGNATED	14% RE-DESIGNATED		8/10	↗ 2
Social-Emotional Skills	Coming Fall 2016				
Culture and Climate	Coming Fall 2016				

Green = above average (Index Level 8, 9, and 10) Orange = average (Index Levels 4, 5, 6, 7) Red = below average (Index Levels 1, 2, 3)  
 Source: CORE districts website. Retrieved September 14, 2015, from <http://coredistricts.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Full-High-School-Mock-Report-updated-7-20-15.pdf>.

The CORE schools and districts use the results from the broader set of state and local indicators to evaluate their progress each year and plan for ongoing improvements. The report card is a means to present some of the evidence in a dashboard for parents and the public. These data are also used to identify schools for additional assistance, as discussed next.

38x

## New York City's School Quality Guide

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) developed the School Quality Snapshot and the School Quality Guide as a way to inform parents, students, and educators about each school's performance on a range of indicators that are aligned to their educational priorities.<sup>35</sup>

The School Quality Guide reports on seven domains of interest:

1. **Student Achievement** at the elementary school level, is measured by student growth and performance on state tests, 6th grade core courses pass rates by former 5th graders; at the middle school level, is measured by student growth and performance on state tests, core courses pass rates, high school credit earned by 8th graders, and 9th grade credit accumulation by former 8th graders; at the high school level, is measured by high school credit accumulation, data on student performance on Regents exams, 4-year and 6-year graduation rates, college and career readiness (i.e., percentage of students who complete approved college or career preparatory courses and assessments, percentage of students who met CUNY's standards for avoiding remedial classes, and percentage of students who graduate from high school and enroll in college or other postsecondary program within 6 months), and postsecondary enrollment.
2. **Rigorous Instruction** measures the extent to which curriculum and instruction are designed to engage students and foster critical thinking skills, and are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. It is measured by data from the NYC School Quality Review (SQR) (i.e., how interesting and challenging is the curriculum, how effective is the teaching and learning, and how well does the school assess student learning) and the average percent of positive responses to the NYC School Survey questions related to rigorous instruction.
3. **Collaborative Teachers** measures the extent to which teachers participate in opportunities to develop and grow their competencies and contribute to the continuous improvement of the school community; and is measured by data from the NYC SQR (i.e., how well do teachers work together) and from the NYC School Survey (e.g., the percentage of teachers who report that they work together to design instructional programs).
4. **Supportive Environment** measures the extent to which the school establishes a climate in which students feel safe, challenged to grow, and supported to meet high expectations. It is measured by data from the NYC SQR (i.e., how clearly are high expectations communicated to students and staff), the NYC School Survey questions related to school safety and feeling supported (e.g., percentage of students who feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, and cafeteria); and administrative data on student attendance and movement of students with disabilities to the least restrictive environment.
5. **Effective School Leadership** measures the extent to which the school leadership inspires the school community with a clear instructional vision and effectively distributes leadership to realize this vision. It is measured by data from the NYC School Survey (e.g., percentage of teachers who say that the principal communicates a clear vision for the school, percentage of parents who feel that the principal works to create a sense of community in the school).
6. **Strong Family-Community Ties** measures the extent to which the school forms effective partnerships with families and outside organizations to improve the school. It is measured by data from the NYC School Survey (e.g., percentage of parents that report the school staff regularly

communicate with them about how staff can help their children learn; percentage of teachers who report that teachers at the school work closely with families to meet students' needs).

- Trust** measures the extent to which relationships between administrators, educators, students, and families are based on trust and respect. It is measured by data from the NYC School Survey (e.g., percentage of teachers who report that they trust the principal; percentage of parents who report that the school staff work hard to build trusting relationships with them; percentage of students who report that teachers treat them with respect).

The set of measures contributes to a section score that determines the performance level for each domain. In the School Quality Guide, the performance levels for each domain range from not meeting target to approaching target to meeting target to exceeding target (see Figure 5).

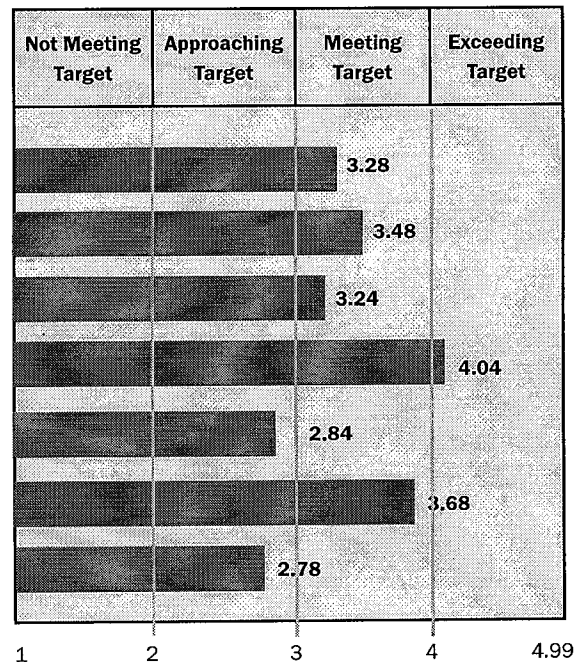
Figure 5: NYCDOE School Quality Guide, Summary Page

**Framework for Great Schools**

Archer Elementary School

The Framework consists of six elements—Rigorous Instruction, Collaborative Teachers, Supportive Environment, Effective School Leadership, Strong Family-Community Ties, and Trust—that drive Student Achievement. The School Quality Guide shares ratings and data on each of the Framework elements, based on information from Quality Reviews, the NYC School Survey, student attendance, and movement of students with disabilities to less restrictive environments. The School Quality Guide also shares ratings and data on Student Achievement based on a variety of quantitative measures of student growth and performance.

Section	Section Rating
Rigorous Instruction	Meeting Target
Collaborative Teachers	Meeting Target
Supportive Environment	Meeting Target
Effective School Leadership	Exceeding Target
Strong Family-Community Ties	Approaching Target
Trust	Meeting Target
Student Achievement	Approaching Target



Section scores are on a scale from 1.00-4.99. The first digit corresponds to the section rating, and the additional digits show how close the school was to the next rating level.

**State Accountability Status: Good Standing**

This designation is determined by the New York State Department of Education. More information on New York State accountability can be found here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/accountability/default.htm>

Source: NYCDOE School Quality Reports. Retrieved March 15, 2016, from <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>.

40x

In efforts to set fair and thoughtful targets for the accountability metrics, the School Quality Guide aligns performance targets for each school based on a comparison group of similar students across the city.<sup>36</sup> Each student at a school is matched to the 50 most similar students from other schools throughout the city, based on prior test scores and demographic data. In addition, the School Quality Guide presents the NYC School Survey results so that the school's data may be compared with the city's range of scores (i.e., minimum score, average score, and maximum score). This information allows stakeholders to contextualize the school's survey data and gain a more nuanced understanding of how the school is progressing on the domains of interest.

As with the Alberta Results Report, the scores for each domain in the School Quality Guide are not rolled up into one summative score. Rather, the results of each measure are viewed separately and are more likely to reveal areas of strength as well as weakness and facilitate the use of data-based decision-making to inform school improvement efforts.

### **How Might Data Be Combined for Decision-making?**

States and districts that have developed dashboards use the various measures to identify progress and needs in different aspects of school functioning, both for students overall and for identified groups of students, and to plan for appropriate, targeted improvement strategies. This planning is often further informed by additional diagnostic processes such as school or program quality reviews, described further in the next section.

The multiple measures approach supports more strategic interventions than those informed only by a unidimensional rating, ranking, or grade. It is far less clear what to work on if educators know only that their school has scored a 780 on a performance index or a C+ on a grading scheme, than if they know they are making strong progress on test scores but struggling with graduation rates for Latino students. With more detailed information, educators can focus their efforts on what really needs attention.

How can states preserve the benefits of a multiple measures approach under ESSA? The law requires states to develop processes for identifying and supporting the lowest performing schools (the "bottom 5 percent" of Title I schools) and those with sustained equity gaps. Although ESSA states that the set of academic measures must have greater weight than other non-academic measures in making the determination, this does not mean that a unidimensional index or grading scheme must be used as the foundation of the accountability system.

The law's requirements could be met in the context of a multiple measures system through the use of decision rules at the time the identification of schools must be made (at least once every three years). This does not require using a single dimensional ranking system for schools as the main foundation of the accountability system. In a system where the goal is effective support for improvement for all schools, a dashboard approach is much more likely to support productive diagnosis and planning than an approach that ranks all the schools against each other but provides little information about where they can improve.

Two examples are CORE's weighted measures approach, which is used under the districts' federal waiver to identify schools for intensive assistance, and a "decision rules" approach emerging in California's new accountability policy.

## A Weighted Measures Approach

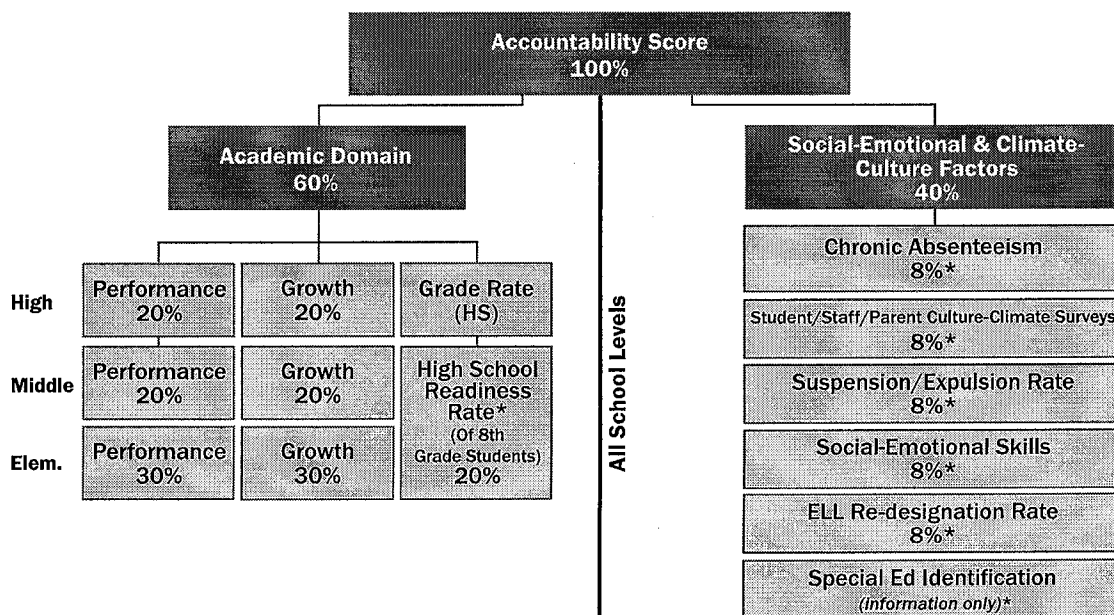
One approach to preserve a multiple measures dashboard is to apply weights to specific measures for the purpose of identifying lowest performing schools at the time of decision-making, without reducing the measures to a composite index for other purposes. An analogy for such a technique would be providing parents with a student’s report card for each subject area throughout all grade levels, and then calculating an overall GPA at the end of high school for the college transcript. Colleges also receive the information about all those courses and grades over the students’ high school years so that they can both evaluate specific strengths, weaknesses, and trends, and see how these roll up into a single measure.

The CORE districts’ SQIS provides an illustrative example of this method. The SQIS emphasizes a multiple measures approach to accountability and includes the following indicators: academic achievement and growth; graduation rates; high school readiness of 8th graders; social-emotional and culture-climate factors which include chronic absenteeism, social-emotional skills, suspension/expulsion rates, surveys of the student, staff, and parent body on school culture and climate; and English language learner re-designation rates.

As part of the SQIS, the CORE districts developed the School Quality Improvement Index that applies weights to selected measures in the two domains in order to meet federal requirements for identifying low-performing schools. The academic achievement domain comprises 60% of the total and the social-emotional and school culture and climate domain comprises the remaining 40%. When schools need to be identified for intensive assistance, a score is calculated for each school, and those with the lowest scores are thereby identified (see Figure 6).

Once this identification is made, districts conduct school quality reviews to determine the nature of the supports needed. This remains the key tool for informing ongoing improvement for these and all the other schools in the network. The weighting of measures is used only at a moment in time to identify schools for assistance, and not as an ongoing strategy to rank schools against each other.

Figure 6: Domain Weights for CORE School Quality Improvement Systems



Source: CORE’s Accountability System (N. Bookman, personal communication, January 27, 2015).

The data from the dashboard is designed to track students' progress related to each metric and to signal the types of interventions and continuous improvement strategies needed in the schools. Thus, when a school falls below certain thresholds (for example, a targeted rate for eighth graders who are on track to graduate), this triggers district attention, and improvement resources may be allocated to the school regardless of the school's overall accountability score.

Another approach is to use decision rules to identify schools based on the multiple measures in the dashboard.

### Use of Decision Rules

Another approach is to use decision rules to identify schools based on the multiple measures in the dashboard. In California, the Public School Performance Accountability Act of 1999 established criteria for determining low-performing and high-performing schools, along with a system of assistance and consequences.<sup>37</sup> Schools were identified for assistance if they did not meet their annual improvement targets for three years in a row. At a certain level of high attainment, schools had met a threshold that no longer required the same rate of annual growth overall, as long as they remained above the threshold.

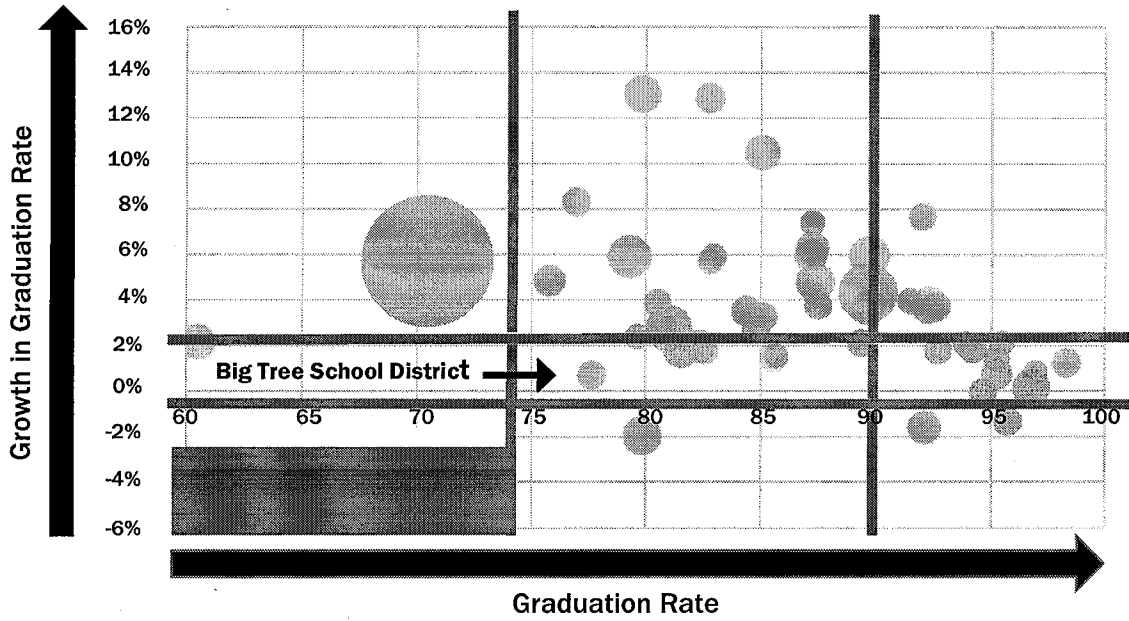
In the context of a multiple measures dashboard, similar decision rules could be used, with academic outcome indicators carrying significant weight based upon their prominence in the decision process. For example, if a school or district—or a student population within a school or district—failed to make progress or reach a threshold in two of several academic outcomes indicators over a period of time, or failed to make progress on any three of several other indicators (e.g. school climate, opportunities to learn, engagement), the school or district could be identified for intensive assistance. The nature of the assistance would focus the areas of need represented by those indicators and any other key aspects of school or district functioning revealed by the review process. Other decision rules are, of course, possible.

In current conversations to shape California's new accountability system, Children Now, a statewide policy and advocacy organization, has proposed a method of interpreting data that allows simultaneous consideration of performance and improvement on any given indicator, overall and relative to other districts, by analysis of a scatter plot on a two-dimensional graph. In Figure 7, each circle represents a separate school district (the size of the circle reflects district enrollment); the location on the scatter plot represents performance on the x-axis, and growth on the y-axis.

Presented in this way, the information allows schools or districts to see themselves in relation to others and in relation to a standard as indicated by the green lines. For example, Big Tree School District can see that its graduation rate, as indicated by the location on the x-axis, is about 77%, which meets a minimal standard but not the state's ultimate goal of 90% (shown by the green line). This rate is growing slowly, having increased by about 1 percent—as indicated by its place on the y-axis—and is improving at a slower rate than most other districts at that graduation rate level, as shown by the position of the district in relation to others just above and below it.

The red lines on the graph delineate areas of concern with respect to performance or improvement. In the lower left quadrant, schools or districts that are both low-performing and not improving would be identified for intensive interventions and support.

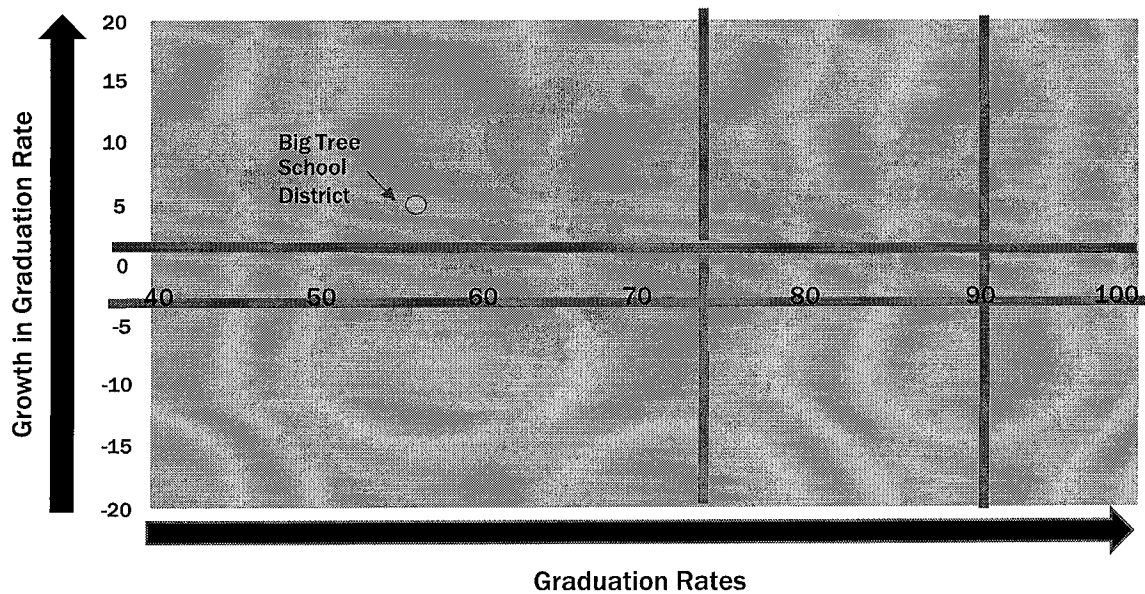
Figure 7: Graduation Rates and Growth in Graduation Rates for Districts



Source: Children Now

These data can be further disaggregated by student group, which permits a school or district to see performance and improvement in relation to a particular student population and, at the same time, in relation to other schools' or districts' success with that population. In Figure 8, our fictional Big Tree School District has improved its graduation rate for special education students by 5%. The district could identify other districts that have had stronger success and/or improvement with this population to learn more about what strategies could be effective.

Figure 8: Grade Rate/Growth in Graduation Rate for Special Education



Source: Children Now

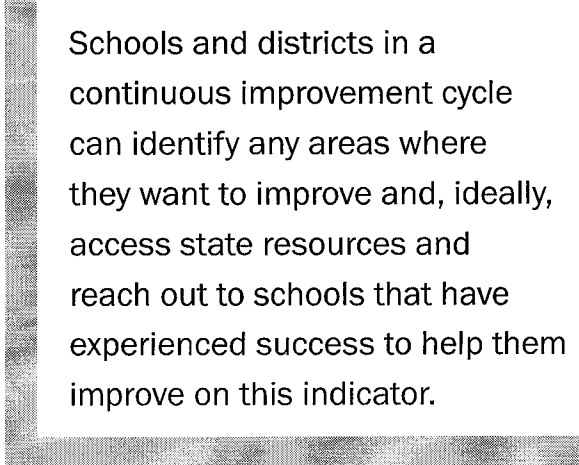
The state can look at data on each of the key indicators (overall and by student subgroup) and identify schools that fall in the lower left quadrant—signifying low performing and not improving—on multiple measures and for different subgroups of students. As this analysis is conducted, measures of academic outcomes can be more prominently considered.

A critical point is that schools and districts in a continuous improvement cycle can identify any areas where they want to improve and, ideally, access state resources and reach out to schools that have experienced success to help them improve on this indicator. A system like

California’s would produce these data for many indicators, such as graduation rates; assessments of ELA, math, science, and English language learner proficiency gains; student completion of college- and career-ready curriculum; attendance and chronic absenteeism; and suspensions and expulsions. The data could help schools and districts identify areas for focus, identify other schools making strong gains, and allow the state to recognize and study successful efforts to share new knowledge with others.

The state might create learning and improvement resources around specific needs—for example, strengthening programs for English language learners—and identify districts or schools that need particular help in this area. It might assemble research evidence about what works and study successful schools and districts that have made strong gains. Building on this knowledge, the state might create supported learning networks to create stronger programs, access better materials, engage in professional development for teachers and leaders, work with instructional coaches, visit and study successful schools/districts, and monitor progress in English language learning. A similar process might occur with schools or districts that are struggling to make progress in mathematics, or those that are seeking to reduce high or discriminatory suspension rates.

Across domains, the state might offer assistance to more than 5% of its schools that receive intensive assistance in one or more arenas. But the assistance would be targeted and well supported, and conducted so as to build a learning community that takes advantage of the collaboration that can spur more progress. For schools or districts that are low-performing and failing to improve in many areas, a more comprehensive approach to intervention would be called for, and the state could create a set of resource and interventions to ensure that highly trained experts are made available to evaluate the dysfunctions, get to the root causes, and determine changes and strategic investments that are needed.



Schools and districts in a continuous improvement cycle can identify any areas where they want to improve and, ideally, access state resources and reach out to schools that have experienced success to help them improve on this indicator.

## How Might Diagnostic Systems Be Developed?

To move accountability systems from a compliance orientation to one centered on continuous improvement and learning, redesigned school accountability systems must include rich sources of diagnostic information. In their efforts to improve student learning, decision makers need to know whether and how different learners are provided the opportunities and supports they need to be successful, including high quality instruction, a rigorous and meaningful curriculum, a positive school culture and climate, and strong school leadership. Without this context information, student performance scores are less actionable.

School reviews can generate the needed contextual, qualitative information to better understand the quality of teaching and learning and to promote continuous improvement. A number of states are designing and engaging in the following approaches to school reviews:

- annual planning and review;
- program review;
- school quality review; and
- diagnostic review.

**Annual planning and review** is a continuous improvement process that California has developed as part of its initiative to provide local education agencies with more control over school budgeting while strengthening local accountability. The goal of the annual planning and review is to inject more transparency into how funds are spent as well as the practices and strategies that the district will implement to improve teaching and learning in schools.<sup>38</sup>

A **program review** is a process whereby school staff document, analyze, and reflect on components of an instructional program to identify areas of strength and needed improvement. A program review serves multiple purposes: to improve the quality of teaching and learning, allow equal access to opportunities to learn for all students, promote performance-based assessments of student understanding, and ensure a coherent integration of relevant skills across all content areas throughout the school.<sup>39</sup>

The **School Quality Review (SQR)** is a formal process for evaluating teaching and learning. The SQR typically involves a school self-assessment, followed by a site visit by expert and peer reviewers who develop qualitative insights by observing teaching, reviewing student work, and talking with stakeholders. This review is often designed to complement the quantitative information provided through data dashboards. Moreover, the findings garnered from the SQR provide educators and administrators with actionable information to develop school improvement plans and assist stakeholders in prioritizing and targeting resources to provide learning supports and build local capacity.

**Diagnostic reviews** function similarly to SQRs and serve similar purposes. The difference, however, lies in the segment of schools to which the reviews are applied. Whereas SQRs have been employed traditionally as a continuous improvement model for all schools within a school system (e.g., NYC schools, Massachusetts charter schools), diagnostic reviews have been promoted for use primarily with low-performing schools within a larger school system to create a firmer connection between accountability determinations and appropriate and meaningful supports and interventions. These reviews are typically conducted by organizations external to the school system.

Detailed below are examples of state approaches to building continuous improvement systems. We highlight:

- California’s annual planning and review process;
- Kentucky’s program review process;
- SQR processes used in New York City, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and California; and
- Diagnostic reviews used in Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

### **Annual Planning and Review**

California has incorporated into its new accountability system processes for engaging community members and other local stakeholders, including the ability to participate in the decision-making process for setting goals, determining budgets, and evaluating progress to guide ongoing improvement efforts. Community engagement is a centerpiece of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) development process. The LCAP is a three-year plan that outlines the district’s annual goals and the strategies that will be used to achieve the stated goals.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the district goals must address the state’s eight priority areas, which can be categorized around three focus areas: conditions of learning, pupil outcomes, and engagement. The plans must be updated annually, and parents and community members are actively recruited to participate in the plan development process and provide input.

Each year, the district’s implementation of the LCAP is reviewed through both self-assessment and county-level review. The LCAP rubric is being developed by the State Board of Education around the state priorities and additional local indicators. The rubric is designed to assess progress and prompt active reflection on areas of strength and needed growth. Because the LCAP is a planning tool, it allows district personnel, parents, and community members to continuously monitor the district’s progress toward its goals and to promote continuous improvement.

As part of its LCAP process, the CORE network supports ongoing improvements by facilitating professional learning activities across districts. For schools identified as under-performing, the CORE process includes additional diagnosis through a SQR, followed by provision of needed resources and professional development as part of a commitment to build professional capacity in those schools. One of several strategies for transforming low-performing schools is based on a highly successful approach developed in Shanghai, China. The method pairs demographically similar high- and low-performing schools based on specific areas of strengths and weaknesses. Following an initial needs assessment of the low-performing school, educators from both schools share ideas and intervention practices to design and implement an improvement plan.

### **Program Review**

Kentucky’s redesign of its accountability system began in 2009, when the Kentucky legislature set the course for a new assessment and accountability system titled Unbridled Learning: College/ Career-Readiness for All. The Unbridled Learning system is a balanced approach to public school accountability based on multiple measures of school effectiveness. The system comprises three strategic priorities: next-generation learners, next-generation instructional programs and support, and next-generation professionals.<sup>41</sup>

The state priority for next-generation instructional programs and supports is based on reviews that function as systematic analyses of an “instructional program, including instructional practices, aligned and enacted curriculum, student work samples, formative and summative assessments, professional development and support services, and administrative support and monitoring.”<sup>42</sup> Intended to identify areas of strengths and needs, the reviews are conducted by committees made up of school personnel (i.e., subject-matter teachers, teachers from other disciplines, and school leaders) and representatives from parent, student, and business communities.

Program reviews have been developed for arts and humanities, practical living and career studies, writing, and K-3 early learning. A world language program review was piloted during the 2014–15 school year with high school students. High schools will be held accountable for the world language program review in the 2015–16 school year, and elementary and middle schools will be included in the following academic year. Currently, next-generation instructional programs and supports account for 23% of a school’s overall school accountability score.

### **School Quality Review**

In **New York City**, the SQR is used to examine the quality of instruction in schools and to provide the school community an opportunity to reflect on and self-evaluate its progress and improvement efforts.<sup>43</sup> The review focuses on instructional and organizational coherence as keys to improving student learning and evaluates the school’s work as it relates to the following five quality indicators:

1. Rigorous, engaging and coherent curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
2. Research-based, effective instruction that yields high quality student work.
3. Curricula-aligned assessment practices that inform instruction.
4. Establishment of a culture of learning that communicates high expectations with supports.
5. Engagement of teacher teams in collaborative practice using the inquiry approach to improve classroom practice.<sup>44</sup>

The review process begins with the school completing a self-evaluation form that provides the contextual background for review and affords the staff an opportunity to reflect upon and assess the school’s functioning. Although an earlier version of the review developed by the state featured teams of peer reviewers led by an expert reviewer, the current New York City version is less extensive, typically including only one reviewer.<sup>45</sup>

During the process, the reviewer observes classrooms and teacher team meetings; meets with the school administrator, students, parents, teachers, and the teacher union chapter leader; and examines curricular artifacts and other school-related documents. The reviewer must use specific tools such as the Quality Review rubric,<sup>46</sup> which describes the quality “look-fors” in each grade; the Classroom Visitation Tool,<sup>47</sup> an evidence-gathering document; and a Record Book, used to document and organize the evidence collected during the site visit. At the conclusion, the reviewer provides verbal feedback to the principal and the school leadership team on the school’s preliminary rating, emphasizing areas of strength and areas for future focus, with specific examples gathered from the visit.

After a quality assurance process, a final report detailing the findings is published on the New York City Department of Education's website. A score derived from the quality review is reported on the school report card. The report is then used as a lens through which to better understand and interpret the quantitative data (e.g., student test scores, school climate survey, gap scores) while informing improvement efforts at the school.

In Vermont ... the standards focus on assuring that all schools deliver proficiency-based learning, flexible pathways to graduation, safe school environments, high-quality staffing, and financially efficient practices.

In **Vermont**, the State Board of Education adopted the Education Quality Standards (EQS) in 2014<sup>48</sup> to ensure that all students have access to high-quality educational programming that is substantially equal throughout the state. The standards focus on assuring that all schools deliver to their students proficiency-based learning, flexible pathways to graduation, safe school environments, high-quality staffing, and financially efficient practices. To evaluate schools' delivery of the standards, the Vermont Agency of Education has begun developing the Education Quality Review (EQR), which is the tool with which the state and the public will measure student learning and school progress.<sup>49</sup>

The EQR consists of two complementary processes to drive continuous improvement: the Annual Snapshot Review and the Integrated Field Review (IFR). The annual snapshot gathers quantitative data along the five dimensions of school quality related to the EQS to examine a school's overall performance and assess the extent of parity for students among and between the districts/supervisory unions and schools. The IFR is intended to provide stakeholders with an in-depth review of school quality, illuminate potential reasons for what is revealed by the quantitative data, identify promising practices from the field, and provide support and interventions for school improvement.

Schools will participate in IFRs at least every three years. The teams conducting the reviews comprise a combination of students, educators, and Agency staff. The review team observes classrooms, reviews student work and school policies, and meets with parents, students, and staff to evaluate the school's performance along the same five dimensions of school quality guiding the Annual Snapshot Reviews. The on-site review concludes with the development of a written report that assesses performance, highlights a commendation and a focus area for each school quality dimension, and identifies resources to aid improvement.

As in **Kentucky** (see page 34), the results from the IFR will be integrated into the process for making accountability determinations for the supervisory unions/districts. The IFR process is being field tested during the 2015-16 school year and the EQS is expected to be implemented statewide the following year.

In **Massachusetts**, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) employs an SQR process for reviewing charter schools for renewal. Each charter prepares a school accountability plan, which establishes its performance objectives and measures. The Department reviews the school's performance against the Charter School Performance Criteria<sup>50</sup>

based on this plan and an on-site visit, during which reviewers gather qualitative evidence of the school's performance on six criteria:

1. Mission and key design elements.
2. Access and equity.
3. Program delivery.
4. Culture and family engagement.
5. Capacity.
6. Governance.<sup>51</sup>

The frequency and length of the on-site visit is determined by the school's size, age, location, and status (whether it is on conditions or probation).<sup>52</sup> For example, charter schools in the first year of operation qualify for a year-one visit and are visited for one day only. Schools in year two or three of a charter term, or that are part of a network of charter schools, qualify for a full visit and are visited for one to three days. Schools on condition or probation receive a targeted visit, which lasts a half-day to a full day. Each charter school then receives a two-to-three day renewal inspection visit every five years.

Prior to the on-site visit, the school staff assembles key documents (e.g., school's master schedule, strategic plan, lesson plans, curricular units, summaries of key assessment data, descriptions of high quality instructional practices implemented in the school) and submits them to the Department. The review team consists of a Department staff member as the lead reviewer. Other Department staff and/or external volunteers may be engaged depending on the size, location, or special conditions of the school. On-site, the review team members conduct focus groups, interviews, observe classrooms,<sup>53</sup> conduct a document review to form judgments about the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Based on the evidence observed and collected, the review team creates initial findings that translate into ratings of the school's performance relative to the performance criteria. Criteria ratings range from "falls far below" to "partially meets" to "meets" to "exceeds."

At the end of the on-site visit, the review team shares its initial findings and ratings with the school staff. The team does not make suggestions or recommendations for improvement.<sup>54</sup> Instead, the team recounts the evidence-based or observed findings and ratings describing the school's performance in relation to the Charter School Performance Criteria. After the visit, the reviewers prepare a formal report that becomes a permanent part of the school's record. The site visit report is used to guide decision-making and ongoing improvement and is integral to the charter renewal process.

As part of the PACE system in **New Hampshire**, a district peer-review and auditing process has been incorporated into the system to ensure validity and reliability and to build local capacity. Peer review teams of external practitioners conduct school visits and examine the evidence submitted by the district. The peer review process supports continuous improvement as feedback based on common criteria is reported back to the districts. Eventually, the peer review audits will become a requirement of the approval process for districts seeking to implement the PACE system of accountability.

## Diagnostic Review

- **Kentucky's diagnostic reviews of priority schools.** In 2014, the Kentucky Board of Education outlined intervention options for low-performing priority schools and districts.<sup>55</sup> A diagnostic review is scheduled within 90 days of a school being identified as a priority school, to evaluate the functioning of the school council and the leadership capacity of the principal. The diagnostic review may include the following activities:
  - Analysis of state and local education data.
  - Review of comprehensive school improvement plans and other planning documents.
  - Interviews with students, parents, all school council members, school and district personnel, and community members.
  - Direct observation.
  - Administration of school climate and culture surveys.
  - Review of school council minutes and agendas.
  - Review of family and community involvement strategies.

The Kentucky Department of Education contracts with AdvancEd, to lead the diagnostic reviews of its priority schools. The AdvancEd Standards for Quality Schools focus on five areas:

1. Purpose and direction.
2. Governance and leadership.
3. Teaching and assessing for learning.
4. Resources and support systems.
5. Using results for continuous improvement.<sup>56</sup>

The process includes an internal review conducted by school and district staff along with parents, students, and community leaders, and a school site visit, conducted by an AdvancEd team of external reviewers. The internal review results in the development of a school profile that portrays the school's current reality based on multiple sources of data, such as student assessment scores, student demographic data, programmatic data, and stakeholder perception/survey data. The external review assesses the school's quality based on an on-site review of classroom observations and interviews with school staff, board members, district staff, parents, students, and community members. The external reviewers produce a written report that delineates the school's strengths as well as recommendations for improvement. The diagnostic report is the basis for the development of the priority school's continuous improvement plan.

After the diagnostic review, a written report is submitted to the Commissioner of Education with a recommendation as to whether the school council and principal have the capacity to lead the school to recovery or should be replaced. Following the initial diagnostic review, a follow-up review is to be conducted at least once every two years.

- **Massachusetts reviews of low-performing schools.** In similar fashion, the MDESE contracts with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct Monitoring Site Visits (MSV) at low-performing schools (Levels 4 and 5 in the state rating system) and School Redesign Grant recipient schools. The visits provide these schools with targeted information and feedback on the schools' progress toward meeting their improvement goals.<sup>57</sup> A school's progress is evaluated against four evidence-based turnaround practice areas:
  1. Leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration.
  2. Intentional practices for improving instruction.
  3. Student-specific supports and instruction to all students.
  4. School culture and climate.<sup>58</sup>

Specific indicators have been identified for each turnaround practice area. For example, the leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration area comprises seven indicators:

- Use of autonomy.
- High expectations.
- Vision/theory of action.
- Monitoring school progress.
- Instructional leadership and improvement.
- Time use.
- Communication with staff.

Each indicator is assessed along a four-point implementation continuum: (1) no evidence, (2) developing, (3) providing, and (4) sustaining. When a school is performing at the sustaining level across all of the indicators within a turnaround practice area, the school is viewed as demonstrating a high level of coherence that can lead to improvements in student outcomes.<sup>59</sup>

The site visit typically takes two days to complete by AIR staff. Prior to the visit, the school staff collects and sends to the AIR staff preparatory materials, such as the master schedule, a staff list, the daily schedule, and a map of the school. The first day of the on-site visit generally consists of interviews and focus groups with school leaders, staff, students (only in middle and high schools), district staff, and identified external partners. The second day visit generally consists of classroom observations. The AIR staff employs the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation tool, with each classroom observed for up to 20 minutes. Within four business days of the visit, the findings from the observations are shared in the Schoolwide Instructional Observation report with school and district leaders as well as with the MDESE. The overall MSV report, delivered within four weeks, incorporates data from interviews and focus groups and the classroom observations. The report provides an overview, specific information, and evidence related to turnaround practices and the school's progress on the indicators.

- **Connecticut’s instructional audits for schools and districts in need of improvement.** Connecticut contracts with Cambridge Education, an organization that provides consultancy and training services in education, to conduct instructional and fiscal audits of schools and districts identified as in need of improvement in Year 3 or greater under the NCLB legislation.<sup>60</sup> The instructional audits are a central component in the state’s strategy for promoting continuous school improvement. They evaluate a school’s progress against five quality criteria:<sup>61</sup>
  1. Student achievement in the core subject areas.
  2. Quality of instruction provided through teaching, learning, and curriculum.
  3. Students’ personal character development.
  4. Effective leadership and management.
  5. Partnerships with parents and community.

To conduct the audits, Cambridge Education works collaboratively with staff from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to review school and district self-evaluations and conduct an on-site visit. The on-site visit includes observations of classroom teaching and interviews with school and district staff, students, parents, and community members. At the conclusion of the visit, preliminary verbal findings about the school’s or district’s strengths and areas of development are shared with the leadership team. After the site visit, a written report is drafted by Cambridge Education staff and reviewed for accuracy by school and district staff and then by the CSDE staff. A final report is submitted to the CSDE, which then releases it to the school or district. The report becomes the grist with which school and district staff, in collaboration with local stakeholders, revise the district improvement plans.

## **How Might Evidence-based Interventions Be Evaluated?**

Following the review of information and a diagnostic process, states have an obligation to help schools improve. ESSA requires schools and districts to develop and implement evidence-based interventions to improve student outcomes. As explained earlier, an educational intervention is evidence based when at least one high-quality study demonstrates that the intervention is statistically significantly likely to improve student achievement.

A large body of educational research has explored practices that are effective (and ineffective) for improving student outcomes. A key issue is that strategies for improving performance have generally proved successful only when implemented effectively and in contexts that can benefit from what they have to offer. Understanding how to evaluate this research can empower state and local policymakers to adopt educational interventions that best address the unique context of their local education system.

Below, we discuss four commonly used interventions that research has found to improve student outcomes under certain circumstances, seeking to illuminate the conditions under which they have been found to be successful. In a future publication, we will review a broader range of potential interventions more deeply.

## High-quality Professional Development

Clearly, changing curriculum and teaching practices require investments in teachers' professional learning, and some schools have shown significant achievement gains by making such investments strategically.<sup>62</sup> However, not all professional development (PD) is designed in ways that produce these effects.

A key feature of effective PD is that teachers work together on a particular set of practices over a sustained period of time. Of nine well-designed experimental or quasi-experimental investigations, Yoon and colleagues found that 14 or fewer hours of professional development on a given topic showed no significant effects on student learning.<sup>63</sup> The professional development that showed positive and significant effects on student achievement averaged 49 hours.<sup>64</sup>

The greatest improvements in student achievement have been found to be associated with PD approaches that:

- focus on deepening teachers' content knowledge and instructional practices;<sup>65</sup>
- function as a coherent part of a school's improvement efforts, aligned with curriculum, assessments, and standards, so that teachers can implement the knowledge and practices they learn in their classrooms;<sup>66</sup>
- occur in collaborative and collegial learning environments in which teachers participate in professional learning and together grapple with issues related to new content and instructional practices;<sup>67</sup>
- provide authentic activities rooted in teachers' inquiry and reflection about practice within the context of the curriculum and students they teach;<sup>68</sup>
- link to analysis of teaching and student learning, including the formative use of assessment data;<sup>69</sup> and
- are supported by coaching, modeling, observations, and feedback.<sup>70</sup>
- States and districts will want to be informed by research that highlights the critical components of PD most likely to markedly improve teachers' skills and students' outcomes.

## Class Size Reduction

Reducing class size can help improve student outcomes under some circumstances. However, the effects appear to vary depending on the age and character of the students and the extent of class-size reduction pursued. And they assume that other variables, such as the quality of teachers and curriculum, remain constant.

For example, a meta-analysis of 77 studies exploring the effects of class size found that smaller class sizes were associated with improved student achievement, with the greatest effects when certain smaller class thresholds were reached. For example, reducing a class size of 40 students to a class of no more than 20 students, or a class of 25 students to a class of 10–15 students produced the greatest gains in student achievement.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, the well-known experimental study of Tennessee’s Project Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) found that reducing class sizes below certain threshold levels in kindergarten through third grade improved student achievement, with benefits persisting for at least five years after the student was assigned to a smaller class.<sup>72</sup> In particular, small classes of fewer than 18 students made greater gains in their achievement on standardized tests than students in regular-sized classes (22–25 students). Importantly, the effects of being in a small class were nearly twice as large for students of color as for their white peers. Test score gains were greatest for children in kindergarten and 1st grade with persistent long-term effects on a variety of academic outcomes in middle and high school.<sup>73</sup>

Studies of Wisconsin’s statewide class size reduction experiment found that reducing student-teacher ratios in kindergarten through 3rd grade to fewer than 15 students per teacher (as compared to ratios of 21:1 and 25:1) was associated with improved student achievement. The largest benefits from smaller class sizes were experienced by African American students and students in urban districts with large proportions of low-income students.<sup>74</sup>

In sum, positive results, especially for low-income students and students of color, have been found in the literature when class-size reduction programs are well-designed, meet a relatively low threshold of class size (in the vicinity of 15 to 18 students), and are implemented in the early grades.

### **Community Schools and Wraparound Services**

A community school is both a physical place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources.<sup>75</sup> Community schools take on a results-focused integrated approach that links high-quality academics with health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. Particularly in schools serving low-income students, community school models and wraparound services have been found to improve student outcomes.<sup>76</sup>

The rationale for a community school is that students need more than just high-quality instruction to achieve academic and personal success. Children need access to housing, food, and health care, as well as social and learning supports. In addition, parents and the broader community need coordinated, one-stop services so that they can easily receive assistance that ultimately supports children’s development. Consequently, many community schools offer onsite clinics that provide physical and mental health care, social welfare services, before- and after-school care, tutoring and mentoring, preschool, a focus on social-emotional learning and positive discipline approaches, and parent and community engagement.<sup>77</sup> In addition, many of these services are open to all community members during the day, evening, and weekend.<sup>78</sup>

Research about the effectiveness of community schools and other approaches that ensure a wide range of services for children often finds that such schools are associated with improved student outcomes, especially for the most socioeconomically disadvantaged students.<sup>79</sup> Of course, it is not the “community schools” label that makes a difference: A critical mass of key features must be in place and well implemented to derive these effects.

In addition to overarching studies, certain features of such schools have been studied individually, showing positive influences on outcomes. For example, research has found significant student learning gains as a result of expanded learning time, including an extended school day, time for tutoring and homework help,<sup>80</sup> and summer learning time.<sup>81</sup>

The frequency of parent, family, and community engagement is positively associated with improved student academic achievement, lower rates of grade retention, fewer years that students spend in special education, and gains in English language development exam scores for English language learners.<sup>82</sup> Wraparound academic, health, and social services are associated with improved academic outcomes, especially for the most vulnerable students.<sup>83</sup> Social-emotional learning supports and positive behavioral interventions, such as restorative justice practices, are associated with increased student academic success and lower rates of suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts.<sup>84</sup>

The frequency of parent, family, and community engagement is positively associated with improved student academic achievement, lower rates of grade retention, fewer years that students spend in special education, and gains ... for English language learners.

One approach, the Turnaround for Children (TFC) model, addresses these goals in underperforming schools through capacity building and culture change. TFC’s model is an integrated set of practices and supports that address students’ social, emotional, and physical well-being while also transforming school culture. TFC sets up a partnership between the school and a community-based mental health provider to create a focus on child development aimed at reversing poverty-induced traumas that impede learning. It then deploys a team consisting of a social work consultant (veteran clinical social worker), instructional coach (master teacher), and program director (experienced school administrator) to:

- build a high-capacity student support system that provides help to all children, including those with intense needs, either in their schools or in partnership with community-based mental health providers;
- train all teachers in proven classroom strategies that foster a safe, engaging learning environment and strong student-teacher relationships; and
- work with school leaders to drive school-wide improvement aligned to Common Core State Standards and district guidelines with the intention of creating a high-performing culture that involves the entire school community.

Data from TFC schools in New York City shows dramatic gains in math and English language arts scores, as well as greater safety, a decrease in suspensions, and a decrease in teacher absences and turnover.<sup>85</sup>

### High School Redesign

The effective redesign of secondary schools is another intervention strategy supported by research. Although school size and structural features are potential tools to help schools support student attachment and learning, the results they produce depend in substantial part on how these elements are implemented. Effective redesigned schools share a number of features that influence student achievement, including personalization, a shared school mission focused on high-quality student learning, a strong core curriculum for all students, high-quality “authentic” instruction,

56x

and a professional community.<sup>86</sup> The redesign strategies discussed below hold promise for helping schools achieve improved outcomes, but success ultimately depends on how each element is implemented.

- **Small size and personalization.** A number of studies have found that, all else being equal, schools have higher levels of achievement when they create smaller, more personalized communities of teachers and students in which teachers work together and students see a smaller number of teachers over a longer period of time. This allows teachers and students to come to know one another well.<sup>87</sup> For example, a study of 820 high schools in the National Education Longitudinal Study, which controlled for student characteristics, found that those schools that restructured to personalize education and develop collaborative learning structures produced significantly higher achievement gains that were also distributed more equitably across more and less advantaged students.<sup>88</sup> Other studies have found improved student and teacher relationships and increased student engagement, as well as improved student achievement, as a result of these strategies.<sup>89</sup>

Personalization can be accomplished not only through smaller classes but also through longer stretches of time spent by adults with the same groups of students—through longer class periods associated with smaller pupil loads for teachers, fewer courses per term, advisories (classes in which teachers meet regularly with students to advise and support students with their work, sometimes staying together over multiple years), and looping (teachers stay with the same group of students for more than a year).<sup>90</sup> Another strategy for enhancing personalization is teaming, in which a few teachers share the same group of students and regularly discuss students' progress in addition to connecting curriculum across content areas.

- **Shared school mission.** A problem commonly reported among less successful schools is goal diffusion, as fragmentation and managerial distractions cause schools to lose focus on teaching and learning. A common theme running through the research on successful schools is having a clear, shared focus on student learning with common norms and practices across classrooms.<sup>91</sup> Faculty communication, community ownership, and a common purpose and curricular focus—all associated with developing a shared school mission—facilitate greater participation by marginal students.<sup>92</sup> Other research confirms that developing common goals, norms, and practices with a strong focus on teaching and learning leads to greater student engagement and student outcomes, especially for underserved students.<sup>93</sup> This signals the importance of skilled school leaders who can help staff, parents, and students develop a shared sense of mission that translates into common norms, beliefs, and practices.
- **Strong, common academic curriculum.** Students attending schools that emphasize academic rigor and provide a more common curriculum with less tracking are more likely to make greater gains in their academic achievement.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, students attending such schools have lower rates of absenteeism and stronger graduation rates.<sup>95</sup> In fact, when students of similar backgrounds and initial achievement levels are exposed to more and less challenging curricula, those given the richer curriculum opportunities outperform those placed in less challenging classes.<sup>96</sup> As a corollary, students achieve at lower levels and exhibit more behavioral problems when they are tracked into classes that are academically unchallenging.<sup>97</sup> Importantly, schools that have successfully created a common curriculum for students of varying levels of initial achievement have offered other supports and interventions alongside the curriculum, such as during- and after-school help with homework and tutoring.<sup>98</sup>

- **Authentic instruction.** A number of studies have found positive influences on student achievement from what researchers call authentic instruction—that is, meaningful instruction, curriculum, and assessment that requires students to construct and organize knowledge, consider alternatives, apply disciplinary processes to content central to the discipline, and communicate effectively to audiences beyond the classroom and school.<sup>99</sup> This is the kind of instruction called for in the new Common Core State Standards. For example, a study of more than 2,100 students in 23 restructured schools found significantly higher achievement on intellectually challenging performance tasks for students who experienced authentic instruction.<sup>100</sup>

Authentic instruction generally occurs through performance-based activities, including experiments, mathematical modeling, social science inquiry, and other projects requiring in-depth study, extensive writing, or public presentations. These activities can create high expectations throughout a school and encourage mutual teacher and student accountability for meeting expectations.<sup>101</sup>

- **Professional community.** Many researchers have identified the collaboration associated with a professional community of teachers as a key element of successful schools.<sup>102</sup> Bryk, Camburn, and Louis define a professional community as teachers' focus on student learning, collective responsibility for school improvement, de-privatized practice, reflective dialogue, and staff collegiality and collaboration.<sup>103</sup> A professional community encourages teachers to take responsibility for student learning and provides them with tools to do so, through collaboration around learning problems and effective teaching practices. In their study of 24 restructured schools, Newmann and colleagues found that having a strong professional community of practice is one of three commonalities among schools achieving high levels of student learning.<sup>104</sup> Other research suggests that a collegial professional environment for teachers produces stronger achievement and generates greater collective responsibility for school improvement and student learning.<sup>105</sup>

## Conclusion

The Every Student Succeeds Act provides an important opportunity to create new accountability strategies that seek to view students and schools more holistically. Taking advantage of this opportunity will require clarity about what the act permits and requires, as well as creativity in developing new measures, processes for school diagnosis and improvement, and evidence-based interventions that support deeper learning in contexts that further equity goals.

## Endnotes

1. See, e.g., U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), Averaged freshmen graduation rates, [http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/data\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/data_tables.asp) and Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates, and [http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/data\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/data_tables.asp) and [http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR\\_2010-11\\_to\\_2012-13.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_2010-11_to_2012-13.asp).
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5. Darling-Hammond et al. (2014).
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New Jersey  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# *Every Student Succeeds Act* in New Jersey

A logo for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), featuring a silhouette of the state of New Jersey with the acronym "ESSA" written inside a white box with a blue border.

ESSA

October 11, 2016



# The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* reauthorizes the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, which, when passed in 1965, committed new federal funding to help ensure equitable access to educational resources and opportunities

- States and school districts **are eligible for funds** if they comply with the specific requirements outlined in the law:
  - Funding is heavily weighted to go to school districts **with students living in poverty**
  - Most funds funnel through the state and **go directly to schools and districts**
  - Federal funds make up only a **small percentage of a district's budget** (typically, less than 10%)
- **To qualify for funding** under the law:
  - **Every several years**, each state must apply to the U.S. Department of Education
  - **Every year**, each school district must apply to the State

See our video overview a: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ESSA/>





# The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The NJ ESSA State Plan: ESSA provides us opportunities to support the success of all students by:

- Setting **long-term goals** for schools and students;
- **Measuring and reporting** how all students are progressing toward achieving the NJ Student Learning Standards and leaving high school prepared for college and career;
- Identifying schools and districts in need of **additional support**;
- Writing **plans for intervention** for schools with low performance and high needs; and
- Determining **how state-level funds will be used** to further support New Jersey students and educators.





# Timeline: ESSA Implementation

Date (Expected)	Federal	State	District
School Year <b>2016-17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal regulations and guidance continuously released</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESEA Waiver expires (August)</li> <li>NJ develops and submits state plan in collaboration with stakeholders</li> <li>Continues to provide targeted support Priority/Focus schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Districts spend under NCLB rules</li> <li>Priority/Focus school status remains the same as in 2015-16</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final federal regulations posted (expected)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborates with stakeholders to develop a state plan</li> <li>Ensures state processes, guidance, and data collections reflect changes from ESSA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Districts receive initial spending guidance from NJDOE (Nov)</li> </ul>
<b>Spring-Summer 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US Dept. of Ed reviews and approves state plans submitted in March or July</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NJ to submit state plan to US Dept. of Ed by March 6* following public comment period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Districts continue to receive updated spending guidance from NJDOE</li> <li>Districts receive allocations from NJDOE and apply for grants</li> </ul>
School Year <b>2017-18</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New state plan goes into effect, ongoing stakeholder engagement to support implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Districts develop intervention plans in collaboration with stakeholders</li> <li>Districts spend under ESSA rules/formulas</li> </ul>

\* Subject to change pending final federal regulations





# Commitment to Ongoing Engagement

2016 Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun 2017



## NJDOE will provide opportunities for stakeholders to:

<u>Discuss how NJ state and districts may best implement</u> specific areas of existing and new federal law	<u>Provide targeted feedback</u> , through focus groups and public comment	<u>Receive updated information</u> about ESSA implementation and best practices
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## Engagement So Far

Received over **5,000 survey responses** from members of school communities in every county about what type of public school information should be publicly reported

Attended or hosted **over 50 meetings** with representatives from a variety of organizations

Hosted **four Listening and Learning Sessions** throughout the state where we met with over **140 attendees** and heard from **35 speakers** who represented or were members of **26 different organizations** and/or communities



# ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group

In response to stakeholder feedback, the NJDOE invited each group below to send a representative to an ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group, which will meet periodically over the next few months to provide input on policy questions related to the state plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abbott Leadership Institute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Conference of La Raza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Network of Catholic School Families and Government Funded Programs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocates for Children of New Jersey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Institute for Early Education Research; Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association of Student Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Parent Teacher Association</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aging Out Project, Child Advocacy Clinic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Alliance for Social, Emotional and Character Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Black Alliance for Educational Options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agudath Israel of America New Jersey Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Arts Education Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Business and Industry Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey School Boards Association</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AIM Institute for Learning and Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association for Curriculum Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Business/Technology Education Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American Federation of Teachers – New Jersey Chapter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association for Educational Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Campaign for Achievement Now</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Special Parent Advocacy Group</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American Heart Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association for Gifted Children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Catholic Conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey State School Nurses Association</li> </ul>





# ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group Continued

In response to stakeholder feedback, the NJDOE invited each group below to send a representative to an ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group, which will meet periodically over the next few months to provide input on policy questions related to the state plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARC of New Jersey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation &amp; Dance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Statewide Parent Advocacy Network</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in New Jersey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>William Paterson University, CAEP, NCATE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Charter School Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/New Jersey Bilingual Educators</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association for Student Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Child Care Aware</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Technology and Engineering Association</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bad*** Teacher Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Council for the Social Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent Education Organizing Council</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Family Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey Council of County Colleges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paterson Education Fund/ Legal Defense Fund</li> </ul>



# ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group Continued

In response to stakeholder feedback, the NJDOE invited each group below to send a representative to an ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group, which will meet periodically over the next few months to provide input on policy questions related to the state plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salem County College</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Law Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Association of Federal Program Administrators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Education Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save Our Schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Services Commission of New Jersey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Association of Independent Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Future Educators Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach for America - New Jersey</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden State Coalition of School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Association of School Administrators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Head Start Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Opportunity Institute</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latino Action Network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey Association of School Psychologists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Statewide Education Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAEP, NCATE</li> </ul>



# October Outreach

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
<p>Performance Report Focus Group</p> <p>Ocean County Special Education Roundtable</p>	<p>Performance Report Focus Group</p> <p>New Jersey Association for School Administrators Workshop</p>	<p>Great Schools New Jersey (tentative)</p> <p>New Jersey School Boards Association Workshop</p> <p>Office of Special Education Programs Stakeholder Meeting</p>	<p>County Education Specialist &amp; Supervisor of Child Study</p> <p>Paterson Education Fund Focus Group</p> <p>Executive County Business Officials Meeting</p> <p>New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association Conference</p> <p>New Jersey Education Association Roundtable</p> <p>New Jersey Alliance for Social, Emotional and Character Development Board Meeting</p>	<p>Mercer County Special Education Roundtable</p> <p><b>ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group</b></p> <p>State Professional Learning Committee Meeting</p>



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# November Outreach

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4
		New Jersey Education Association Roundtable (Deptford)	County Education Specialist and Child Study Meeting New Jersey Education Association Roundtable (Whippany)	<b>ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group</b>
7	8	9	10	11
			Executive County Business Association Meeting	
14	15	16	17	18
Jersey City Community Roundtable (Tentative)	American Federation of Teachers Focus Group (North Bergen)	Garden State Coalition Board of Trustees Meeting <b>ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group</b>	<b>ESSA Technical Assistance</b>	
21	22	23	24	25
<b>ESSA Technical Assistance</b>	American Federation of Teachers Focus Group (Perth Amboy)	Executive County Superintendent Meeting		
28	29	30		
<b>ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group</b>	<b>ESSA Technical Assistance</b>	<b>ESSA Technical Assistance</b>		



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## Community Input Matters

The success and sustainability of efforts to improve educational excellence and equity in New Jersey under ESSA depends on partnership among the NJDOE and stakeholders like you.



- For more information, go to NJ Department of Education ESSA Website  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/ESSA/>
- For questions, concerns, recommendations, requests for resources or opportunities to engage, contact NJ ESSA Team: [essa@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:essa@doe.state.nj.us)

Wendell Steinhauer  
NJEA President  
Joint Committee on Public Schools  
October 11, 2016

Good morning, my name is Wendell Steinhauer. I am a high school math teacher, and I also serve as the President of the 200,000 member New Jersey Education Association.

We believe the Every Student Succeeds Act—or ESSA—offers opportunity. Opportunity for our educators, teachers and students. We see this law as a chance for our state to reverse the many harmful policies of No Child Left Behind. The past fourteen years have been marred by an obsession with a “test and punish” mentality in our schools, and ESSA creates space to fix the broken policies of the past. But, if we want to fix broken policies of the past, all stakeholders must be willing to work together towards changes that benefit all students.

And it is with stakeholder engagement where ESSA is revolutionary. For the first time, federal education policy requires meaningful and sustained involvement of all stakeholders—from parents, to community leaders, to educators—in shaping our public education system. This requirement of stakeholder engagement extends from the school district to the state-level. This is an unprecedented opportunity for the entire community to create a public education system representing our shared values.

One of those shared values is to de-emphasize the oversized role standardized testing plays in our schools. The obsession with high stakes, standardized testing has to stop. Simply put: the impact of these tests on schools is toxic. ESSA specifically calls for states to require multiple measures—a wide variety of measures—as indicators for school success. ESSA brings a de-escalation of the stakes tied to statewide standardized testing, and we hope to see new accountability measures that won’t yield the same results we have come to expect.

Our teacher’s don’t hate tests, they invented them! But, using state-level standardized test at the current rate hurts our classrooms and negatively impacts student learning. ESSA calls for a de-emphasis on these assessments, and we believe New Jersey should take this opportunity to go beyond mere test scores and follow a spirit consistent with federal law.

In fact: when ESSA was signed into law, it prohibited the federal government from requiring states to use standardized assessments for teacher evaluation. We know that using testing for teacher evaluation is inaccurate and ineffective. We must not let this opportunity pass; we must stop using standardized tests to measure teacher effectiveness.

When it comes to school accountability measures, it’s critical that New Jersey select indicators that will not yield the same results we have seen year after year. It’s our obligation to look at measures that will help our most needy schools and children, not hurt them. That’s why, we are

proposing what we call a “student success index” to be chosen as our additional indicator to measure school success.

With the adoption of ESSA, we believe our students have the chance to feel meaningful changes in their everyday lives. A “student success index” would place an emphasis on what matters to students. It would take into account critical factors that we *know* are tied to student success. We would look at access to health services, access to afterschool support programs, class size, and other factors that yield results. A student success index, paired with other indicators required under ESSA to measure school effectiveness, would ensure that districts across the state focus on *multiple elements* of a student’s experience.

No Child Left Behind required districts to care about one thing: test scores. When a district cares solely about performance on tests, so many factors that make up a child’s school day become lost. ESSA means—and a Student Success Index would ensure—that our districts are actively working to improve those elements that make our schools so successful.

Despite our best efforts to work with all districts, it’s a simple fact that we will have some districts that will need additional support. Instead of the discredited one-size-fits-all policies of No Child Left Behind, ESSA allows space for a sustainable, community-driven remedy for schools and districts that need more support. New Jersey must take advantage of this new approach, and we support Community Schools.

Community schools are schools that are unique to each community of the schools they serve. They are not a one-size-fits-all approach to school improvement; they are not a simple addition of “wrap-around services” to schools. Community Schools invite community leaders to work with educators and students to better the community together. They are research-based, and have proven to help schools across the country.

Most importantly, Community Schools don’t dismantle the public schools. We believe that every child has the right to go to a school that will serve them in the neighborhood in which they live. Community Schools work to fix schools with various problems by leveraging the knowledge and the passions of the parents and the community. Under ESSA, when our schools need help, Community Schools are the remedy New Jersey should pursue.

ESSA offers opportunity to bring about the changes we always hoped we would see in our schools. I look forward to working with you to make these changes come to fruition.

Thank you.



## **NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

920 West State Street • Trenton, New Jersey 08618-5394  
609.599.2900 / Fax: 609.599.1893 website: <http://njasa.net>

### **Testimony Regarding Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Joint Committee on Public Schools October 11, 2016**

**Submitted By: Melanie Schulz, NJASA Director of Government Relations**

When Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, it made a dramatic shift from a law that was a Federal plan to a law requiring States to develop their own plans.

While New Jersey is in the process of articulating its own plan, there are critical questions that should be our guide:

1. What is in our waiver that we want to keep?
2. What is in our waiver that needs to go?
3. What did we want in our waiver that was not permissible under No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?
4. What State policies did we put in place (regulations/guidance/statute) to comply with NCLB and that we have an opportunity to rescind or modify to support the answers to the questions above?

The answers to these questions are likely to surface over the coming months as the large group of stakeholders convene to discuss the various provisions of ESSA.

At the heart of ESSA is the fundamental cycle of setting goals, planning on how to use Federal funds, and measuring outcomes.

State and LEAs should feel empowered under ESSA because the baseline is so completely reset and there is an opportunity to adopt and promote what educators deem their own strong systems for school improvement based on evidence rather than one-size-fits-all mandates.

NJASA has been and will continue to be a strong advocate for reliable practice and accountability measures.

# WEEHAWKEN TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Dr. Robert R. Zywicki**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

53 Liberty Place Weehawken, NJ 07086  
201.422.6125 | WeehawkenSchools.net | @WeehawkenTSD

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## **Public Comment on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) October 11, 2016 - Joint Committee on the Public Schools**

My name is Robert Zywicki and I am the Superintendent of the Weehawken Township School District in Hudson County. I greatly appreciate this opportunity to comment on the state's implementation of ESSA. I will be speaking on two topics related to local ESSA implementation as it pertains to the reporting on school and district performance.

My first comment is in regard to the reporting of the adjusted cohort high school graduation rate on the school performance reports that NJDOE produces annually.

- The current adjusted graduation rate reported on NJDOE school performance reports is a calculation of the number of high school students belonging to a cohort who graduate within four years. This metric has had positive results for New Jersey's students. Schools now have greater incentive to provide dropout prevention strategies such as, Response to Intervention, for students who are at risk of not graduating.
- The cohort graduation rate currently reported on the New Jersey school performance reports is considered adjusted because it excludes students who have transferred out of state or who are deceased. Student dropouts, unverified transfers, and students in continuing status count against a school's graduation rate.
- Oftentimes continuing students are special education students who are entitled to receive services beyond four years of high school. Additionally, students who take longer than four years to graduate due to medical conditions are counted as continuing status students.
- The inclusion of continuing status students produces an artificially low graduation rate that is reported to the public on NJDOE performance reports. For example, in my District in 2015-16, the attending cohort graduation rate that excludes continuing students is 98%. Yet, the official accountable cohort graduation rate that includes continuing status students is 93%.
- I respectfully urge the Committee to consider a stipulation in the reporting regulations so that the four year adjusted cohort graduation rate reported on that NJDOE school performance reports no longer penalizes a school for continuing status students.

My second comment is with respect to the reporting of the postsecondary enrollment rate on the NJDOE school performance reports produced annually by the NJDOE.

- New Jersey's school performance reports for high schools currently include a category entitled Postsecondary Enrollment Rate. This statistic reports the percentage of students who are enrolled in a two or four year college sixteen months after high school graduation. This statistic has been used by publications such as New Jersey Monthly as part of their high school ranking methodology.
- This postsecondary enrollment statistic fails to take into account high school graduates who are serving in the military, enrolled in a trade school, volunteering with humanitarian organizations, or working in business or industry. Further the use of this statistic implies that military service or working to save money to go to college are somehow less valuable than immediate enrollment in college.
- I respectfully urge the Committee to consider a "Postsecondary Plans Index" that shows the number of graduates who are reported to be enrolled in college or trade school, serving in the military, volunteering with a humanitarian organization, or working in business or industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments regarding ESSA implementation in New Jersey.



*J. Kenyon Kummings, Superintendent  
Wildwood Public Schools  
4300 Pacific Avenue  
Wildwood, New Jersey 08260  
Phone: 609-522-4157 Fax: 609-523-8161*

## Wildwood Public Schools

October 11, 2016

RE: ESSA Testimony Before the Joint Committee on Public Schools

To Whom It May Concern:

Good afternoon, my name is Kenyon Kummings, Superintendent of Wildwood Public Schools in Cape May County. Our district has a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students and is racially and ethnically diverse. I am here today to testify on two separate but related concerns.

### **Free and Reduced Lunch Status as a Data Point in Structuring Peer School Groups**

NJASA Vision 20/20 Key Factors:

- Services that focus on high expectations and emphasize individualized outcomes in order to maximize the achievement of special needs youngsters
- Governance policies and practices that enhance trust and foster collaboration, communication and coordination

The first of which is on the use of free and reduced lunch status as a metric within any school accountability system, and primarily when identifying peer schools for use in the school performance reports. The performance report is the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) main vehicle for communicating with the public regarding the status and performance of our schools. We know from peer-reviewed studies, and over two decades of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that students on reduced lunch do not score statistically significantly differently than students not eligible for reduced lunch. However, students eligible for free lunch do score significantly lower. To aggregate the two is to create an inaccurate portrayal of the social conditions that a school is charged with navigating. For example, the composition of our elementary school is 90% free and reduced, with 85% free and 5% reduced. Under the current system, our school could be grouped with a school with the inverse of that distribution that is 5% free and 85% reduced. Those numbers represent two very different schools within two very different communities.

My request is that the department look to abandon the use of the percentage of students receiving reduced cost lunch and rely on either the free lunch rates exclusively, or the state of New Jersey's direct certification numbers that indicate if students are involved with the School Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Food Distribution Programs and/or are foster children. This would be a standardized metric that would result in a more accurate portrayal and grouping of schools on reports such as the school performance report, or its next iteration.

## **Standardized Testing, Frequency and Accountability Structures**

NJASA Vision 20/20 Key Factors:

- The recognition of many different and rigorous paths to academic achievement, all of which lead to lifelong learning and careers
- Ongoing and continuous professional development support to maintain the effectiveness of all educators

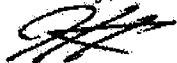
The second concern is in regard to standardized testing frequency and accountability structures. With the onset of NCLB in 2001, we began administering standardized tests in grades 3-8 and 11. That has now grown to potentially 6 compulsory assessments across ELA and Math during high school, one of the highest amounts of high school testing in the country. Any opportunity to decrease the frequency and volume of mandated testing will result in more opportunities for learning as well as a reduction in costs at the school, district and state levels. In addition, many states have abandoned the use of a standardized assessment as a graduation requirement (see attached CMCAA Resolution). Any opportunity to reduce the amount of state standardized assessment via pilots within ESSA should be strongly considered.

The results of standardized assessments are currently used to identify the lowest performing schools for monitoring in an effort to improve student performance. This was originally through the Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement (CAPA), and most recently via the Regional Achievement Centers (RAC) an idea borrowed from other states. The implementation of ESSA offers an opportunity evolve from the current vantage point of monitoring into a new system with a focus on capacity building and support in a more thorough and efficient manner, taking into account protocols that have a proven record of effectiveness. There already exist national school accreditation associations for feedback and growth that have demonstrated track records: (i.e. Middle States Elementary and Secondary School Accreditation, and New England Association of Secondary Schools; Western Association of Schools and Colleges).

Furthermore, given the focus on global competitiveness, it is more appropriate to look at international accreditation agencies that can collaboratively and effectively provide feedback on how well our schools are growing toward offering international educational experiences. Agencies like the Council for International Schools or AdvancedED, among a host of others, offer international perspectives for growth. For all their good intentions, the RACs do not have the personnel, nor the resources to provide that type and level of support. We need a 21st century model built on growth to replace the current 19th century model built on monitoring. For example, the NJDOE could facilitate partnerships between schools in NJ that share similar demographics and challenges to share best practices that have been successful in areas identified for school improvement such as the dropout rate or specific achievement gaps. They could also facilitate partnerships with international schools to help create professional learning networks. The NJDOE would then be in a position to help facilitate customized and collaborative professional development between two or more districts, as opposed to applying the same set of standardized principles to all schools.

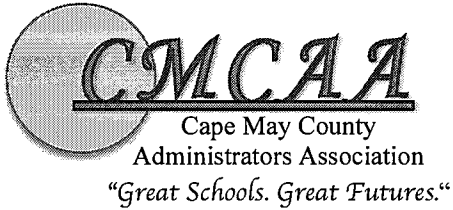
By reducing the amount of standardized assessments, and by restructuring the accountability systems, the NJDOE has an opportunity to decrease the cost of school improvement initiatives and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public education in New Jersey.

Sincerely,



J. Kenyon Kummings, Superintendent

Attachments: CMCAA PARCC Resolution  
NJASA Vision 2020



Meeting Location  
188 Crest Haven Rd.  
Cape May Court House  
New Jersey 08210

September 28, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Attached you will find a resolution entitled; "Resolution of the Cape May County Administrators Association Concerning the Educational Impact of the PARCC Assessment". This was adopted by the Cape May County Administrators Association at its meeting on September 14, 2016. This resolution represents the position of the Association in its entirety, and was drafted utilizing notes from committee meetings of NJASA, CMCAA roundtables, as well as other documents, artifacts, and research.

The aim of this resolution is to identify global concerns of superintendents and other stakeholders within public education around the PARCC, and frame them in a manner that it will be considered for duplication across all 21 superintendents' county roundtables, as well as by any other educational entities and/or advocates of public education. The CMCAA maintains a willingness to partner with the NJDOE as well as other policy makers and legislators, to create the best possible environment for the education of all students, and to maintain and expand upon the outstanding reputation of public education that New Jersey has worked so hard to establish. Please share the resolution as you see appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JKK", is enclosed within a dashed rectangular box.

J. Kenyon Kummings  
Superintendent, Wildwood Public Schools  
NJASA Legislative Committee representative for Cape May County

JKK/jmp

**RESOLUTION OF THE CAPE MAY COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION  
CONCERNING THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF THE PARCC ASSESSMENT**

**WHEREAS**, on October 30, 2014, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) stated that there are no formal procedures for parents to opt their children out of the 2015 administration of the PARCC assessment and implied that district Chief School Administrators (CSAs) take punitive action against parents who choose to opt out; and

**WHEREAS**, CSAs released public statements to their communities following the October, 30, 2014 memo, based on the Commissioner's guidance, that opting out of PARCC is not permitted and could result in disciplinary action; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commissioner of the NJDOE gave conflicting testimony on opt outs at the State Board of Education meeting on January 7, 2015 and implied that school leaders should accommodate opt-outs; and

**WHEREAS**, the seemingly inconsistent guidance provided by NJDOE officials to CSAs continues to disrupt the educational environment of school districts by providing inaccurate and/or incomplete information regarding the diagnostic value of the assessment and the most recent untimely August 31, 2016 NJDOE Broadcast announcing the change in mSGP percentages for teacher and principal evaluation; and

**WHEREAS**, the NJDOE required districts and charter schools whose spring 2015 PARCC participation rates were below 95% of eligible test takers to create a corrective action plan detailing how they will increase participation rates for this spring's PARCC; and

**WHEREAS**, the NJDOE exacerbates district scheduling and time constraints by providing late notice of field testing that not only further disrupts the educational environment of school districts but causes additional human and financial resources to be expended to re-design the assessment schedule and communicate the revised schedule to faculty, students and parents; and

**WHEREAS**, the majority of states have now dropped the high school exit exam as a requirement for graduation from high school; and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey public schools have one of the highest high school graduation rates and highest ratings on the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Bureau of Economics Research and research members of the American Educational Research Association have found that high school exit exams increase incarceration rates and have no influence on employment and wages; and

**WHEREAS**, research by the College Board clearly suggests that high school grade point average is a better indicator of first-year college success and later persistence through college than the SAT and approximately 1,000 colleges and universities do not require either ACT or SAT results or make submitting the scores optional for students; and

**WHEREAS**, the format and timing of the PARCC assessment has changed since the spring administration in 2015, in that the 2014-2015 school year was designated by the NJDOE as a "New Baseline" year that contained two PARCC assessment windows, the results of which were aggregated to determine final performance; and

**WHEREAS**, in the 2015-2016 school year, the PARCC assessment consisted of one assessment window to determine a final performance; and

**WHEREAS**, the validity of the comparison between the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years will now be compromised due to the change in the structure of the delivery and overall design of the PARCC assessment; and

**WHEREAS**, students, schools, teachers, administrators, and districts will still be held accountable for performance based on the results of this compromised comparison of the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years' PARCC assessment data, and student participation rates over which districts have little control; and

**WHEREAS**, the preparation for, and administration of the PARCC assessment consumes a great volume of valuable instructional time and resources with no demonstrable instructionally valuable return, (i.e., that the assessment would be diagnostic at the student level); and

**WHEREAS**, results from empirical studies conducted during the last four years have consistently demonstrated that student results on New Jersey state mandated tests of skills and knowledge at all grade levels can be predicted by community and family census data.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Cape May County Administrators Association ("the association")**

(1) Urges the NJDOE to conduct a top down review of the entire premise of state mandated standardized high school exit exams; as well as the entire premise of high stakes standardized assessments in grades 3-12, with focus on cost, value, validity, and disruption by said assessments to the instructional environment of schools; and this association further

(2) Urges the NJDOE to explore other statewide assessments, in which the local districts share leadership for assessment with the state, along the lines of the Nebraska STARS programs that operated from 2000 to 2009, or The New York Standards Performance Consortium; and this association further

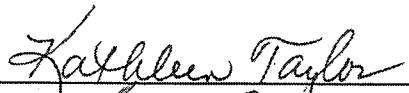
(3) Urges the NJDOE to review the accountability put upon districts, schools and faculty based on the PARCC assessment system that has not been proven to be a valid measurement of an effective instructional program; and this association further

(4) Urges the NJDOE to perform an inquiry of the damage to the instructional programs of school districts caused by the PARCC assessment system, and to determine the value to the taxpayers of New Jersey of the PARCC assessment.

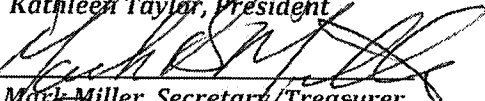
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution be certified and submitted to our State Representatives, The New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey School Boards Association, The New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, local municipal leaders, the board secretaries of each school district in the county, the County Office of Education, and the Office of the Commissioner of Education.

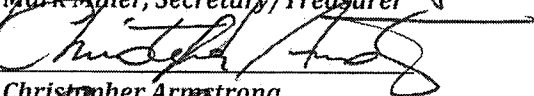
**CERTIFICATION**

I, **Kathleen Taylor, President** of the Cape May County Administrators Association, in the County of Cape May, and the State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true copy of the original resolution duly passed and adopted by the Cape May County Administrators Association at a meeting held on the 14 day of Sept, 2016.

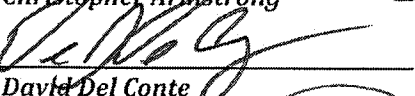
  
Kathleen Taylor, President

  
Victoria Zelenak, Vice President

  
Mark Miller, Secretary/Treasurer

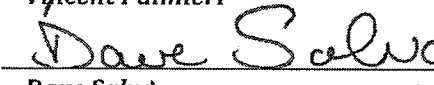
  
Christopher Armstrong


  
Barbara Makoski

  
David Del Conte


  
Vincent Palmieri

  
Anthony Devico

  
Dave Salvo

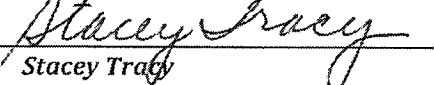
  
Nancy Hudanich

  
Jeff Samaniego

  
Christopher Kobik

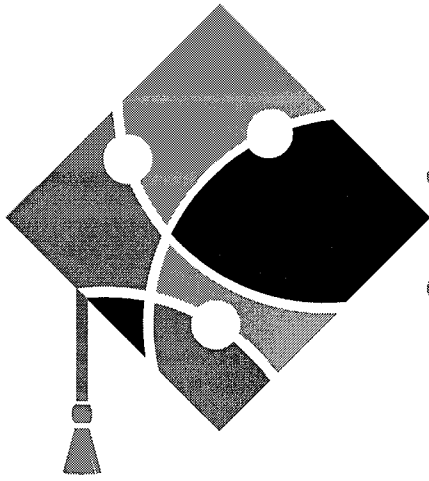
  
Alfred Savio

  
J. Kenyon Kummings

  
Stacey Tracy

Dated: 9/14/16

# Our Children... Our Future

vision  2020



# vision 2020

## Our Value, Our Vision, Our Needs

New Jersey consistently ranks as one of the best public education systems in our country, and scores higher than nearly every state in a number of national assessment reports.

We should all be proud of the wonderful progress we've made and the fact that we are living up to the true belief that "our children are our future." But we must also be aware that this ranking could change overnight, negatively impacting our school systems and putting New Jersey students at risk and jeopardy.

It's unfortunate, and even sad, but our entire society today, more than ever, is engaged in constant arguments and debate, especially when it comes to important issues related to public education. It's rare when we find educators, politicians and concerned parents all in agreement and void of dissent. There is no state where this disagreement is more apparent than here in New Jersey. Yet it seems like everyone universally believes and accepts our children are our future. As an organization, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) strives to ensure the best education for each and every child in the state, regardless of their geographic or socioeconomic status. To that end, we continue to promote eight key factors:

- The recognition of many different and rigorous paths to academic achievement, all of which lead to lifelong learning and careers;
- Predictable and sufficient funding to ensure world-class performance;
- Ongoing and continuous professional development support to maintain the effectiveness of all educators;
- Multiple learning opportunities and additional learning time to accommodate the different learning rates and learning styles of children;
- Investments in early childhood education to prepare children for academic success;
- Appropriately designed and adequately maintained school facilities to accommodate and support positive learning environments and advances in technology;
- Services that focus on high expectations and emphasize individualized outcomes in order to maximize the achievement of special needs youngsters; and
- Governance policies and practices that enhance trust and foster collaboration, communication and coordination.

The NJASA has a long and proud tradition of advocating for children and preparing leaders to steer schools and districts in the direction of positive futures. The children of New Jersey represent the future of our great state, and we have the responsibility to effectively educate all students through our public education system.



# The Value of Strong Leadership

Tim Waters stated, "At no time in recent memory has the need for effective and inspired leadership been more pressing than it is today. The importance of truly effective educational leadership is clear, and the time for improving schools is short." (School Leadership that Works (2005) Marzano, Waters, and McNulty) NJASA firmly believes that the public education system in New Jersey begins with strong leadership that is poised to take students and teachers into the future.

NJASA is committed to spearheading the development of strong leaders, and we support eight key initiatives. NJASA will:

- Work closely with colleges and universities that offer administrative certification and focus on the admission of highly qualified candidates only. We will actively mentor these individuals, with a focus on contemporary issues and the shaping of a framework for effective decision-making.
- Continue to attract promising leaders and advocate for the removal of barriers that serve to discourage candidates from entering the field of educational leadership, all while providing support to sustain the efforts of existing effective leaders throughout the state.
- Pledge to continue creating the most positive and instructionally effective learning environments and resources that foster a student's academic achievements and maintain our deep philosophical commitment and position that our children are our future.
- Provide our members with the support and up-to-date learning resources required for understanding and managing the complexities of balancing competing interests.
- Respect each community's ability to financially support their schools and reinforce their values and expectations to provide outstanding learning experiences for all students.
- Engage the community, and provide clear and continuous communication on a regular and timely basis regarding school performance and school needs. Abraham Lincoln long ago reminded us of the following: "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed." This thinking may be truer today than ever before.
- Promote New Jersey's public education system in an effort to attract outstanding future educators.
- Develop opportunities and support the professional development of teachers, administrators and support staff.



# Key Challenges for Chief Education Officers

The many challenges we face as chief education officers are formidable. But we can never take our eye off the number one goal: deliver a high-quality education to every New Jersey student attending public school in the state. To achieve this goal, we must aggressively address seven key challenges.

- There is a lack of sufficient funding of New Jersey public schools in order to meet the legislatively derived and judicially acknowledged funding formula.
- Economic factors besieging families have created growing income disparities that negatively impact students' readiness to learn, access to educational opportunities and the ability to fully participate in technological growth.
- There is a never-ending tide of legislative mandates that divert both fiscal and human resources from the primary mission of educating children.
- Political rhetoric and actions detract from a collaborative effort of bipartisan support for public education.
- There is a portrayal that public education belies its importance and serves to build mistrust among parents and other taxpayers.
- There is a steady loss of experienced leaders; they are moving to escape New Jersey-imposed barriers to advancement and fair compensation.
- The pool of highly qualified and certified leaders positioned to effectively replace current leaders has been reduced.

## Our Vision for Public Education in 2020 and Beyond

Our vision is to create learning-enriched opportunities and the finest educational environments within the New Jersey public education system, and to prepare our students to effectively compete on a global employment stage. The four key categories to continually transform our system and ensure future success that need our attention are Classrooms, Standards, Culture and Environment.

### Classrooms

We must:

- Continually personalize classroom instruction and develop challenging curricula, with expanded early childhood education and digital learning, which is essential for implementing and fulfilling globally competitive standards.

### Standards

We must:

- Continually review and revise leader, teacher and student performance evaluation systems and assessments to properly address the perpetual changes in education, including a revision of tenure and seniority; and
- Improve the statewide accountability and evaluation system for school district performance.

### Culture

We must:

- Achieve high educational standards by attracting, developing, supporting and retaining the highest-quality teachers, principals and district leaders;

- Generate parent, student and community involvement;
- Emphasize and reinforce education transformation, the importance of lifetime learning and the development of professional learning communities; and
- Address challenges that influence culture, such as increasing district autonomy; eliminating unnecessary regulations; and implementing pilot teacher and leader compensation programs.

### Environment

We must:

- Create a safe and orderly learning environment – doing so must be our first priority. But we must also generate sufficient funding for designing and maintaining school facilities that satisfy the learning challenges of our children, which may also include reorganizing school schedules and expanding the school day and year.

# Our Plan

NJASA has a 12-step plan to address these new learning challenges and deliver a world-class educational experience to each and every child in New Jersey.

- Create a safe, secure and orderly learning environment that forms the basis for all student academic, psychological, social, artistic and athletic development.
- Provide access to early childhood learning that includes universal pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten for all children.
- Provide access to year-round academic intervention services to address and mitigate achievement gaps between and among learners and groups of learners.
- Develop a robust and challenging curriculum for all content areas that is infused with digital learning opportunities and characterized by instructional delivery designed to be responsive to a wide array of learning styles.
- Reevaluate student progression and base it upon skill acquisition and assessment that reflect both written and “hands-on” methodologies.
- Design assessments that assist teachers in analyzing student growth and reteaching concepts and skills yet to be mastered.
- Develop instruction to reflect “teacher-directed,” “student-facilitated” and “learner-centered” approaches that infuse theoretical constructs and practical applications.
- Establish an instructional approach that emphasizes creativity, discovery, self-initiative, persistence and a spirit of lifelong learning.
- Partner with institutions of higher education, businesses, government agencies, entrepreneurial companies and individuals to provide students a broad-based connection between learning and life.
- Attract and promote highly qualified teachers with strong interpersonal skills – they are the centerpiece for every learning environment.
- Redesign teacher preparation programs to reflect an even-handed participation of all professional stakeholders – higher education, NJASA, teachers and teacher educators.
- Revise teacher and administrator evaluation systems and design them to value both quantitative and qualitative student outcomes to ensure the development of “academically able” and “socially/emotionally responsible” young citizens.





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## Measuring Success

Schools of the future will look very different than our schools of today. Technologies will be seamlessly integrated and a broad range of tools will be used for teaching and learning within the boundaries of a school and beyond.

Equally important will be the consistent implementation of evaluation systems that include metrics of performance and graduation rates; college (and other post-high school programs) acceptance data; levels of student engagement, such as attendance and participation rates; and levels of success as an employee. School-to-school comparisons will only be meaningful among similar schools.

Success will be realized through student performance, which will be assessed through valid and reliable instruments designed to inform the teaching and learning process and also encourage teachers to adjust as appropriate. Curricula will be implemented with fidelity and will be accurately aligned with standards centered on higher-order thinking skills.

Our schools will reflect a positive and supportive culture centered on student success, and decisions will be the result of a collaborative process grounded in the guiding principles of what is best for students.

A new model of professional development will reflect sustained, ongoing training and support for teachers and leaders as they learn new strategies of best practices that will focus on developing students who are creative thinkers and problem solvers. The professional development communities will be actively engaged with opportunities for modeling and practice in a cycle of continuous improvement. And, staff attendance and turnover will be stable to ensure consistent student support over time.

We will know we have been successful when parents are engaged as partners and they share their satisfaction with the performance metrics. Communication among the systems within our communities will be evident and student centered.

Success will be realized when all our schools offer safe and secure environments in which students feel comfortable and secure on all levels, including physical, emotional and psychological.

*Success will be realized  
through our leadership  
and our vision.*



## Vision 2020 Committee Members

**Dr. Gary P. McCartney**  
Co-Chair

**Ms. Judith Rattner**  
Co-Chair

**Dr. James C. Baker**

**Mr. Frank D. Borelli**

**Mr. Patrick J. Fletcher**

**Mr. Douglas B. Groff**

**Dr. Scott P. McCartney**

**Dr. Nathan Parker**

**Dr. Antoinette Rath**

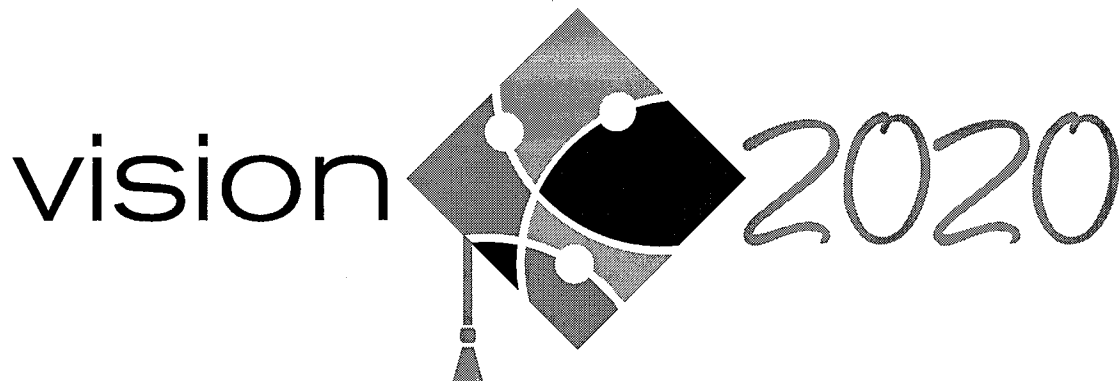
**Dr. Andrew Rinko**

**Dr. Maryrose Caulfield-Sloan**

**Dr. H. Mark Stanwood**

**Dr. Donna B. Van Horn**

**Dr. Brian A. Zychowski**



**Dr. Richard G. Bozza**  
Executive Director

New Jersey Association of School Administrators

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**Dr. G. Kennedy Greene, Superintendent, Newton Public Schools  
Secretary, New Jersey Association of School Administrators**

**Testimony on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)  
October 11, 2016 - Joint Committee on the Public Schools**

My name is Ken Greene, and I am the superintendent of the Newton Public Schools in Sussex County. I also serve as Secretary of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. I want to thank you for this opportunity to comment on the state's implementation of ESSA. I have just two points to make.

My first comment is on assessing school performance, specifically a desire to make participation in dual and concurrent enrollment courses a schoolwide performance target for high schools.

- Participation in dual and concurrent courses has been increasing steadily over the past decade or so, and has become a powerful means to help raise student expectations, especially in communities with higher numbers of at-risk students.
- DOE has recognized this by including this participation rate in the College and Career Readiness section of the School Performance Report. The next logical step is to include it as a schoolwide performance target, either in place of one of the college-based exams or in addition to them.
- Why? SAT and PSAT are highly correlated – we're measuring largely the same students in the same way by performance on standardized tests. Dual and concurrent course taking also has some correlation with SAT and PSAT participation, but much less than they have with one another. Furthermore, the aspiration to attend college as measured by an entrance exam may not be a more powerful measure than the earning of postsecondary credit by actually taking and passing college level courses.
- Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate are nationally and internationally known models, but test performance on them does not guarantee college credit – passing dual and concurrent enrollment courses does.
- These comments are not meant to dismiss the value of SAT exams or AP courses. On the contrary, as educators we strongly advocate multiple options for parents and students. Perhaps the solution is simply to add a different datapoint. Committee Members, I urge you to advocate that DOE and the State Board include participation in dual and concurrent courses as a schoolwide performance target on future School Performance Reports.

My second comment is in regard to assessing student performance, specifically urging reauthorization of PARCC alternatives as permanent options to meet the high school graduation testing requirement.

- As you know, the State Board has recently approved PARCC as the sole high school graduation testing requirement for the Class of 2021.
- As stated to me in the past by DOE officials, a major objection to making alternatives permanent was the incongruity between the desired state standard of ELA 11 and Algebra 2, and the college entrance exam standard of ELA 10 and Algebra 1. Now that New Jersey has adopted ELA 10 and Algebra 1 as the state standard, it parallels the college entrance exam expectation and should enhance the reason to adopt the alternatives permanently.
- An objection might also be raised if the exams were not comparable in terms of student performance on them. But we know the performance is comparable - PARCC ELA and Math passing rates were in the same range as SAT's 1550 standard and similar results on ACT and NAEP.
- To bring this closer to home, my high school has an SAT participation rate of 81% (the statewide average is similar). This means that 4 out of 5 of our students show up voluntarily on a Saturday morning to take the SAT, and their parents pay the exam fee without issue (often more than once). We could say the same for ACT, Accuplacer, etc. Compare that to the valuable teaching and learning time taken up by PARCC, whose compulsory participation has resulted in significant political resistance and test refusal, particularly among high school students and their families.
- I'm not suggesting we should do away with PARCC. High school students who are not planning to go to college, or do not have the financial ability to pay for an entrance exam, should have a graduation test and portfolio process option provided to them by the State at no cost.
- However, I think it is a mistake to eliminate testing options for high school students, especially ones that have the same standards and similar performance outcomes as PARCC, and have much longer histories of support and validation by students and parents. Committee Members, I urge you to advocate that DOE and the State Board reconsider this decision.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Do you have any questions?



# New Jersey School Boards Association

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ESSA Testimony

October 11, 2016

Joint Committee on Public Schools

## Overview of the Every Student Succeeds Act

Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak on the Every Student Succeeds Act this morning. ESSA is based on a local control initiative, which leaves the states responsible to decide the best initiatives for school districts.

The new “Every Student Succeeds Act”, rolls back much of the federal government's direct involvement in education policy, on everything from testing and teacher quality to low-performing schools, and it gives new leeway to states to decide what works best. That's a major transition from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which ESSA replaced and updated.

States still have to submit accountability plans to the U.S. Education Department. These new ESSA plans will start in the 2017-18 school year. The new law has several key components, some of which include: accountability; student indicators; identifying low performing schools; school interventions; standards and testing; English-language learners and special education students; impact on teachers and finally funding.

The law requires the input of local stakeholders as the state department of education implements the law. This approach is the best way to give all students the opportunity for a high quality education. NJSBA anticipates that local board members as key stakeholders will have a say on interventions needed in school districts.

There are challenges to implement the plan as there always is when redefining what is best in public education. NJSBA promotes multiple academic and school quality indicators besides test scores and graduation rates. Under ESSA states are allowed to set both long-term goals and smaller, interim goals.

States are also required to add at least one additional indicator of a very different kind. Possibilities include: student engagement; educator engagement; access to and completion of advanced coursework; postsecondary readiness and school climate and safety. NJSBA supports this measure.

The U.S. D.O.E. still insists on setting minimum participation rates on state tests. ESSA maintains the federal requirement for 95 percent participation.

States have to identify and provide intervention to the bottom five percent of low performing schools. These schools have to be identified at least once every three years. Intervention is required in high schools where the graduation rate is 67 percent or less.

Waivers from the NCLB law ended on Aug. 1, 2016, but states still have to continue supporting their lowest-performing schools ("priority schools") and schools with big achievement gaps ("focus schools") until their new ESSA plan is implemented.

States still have to test students in reading and math in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, and break out the data for whole schools, plus different "subgroups" of students (English-language-learners, students in special education, racial minorities and those in poverty). Accountability for English-language learners moves from Title III to Title I. The idea is to make accountability for those students a priority.

Districts can use local, nationally recognized tests at the high school level, with state permission, such as the SAT or ACT. States will have the option of creating their own testing opt-out laws, and will have to decide what should happen in schools that miss targets. NJSBA also supports this measure and believes there should be alternative testing options.

The former Teacher Incentive Fund—now called the Teacher and School Leader Innovation Program—will provide grants to districts that want to try out performance pay and other teacher-quality improvement measures. ESSA also includes resources training teachers on literacy and STEM. NJSBA supports these provisions.

Title I funding formula remains intact, but there are some changes to the Title II formula (which funds teacher quality) that will be a benefit to rural districts. Maintenance of effort will also remain in place, requiring states to keep up their own spending at a particular level in order to tap federal funds.

New Jersey School Boards Association believes that this implementation has opened lines of communication with the NJ Department of Education as they have asked for assistance with one of their main responsibilities, stakeholder engagement.

It has also been helpful having a two-way dialogue with all of the New Jersey Education Associations as well. We are all part of the ESSA stakeholder engagement group. The intention of this group is to address not only school districts, as the message needs to go out to parents and the community as well.

NJSBA is proud to be part of the implementation of the reauthorization. And we will do our best to see that boards of education understand the modifications that will be coming soon and hope that they will benefit from the new plan.

**Comments of NJPSA Executive Director Patricia Wright  
Before the  
Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
on  
State Efforts to Implement the Every Student Succeeds Act  
October 11, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act. We represent over 9000 school leaders who are both hopeful and anxious to see how this new law will impact their schools and districts. As a former teacher, reading specialist, supervisor, assistant principal, principal and superintendent I am excited to be part of this discussion as we explore the potential impact of ESSA on education in NJ.

**Under NCLB, school leaders were forced to lead in an atmosphere that concentrated heavily on labeling schools as failing based on test scores and on threatening sanctions instead of providing targeted and effective support.**

Through the ESEA waiver, NJ was able to develop its own plan but still within federal mandates like adoption of college and career ready standards and teacher/principal evaluation systems that include measures of student growth. NJ already had a long history of setting rigorous standards so we were already meeting the first mandate. The implementation of new evaluation systems became a strong focus in NJ with the advent of Achieve NJ.

**Now we welcome the promise of ESSA** - the opportunity to provide targeted support and resources, while allowing states, districts and schools the flexibility we need to decide how we can best meet our goals, serve our students and assess our success. ESSA retains key accountability measures to help identify schools and students in need of assistance, but allows us to look beyond just test scores at other components of effective schools that support the growth of the whole child. Measures such as school climate, social and emotional learning, student engagement. While test scores have their place, ESSA allows us to broaden the discussion on accountability to fairly address the components of quality schooling that every principal knows make a real difference in overall student achievement.

**I would like to highlight a component of ESSA that is very important not only to our members but to our teachers and our students. In the last few years under our waiver, NJ's school leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that their students are receiving high quality standards-based instruction and that teachers are evaluated using new frameworks. They also led the implementation of a new assessment – PARCC. In order to do this work the job of the principal shifted greatly from manager to instructional leader. Educational research proves that effective school leadership is the second most important, in-school factor that impacts classroom instruction and student achievement, particularly in schools with the greatest challenges. Principals want to be the instructional leaders of their school, yet competing demands and compliance-based activities often pull them away from focusing on improving teacher practice and student learning. This must be their focus. In order to make this shift, leaders need**

**opportunities for professional learning. Often leaders are focused on providing quality professional learning opportunities, yet they have little time for their own learning.**

For the past decade, members of NJPSA and our national affiliates have consistently asked for the investment in leadership growth and development. This request was heard with ESSA.

But, we now need the State to take advantage of the ESSA provisions (Section 2101(c)(3)) that provide for a real opportunity for leadership development by allowing states to reserve up to 3% of district Title II allotments for statewide school leadership efforts.

NJPSA has already proposed new ideas and partnerships to the DOE. These partnership proposals focus on:

- the preparation and support of school leaders in high need schools,
- building instructional leadership capacity linked to our state's educational vision,
- expanding the reach of the New Jersey Leadership Academy which focuses leadership training on teams of superintendents, principals and supervisors,
- Providing long overdue assistance and support to principals and leaders responsible for early childhood learning programs to ensure alignment with elementary schools, effective transitions from preschool to kindergarten, staff support and increased parent and community engagement.

These are just a few of the statewide needs and issues that would be addressed with this set aside and I believe that the investment will reap great rewards in the instruction provided in our schools.

ESSA requires the DOE to work collaboratively with all stakeholders when developing the ESSA implementation plan. I applaud the efforts of the NJDOE to reach out to our association and many other stakeholders in order to begin this conversation. These include organizations representing educators, parents, taxpayers, the business community, ELL/Special Education organizations, the preschool community and community organizations that advocate for our students.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for holding this conversation today. NJPSA and I look forward to working together in the best interests of all New Jersey students.



## **NJSACC, the Statewide Network for NJ's Afterschool Communities**

*Testimony before the Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
Submitted by Diane M. Genco, Executive Director of NJSACC, October 11, 2016  
208 Lenox Avenue, #363, Westfield, NJ 07090*

NJSACC: the Statewide Network for New Jersey's Afterschool Communities promotes and supports the development, continuity and expansion of quality programs for children and youth during out-of-school time in NJ. We believe that the hours between 3 and 6pm present an incredible opportunity for NJ's students to learn and build skills critical for success in college and careers. On behalf of our staff, Board of Directors and our entire network of afterschool programs statewide, we hope that the NJ Department of Education will take advantage of the opportunities available to increase and improve afterschool programming in the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

As the state moves through the ESSA implementation process, we would like to highlight for you the many ways ESSA creates opportunities for afterschool program to improve the educational success for all NJ students.

**Title I** requires states to choose one or more indicators of school quality and student success as part of their accountability system, such as school climate, chronic absence or student engagement. Whatever measure is selected, we strongly encourage NJDOE to consider how afterschool programs can support schools in improving student success in the selected measure. For example, research has shown that students who participate in a high quality afterschool program miss fewer days of school.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, afterschool programs are a critical partner in combating chronic absence.

**Title II Part B's "Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation"** gives the state opportunities to use afterschool programming to enhance educational success. This section provides grants to "develop or enhance comprehensive literacy instruction" to entities serving "children low-income families".<sup>2</sup> ESSA specifically states that these literacy activities can be "augmented by after-school and out-of-school time instruction".<sup>3</sup> We encourage the NJ

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<sup>1</sup> Deborah Vandell, "Afterschool Programs Close Achievement Gaps". Available at: [http://expandinglearning.org/research/vandell/resources/VANDELL\\_K4.pdf](http://expandinglearning.org/research/vandell/resources/VANDELL_K4.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Pub. L. No. 114-95.

<sup>3</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Pub. L. No. 114-95.

Department of Education to take advantage of these opportunities to improve literacy in high-need populations by coordinating literacy activities between in-school and out-of-school time partners.

**Title IV A's "Student Support and Enrichment Grants"** provide opportunities at the local education agency (LEA) level for expanding opportunities afterschool with a strong focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics -- the subjects called "STEM." Afterschool spark learning by letting children and youth experiment with STEM ideas in real-world situations. Such opportunities help ignite curiosity and interest, especially for those who might not think of themselves as "math and science kids." STEM learning builds the knowledge and skills needed to reason through tough problems and come up with creative, effective, and reasonable solutions. We need to make sure that every child in the next generation develops the skills demanded by the information age, which is vital to our country's shared, and continued, prosperity. We ask that you consider the positive impact that afterschool programs have on STEM learning in your ESSA implementation plan.

In conclusion, ESSA provides the state with a wealth of opportunities to help all NJ students succeed. Quality afterschool programming is critical for student success and we hope that NJDOE takes this into consideration in its implementation of ESSA.

**GARDEN STATE COALITION OF SCHOOLS/GSCS**

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**Joint Committee on Public Schools Hearing—October 11, 2016**

Good morning Chairman Rice, Chairwoman Jasey and members of the Committee. I am Elisabeth Ginsburg, Executive Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools. Here with me today is Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District and a member of the GSCS Executive Board, who will provide you with his thoughts on ESSA in just a moment.

The promise of ESSA is that we have an opportunity to improve on NCLB, refashioning in our state and our communities a sturdier and more flexible framework for student success. We have been given a rare chance to “get it right” for this generation of students.

I know that we in this room will all work towards that end, because the price of not “getting it right” is wasted potential. And there is nothing more toxic to society than to waste the potential of our children.



## WEST WINDSOR-PLAINSBORO REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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David Aderhold, EdD  
Superintendent of Schools

October 9, 2016

RE: ESSA Testimony

Good Morning. My name is David Aderhold, Superintendent of the West Windsor – Plainsboro Regional School District located in Mercer and Middlesex Counties. I also serve as Treasurer of the Garden State Coalition of Schools. Today I am joined by Betsy Ginsburg, Executive Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools to discuss the opportunities that are present under ESSA. As you know, the Garden State Coalition of Schools represents over 90 districts that serve over 300,000 students. The GSCS advocates for the inter-related issues of academic achievement, sound educational practices and equitable school finance. At our core we believe in advocating for public support of public education for ALL children

I want to thank the Joint Committee on the Public Schools for the opportunity to comment on the states implementation of ESSA.

The underlying motivation for passing ESSA was to address aspects of NCLB that caused widespread concern among educators, parents and many policy makers. While the basic tenets of NCLB remain, including; assessments, standards, data reporting, supporting underperforming and struggling schools—we now have an opportunity to reset and redefine what “college and career ready” means in New Jersey.

Today I would like to focus my comments on the opportunities now available under ESSA.

- Under ESSA, critical decisions about our schools have been returned to the state and local districts.
- ESSA permits changes in crucial areas such as testing and accountability.

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- We have the opportunity to reduce the burden of unnecessary testing, without diminishing the accountability that is necessary to assess student progress.
- For example, ESSA requires students to take only a single exam in high school. The authority under ESSA provides justification to revisit and reverse the August 3<sup>rd</sup> decision of the NJ School Board of Education's requirement of sitting for all sections of the PARCC examination beginning with the class of 2020 and sitting for all sections and passing the PARCC (Alg. 1 and LA 10) beginning with the class of 2021.
- Furthermore, ESSA provides flexibilities in testing requirements that we should be taking full advantage of to benefit as many students as possible. We should be creating systems that are flexible and provide multiple paths toward demonstrating mastery of graduation requirements. We should not be eliminating opportunities for students, as in the recently enacted regulations (passed by the NJ State Board of Education) that eliminate alternative measures beginning with the class of 2021.
- The US DOE July 2016 Overview of Proposed Regulations: Assessment defines a "Nationally recognized high school academic assessment" as "an assessment of high school students' knowledge and skills that is administered in multiple States and is recognized by institutions of higher education in those or other States for the purposes of entrance or placement into courses in postsecondary education or training programs."
  - As the redesigned PSAT and SAT is aligned to high quality standards, there is no reason New Jersey could not consider the utilization of these assessments in lieu of the PARCC at grades 9 – 12.
- Furthermore, I urge the NJDOE to participate in pilot projects that allow school districts to administer innovative assessments instead of statewide assessments.
- Under Title I, Part B state educational agencies have tremendous flexibility for administering assessments. These include ensuring appropriate accommodations for English Language learners, developing or improving assessments for children with disabilities,

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measuring student academic achievement using multiple measures of student academic achievement, and evaluating students through competency-based models.

My request is that the NJ Department of Education, NJ Board of Education and the Joint Committee on the Public Schools work to translate the intention of ESSA, into a series of constructive measures that minimize the impact and cost to public schools and provide the greatest opportunities possible for ALL students to be successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DASL" with a stylized flourish underneath.

David M. Aderhold, Ed.  
Superintendent

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To: Members, Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
From: Cecilia Zalkind, President and CEO, Advocates for Children of New Jersey  
Cynthia Rice, Senior Policy Analyst, Advocates for Children of New Jersey  
Date: October 11, 2016  
RE: **Recommendations to New Jersey's ESSA Implementation Plan**

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ), our state's largest multi-issue child advocacy group, appreciates the opportunity to provide information on the ways in which the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) can help better align state and federal funding to support local efforts in narrowing the student achievement gap, improving child outcomes and building educator capacity, both in and out of public schools in order to better meet the educational needs of our diverse student population.

ACNJ believes that many of the changes in our nation's federal education law will positively impact students. For example, ESSA includes multiple early learning provisions designed to allow states, school districts and individual schools to expand and strengthen the bridge between early childhood education and the existing K-12 system. It requires states to design new systems of accountability, based on multiple academic measures, but also requires the inclusion of at least one indicator addressing school quality or student success. This allows states and districts to look more holistically at students and potential barriers that may limit educational success.

ACNJ's current education policy agenda includes two areas that can play a critical role in the development of our state's ESSA plan: early childhood education and chronic absenteeism. Below are a few ways in which the inclusion of these topics in the state plan can make a difference in the educational experiences and outcomes of students in New Jersey:

- 1. The plan should take steps to strengthen the connections between the early childhood and New Jersey's K-12 education systems.**

New Jersey's current systems of early care and education and the K-12 education often exist with minimal overlap, resulting in a lack of information sharing, in such areas as data, curricula, family engagement, transition practices and professional development. These disconnects have a consequence on students' school readiness. ESSA provides opportunities to change this. The law's early learning references include state planning requirements, promoting kindergarten readiness, strengthening professional development opportunities for educators and administrators and developing stronger family engagement supports.

The following are a few opportunities to effectively integrate ESSA's early learning provisions into the development of the state's plan:

1. Opportunities for Better Data Collection: Under Title I, states will be required to include in their state report cards the number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool. Although this requirement is broad, it provides an opportunity to provide information on the overall landscape of early learning in our state and in individual communities, which currently does not exist. Such information collected can include the types, duration, availability, accessibility and quality of programs children attend prior to entering the public schools. Should the state plan require districts to collect data from community programs such as Early Head Start, Head Start, private and family child care and those programs that accept state child care subsidies, they will obtain a wealth of information on the early experiences of those children who they will be responsible for educating for the next 13 years.
2. Opportunities for Better Coordination and Expansion between the Educational Systems: Whether or not schools decide to use their Title I funds for early learning, there are new ESSA requirements that go beyond data collection and support coordination and expansion of early learning programs. This is long overdue. Except for those districts that currently implement a preschool mixed delivery system, ACNJ has found that collaboration and coordination is often weak between schools and the child care/early childhood programs in their community, as are overall transition practices. These practices tend to be "event-driven" rather than meaningful plans to prepare young children and their families for kindergarten.<sup>1</sup> For those schools that will use Title I funds to support early learning, they will be required to develop a plan that outlines how they will "support, coordinate and integrate services" for young students. This wording provides schools with an opportunity to develop an intentional early learning plan, but they will need state guidance as to how to effectively accomplish this end. The state plan can maximize this opportunity by requiring these schools to include in their individual plans, a vision for a high-quality, developmentally appropriate system of early learning from Birth- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, an outline for effective coordination and collaboration with community-based early childhood programs and identified supports for young children transitioning into kindergarten.

Even when districts choose not to use their Title I funds to support early learning initiatives, they will be required to improve coordination between themselves and other early education programs. This will be another area in which state guidance is critical. The state plan should provide guidance and options for districts on how to incorporate such coordination into their plans, including understanding "feeder

patterns” of young children entering into the public schools; developing a system for obtaining student records from community providers; establishing a schedule for regular communications between school staff and the early childhood community; and jointly participating in transition trainings.

3. Opportunities for Expanded and Inclusive Professional Development: ESSA provides states and schools the opportunity to think differently about how professional development is provided for those teachers and administrators who are responsible for young children —both in and out of the public schools. Both Titles I and II include language encouraging the state and school districts to:
  - A. Expand professional development opportunities to include school staff and community-based providers in such areas as transition practices, school readiness, family engagement and curricula designed to meet the needs of children from Birth through eight-years-old; and
  - B. Increase the knowledge-base of teachers, principals or other school leaders regarding instruction in the early grades and developmentally appropriate strategies to measure how young children are progressing. This has been a significant gap, particularly for principals and school administrators responsible for young children. Although they may hold the appropriate educational certifications, many school leaders do not have the appropriate early learning skill-set to be effective in both supervision and evaluation of the early childhood classrooms in which they are responsible.

Including these two important professional development opportunities in the state plan is a win-win situation. It will better equip all early childhood educators and administrators with skills aimed at ensuring high quality early learning experiences for young children. It will also provide opportunities for school personnel and community providers to develop stronger relationships by learning and working together towards that goal. The state plan should strongly encourage such funds be used in this manner.

2. **As part of the state’s establishment of an accountability system that measures school performance, chronic absenteeism should be included as one or as part of the student success or school climate indicators.**

For nearly two years, chronic absenteeism has been a focus of ACNJ’s policy agenda. In the last year, ACNJ released three reports on chronic absenteeism: 1. Two statewide reports that provided data by state, school district, grade and demographics. The most recent report, released last month, found that based on New Jersey Department of Education data, more than 137,000 or about 10 percent of the state’s K-12 students were considered “chronically absent” during the 2014-2015 school year; and 2. A report that studied the high rate of absenteeism in Newark, New Jersey’s K-3 grades. ACNJ found in all three reports that chronic absenteeism was the “gateway” to other issues. Once a district takes an in-

depth look at this problem, it will find deeper issues that are driving those missed days. In the Newark report on K-3 chronic absenteeism, school staff and parents identified factors that impacted school attendance, including student/family health, transportation, conflicting work and school schedules, weather and safety. As a result, Newark's school leadership is now reviewing policies that will address some of those issues. Districts throughout the state would benefit by taking Newark's lead in identifying and addressing the issues that are the root causes of their own absenteeism problems.

Both national and state data indicate that chronic absenteeism is more likely to affect low-income and children of color, many of whom are the students ESSA funding targets, because they frequently experience risk factors for absenteeism which can include unmanaged physical and mental health issues, unreliable transportation, unstable housing, school suspensions and community violence.<sup>ii</sup> Higher absenteeism for low-income and minority students holds them back academically, accounting for as much as a quarter of the achievement gap between poor and non-poor students.<sup>iii</sup>

These findings clearly show the inextricable link between student attendance and school success. No matter how much funding or supports are available to students, when they don't regularly attend school their chances of achieving academic success are significantly lower. That is why it is critical for every New Jersey school to know and understand their chronic absenteeism data and then develop plans to address the barriers causing their students to miss too much school.

States are required to design new systems of accountability based on multiple measures, but must include at least one indicator of school quality or student success. It makes sense that chronic absenteeism be one of those indicators. By including absentee data as part of ESSA's accountability requirements, schools will be required to focus on and take actions towards improving student attendance, by reporting on all students, as well as disaggregated data by specific subgroups. Moreover, choosing chronic absenteeism data as one of the ESSA indicators will be positive for schools. It takes a step towards targeting a major barrier to student success and is not unduly onerous for schools. Much of this data required to meet the criteria is already collected and would not be an additional cost to school districts, making it more attractive to economically strapped schools.

Identifying chronic absenteeism as one of the student success or school-climate indicators is a no cost or low-cost, common-sense approach to making schools more accountable and providing students with a better chance for school success.

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<sup>i</sup> Shore, V., Rice, C. (2015) Right from the Start: Guiding Young Children's Transitions in the Early Years. Advocates for Children of New Jersey. Retrieved September 1, 2016 from [http://acnj.org/downloads/2015\\_07\\_28\\_transition\\_in\\_early\\_years\\_report.pdf](http://acnj.org/downloads/2015_07_28_transition_in_early_years_report.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Various sources summarize the research on risk factors for chronic absenteeism. Race Matters Institute (2013). Race Matters in Early School Attendance. Retrieved July 18, 2016 from <http://gradelevelreading.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Early-School-Attendance-1.pdf>. Utah Education Policy Center (2012). Research Brief: Chronic Absenteeism. Retrieved July 18, 2016 from <http://www.utahdataalliance.org/downloads/ChronicAbsenteeismResearchBrief.pdf>. Indiana Department of Education (2015). Contributing Factors of Absenteeism. Retrieved July 18, 2016 from <http://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/attendance/contributing-factors-absenteeism>.

<sup>iii</sup> Goodman, J. (2014). Flaking Out: Student Absences and Snow Days as Disruptions of Instructional Time. NBER Working Paper No. 20221. Retrieved July 18, 2016 from <http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/joshuagoodman/files/absences.pdf>.



## Testimony before the Joint Committee on the Public Schools

October 11, 2016

By Patricia Tumulty, Executive Director  
New Jersey Library Association

On behalf of the members of the New Jersey Library Association I want to thank you for permitting us to provide testimony on the opportunities which the new federal ESSA legislation provides for students in New Jersey.

As we discuss this legislation, I am sure there will be many points of view but I am sure we can all agree that students today live in the information age. No matter what their career aspirations they must know how to use and evaluate information. These will be basic skills for the twenty-first century learning. Fundamental in acquiring these skills must be a highly effective school library program staffed by certified school media specialists.

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), with proper implementation by the NJ Department of Education, legislators and school boards, can provide financial support to help schools achieve vibrant literacy, information literacy and school library media programs for our state's students.

School libraries are a safe learning environment where all students have equal and equitable access to learning, support, and information for personal and educational purposes. NJLA believes that our schools must serve as an "equalizer" to provide all students with equal and equitable access to the resources, support and instruction necessary to succeed academically and become productive and engaged citizens in a democratic society.

Research on the value of reading, information literacy, school library programs and certified school library media specialists is extensive and clear. Yet, New Jersey schools have been dismantling these proven programs at an alarming rate over the last 8 years. According to a recently published joint NJLA and New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) study we know now just how serious the problem is. Key findings of this study are:

- 20% fewer School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) in New Jersey than there were in 2007-2008
- 20% of High Schools have no Certified School Library Media Specialist available to students
- Less than 50% of schools in the Former Abbott Districts have the benefits of SLMS
- 150+ School Library Media Specialists cover more than one school. One SLMS covers 7 schools in one district.
- 91 School Districts have no School Library Media Specialists

- 33 districts have no School Library Media Specialists at the Elementary Level
- Over 280 Elementary Level schools are without School Library Media Specialists

These statistics were difficult to find. The Department of Education does not keep a record of how many school media specialists are currently employed as librarians in New Jersey schools. Members of our Association called the 2500 school buildings in New Jersey to obtain this information. This points to a deficiency within the Department of Education. To our knowledge, no staff person is responsible for overseeing the role of school media specialists within our schools or within the Department. For many years the Department did have a dedicated staff person but when she retired the position was not filled. This absence gives little guidance for districts wanting to evaluate school library services and their impact on student achievement.

In a society growing more and more dependent on information literacy we cannot justify failing to educate our children in these critical skills. We cannot produce students able to compete effectively in a modern information and technology based world without the most basic skills in navigating the vast amount of information in our society. Skills in navigating information literacy (which includes digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy) are best taught by certified school library media specialists.

Why are many students in New Jersey denied access to a quality school library media program? There are several reasons. One is that former federal legislation (No Child Left Behind) did not acknowledge the vital role of school media specialists and a strong information literacy curriculum for all students. In contrast, ESSA does urge policy makers to pay special attention to school library media programs and school media specialists when designing implementation plans for this new program.

Specifically ESSA provides resources to states to:

Develop effective school library programs to provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement,

Provide professional development to support instructional services provided by effective school library programs and develop, administer, and evaluate high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction initiatives,

Provide time for teachers (and other literacy staff, as appropriate, such as school librarians or specialized support personnel) to meet to plan comprehensive literacy instruction,

Promote literacy programs in low income communities. This may include providing professional development for school librarians, books and up-to-date materials to high need schools,

Block grants can be made available to increase “access to school libraries” and provide training to “use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement.

Other states have already made a significant commitment to the development of strong school media programs and the implementation of statewide information literacy standards through state statute or regulations. We have provided examples in your materials from Idaho, Maryland, Nevada, and Montana.

Currently, New Jersey has no specific state requirements for either school media specialist in every school or for comprehensive information literacy standards. Several proposal bills such S436 Media Literacy Skills by

Senators Allen and Ruiz and A3396 Financial Literacy bill by Assemblywoman McKnight recognize the importance of imparting these skills to students. We believe these bills should be incorporated into a comprehensive information literacy curriculum for grades k-12.

It is important to note that although current Department of Education statutes and regulations do not mention information literacy, the regulations by the Secretary of NJ Higher Education do.

NJAC 9A were readopted in December 2015. These regulations provide a specific definition for information literacy. According to the NJ State regulations "information literacy" means a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed, have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information, and observe laws, regulations, and institutional policies related to the access and use of information."

These regulations also specifically discuss the requirement for a library at institutions of higher education. Under NJAC 9A-1.9 (a) the regulations state the library must have

(a) Qualified library professionals, librarians, and support personnel in numbers sufficient to serve the needs of students and faculty shall staff the institution's library. Every institution, regardless of enrollment or number of academic offerings, shall provide access to at least one qualified library professional with the exception of institutions with a specialty mission.

In addition, NJAC 9A-1.9( i) states

"Institutions shall have in place a plan that articulates how students will obtain information literacy skills as they progress through the curriculum. The plan shall identify outcomes for information literacy skill development, and how those outcomes are measured and assessed."

This requirement is under the responsibilities of the academic library.

In addition, NJ colleges and universities seeking accreditation by Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) require that students demonstrate information literacy skills.

A statement by the academic librarian community expresses its frustration that many students from NJ high schools coming into their libraries are not prepared for the demands of academic study. The statement says:

"We see that many college freshmen are poorly prepared to conduct college-level research, requiring professors and libraries to spend more time than they should on basic skills. We live with this cause and effect, frustrated in knowing that many of these students could hit the college ground running with proper training beforehand. All educators comprise a continuum of intervention necessary to help students gain essential career skills. School media specialists have a well-regarded place on this continuum."

It is clear that information literacy skills and the role of librarians in teaching them is a requirement for institutions of higher education both in the NJ Administrative Code and by Middle States requirements, yet there is no foundation in our existing public school laws or regulations which mandates the critical role of school media specialists or information literacy skills in student development in the k-12 curriculum.

Yet it is not just students who are going on to higher education who need access to a strong school media program and information literacy curriculum. Employers, business leaders and vocational career educators all recognize that the ability to do critical thinking and evaluate information resources is an essential workplace readiness skill. The SLMS plays an important role in preparing all students for their future employment goals.

What we are here today to discuss is how we will use the opportunities presented by ESSA to further the goals of every student in New Jersey. The NJ library community has developed a website called "Unlock Student Potential" which highlights some of the wonderful work school media specialists are doing some of our districts today.

Stories include the work of Christina Cucci, SLMS and Mary DeNunzio, children's librarian, both who work in Upper Saddle River, who have collaborated on information literacy skills projects for students in grades 1-5.

Or the work of Krista Welz, SLMS in North Bergen High School, who has developed programs that helped build STEM-based skills in her students. Ms. Welz is a Google for Education Certified Trainer and is currently a doctoral student in Educational Technology Leadership at New Jersey City University.

School Media specialists have also been actively involved in the Maker Movement.

We could go on with our successes.

Unfortunately, we can also document some significant setbacks. Recently the Paterson Education Fund announced students reading 50 books or more dropped by 500 after the district cut school media specialists. In 2015 1,923 students read 50 or more books but in 2016 that number dropped to 1,400. The district had 19 librarians last year compared to 31 in the 2014-15 school year. This year they are hiring two additional librarians. Still 10 below the 2014-15 school year.

ESSA is a tremendous opportunity to provide additional resources to school libraries. Currently, only one federal program *Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)* provides funding for school library materials. This program is authorized at \$27 million annually of which half is dedicated to school libraries. Unfortunately, no school district in New Jersey has received this funding for school libraries in several years even though, as demonstrated above, we have great needs. We have provided examples of school libraries throughout the county which have received funding under this initiative. This would be another area where a staff member at the Department of Education working with the school library media community could have a tremendous impact.

ESSA provides a new beginning for all students. As President Obama stated when this legislation was signed, "It upholds the core value that animated the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act signed by President Lyndon Johnson -- the value that says education, the key to economic opportunity, is a civil right. With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamental American ideal that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make out of their lives what they will."

The New Jersey Library Association stands ready to work with all stakeholders in support of implementing the elements of ESSA that recognize the need to re-invigorate student's education in this critical area. We particularly urge decision makers to pay special attention to school library media programs and school library media specialists when designing implementation plans for the following ESSA programs.

In New Jersey, as well as many states, the economic downturn and expanding expectations from schools has forced difficult fiscal decisions for many New Jersey school districts. Prior federal legislation did not emphasize school media programs. However, the research clearly shows that schools with high test scores also have highly effective school library programs which ensure their students will have the best chance to succeed in the 21st century. Now is the time to reverse course and restore the school library programs, so all New Jersey students have access to certified school library media specialists, and a standards based information literacy

curriculum. ESSA presents a critical opportunity to reinvest in school library programs, to unlock the potential in New Jersey students and prepare them for college and the workforce. At its heart of ESSA is providing an educational foundation which will ensure students from all school districts have the skills for career and academic readiness for the decades to come.

# The Role of Effective School Library Programs in The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 A Position Statement from New Jersey Association of School Librarians, New Jersey Library Association, and LibraryLinkNJ

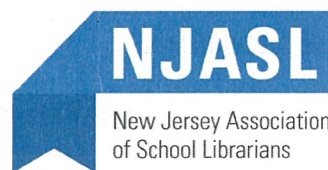
August 2016

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), New Jersey Library Association (NJLA), LibraryLinkNJ, and local school librarians are united in our commitment that all New Jersey students have access to an effective school library program to ensure increased academic achievement, literacy and information literacy skills, and preparation for higher education. The *Every Student Succeeds Act* of 2015 (ESSA) provides an opportunity for New Jersey school districts to make this a reality. This new federal law provides for highly effective school library programs as essential elements in the education of our nation's children.

Effective school library programs as defined by the American Association of School Libraries meet the following criteria:

- the school library is staffed by a state certified school librarian;
- has up-to-date resources that include technology and broadband access; and
- includes collaboration between content teachers and school librarians concerning school reform.

We, as a coalition, urge the Department of Education set the above definition as the appropriate standard for all New Jersey schools.



# Summary of ESSA, Implications for New Jersey, and Recommendations

## Title I, Part A - Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Education Agencies

Under this provision of ESSA, NJDOE and local school districts will develop plans to implement federally-funded educational activities.

ESSA includes that states and local school districts must develop their plans with timely and meaningful consultation with teachers, principals and other stakeholders, including "*specialized instructional support personnel*" which is defined under ESSA as specifically including school librarians.

ESSA authorizes school districts to include in their plans how they will develop effective school library programs to provide students an opportunity to improve digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.

### Recommendations for the Department of Education:

1. Collaborate with NJASL, NJLA, the New Jersey State Library and partners to ensure school librarians have a place in statewide planning sessions dedicated to implementing federally-funded activities.
2. Strongly encourage districts to include in their local plans the importance of implementing, developing and maintaining effective school library programs that empower the development of digital literacy skills and academic achievement.

## Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction

ESSA includes new provisions that authorize states and districts to use grant and subgrant funds to support instructional services provided by school library programs.

### Recommendation for the Department of Education:

3. Inform school districts that Title II funds may now be used for professional development for school librarians.

### **Rationale:**

Under No Child Left Behind, Title II funds were to be used primarily for classroom teachers to participate in professional development activities. ESSA specifically authorizes funds to be used to support instructional services provided by effective school library programs. School librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to design curriculum, instruct and engage students. Therefore, both classroom teachers and school librarians must have high quality professional development on effective instruction and collaboration.

## Title II, Part B, Subpart 2 – Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)

This is a new program under ESSA that provides support to states to develop, revise, or update comprehensive literacy instruction plans. States award competitive subgrants to districts for activities that focus on K-5 and 6-12. ESSA specifically authorizes school librarians to participate in required grant activities for both K-5 and 6-12. Local grants can be used to:

- provide high quality professional development opportunities for school staff, as appropriate, including school librarians;
- allocate time for teachers, school librarians, and other literacy staff to meet to plan comprehensive literacy instruction

### Recommendations for the Department of Education:

4. Ensure librarians, administrators, instructional support professionals, and teachers, are aware of these grants for comprehensive literacy instruction
5. Support, encourage, and provide technical assistance to districts and school personnel in applying for grants and subgrants.

## Title II, Part B, Subpart 2, Section 2226 – Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)

ESSA specifically authorizes funds to be used for implementing, developing and enhancing effective school library programs including professional development for school librarians, books, and up-to-date materials for high needs students.

### Recommendations for the Department of Education:

6. Ensure librarians, administrators, instructional support professionals, and teachers are aware of these grants for low income communities to support high needs students in literacy instruction.
7. Support, encourage, and provide technical assistances to districts and school personnel in applying for grants and subgrants.

### **Rationale:**

Those students in the most need often have the fewest school library resources to draw on. An examination of the school library access gap (Pribesh, Gavigan, & Dickinson, 2011) looked at the differences in school library characteristics (staffing, books added to the collection, schedule, and number of days closed) in schools with various concentrations of students living in poverty. Findings suggest that if we hope to close achievement gaps between high and low socioeconomic groups, we must attend to the access gap in school libraries in high and low poverty schools.

## Title IV, Part A – Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Block Grant)

ESSA authorizes a new program to provide Student Support and Academic Enrichment activities (commonly referred to as the "Block Grant" under ESSA) to help States and school districts target federal resources on locally-designed priorities.

ESSA authorizes states to use funds to assist school districts in providing school librarians and other school personnel with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement.

ESSA requires that school districts conduct a "needs assessment" prior to receiving funds from the State (conducted every 3 years). The needs assessment should include access to personalized learning experiences which may include access to school libraries

### Recommendation for the Department of Education:

8. Inform and encourage local school districts to target these funds to support student access to school libraries staffed by certified School Library Media Specialist in every school.

### **Rationale:**

An educated, information-literate citizenry is the foundation of our democratic society, and outcomes from multi-state research studies, brought together by the 2016 edition of Scholastic's publication *School Libraries Work!* (Scholastic), indicate several positive impacts on student learning as a result of having a full-time certified school librarian, such as:

- scores on standardized achievement tests improve in schools
- librarians collaborate with teachers and lead students to develop 21st century learning skills
- resources are varied and are more likely to have electronic connections to other school collections and the public library,
- secure more federal funding, provide more frequent instruction in the use of electronic resources, and maintain a website linking to current and relevant academic and professional resources.

## Conclusion

On June 24, 2016 the Alliance for Excellent Education and the U.S. Department of Education announced Future Ready Librarians as part of the Future Ready Schools Initiative.

"Acknowledging that the current state of school libraries and librarians ranges widely from state to state and even from school to school, these principles are predicated on a core belief that in a Future Ready school, all students have equitable access to qualified librarians, digital tools, resources and books." (Future Ready Librarians Fact Sheet, 2016)

NJASL and our partners believe that ESSA provides a critical opportunity to create a framework for Future Ready Schools with effective school library programs across New Jersey. We look forward to working with the NJDOE to make this opportunity a reality for all of New Jersey's students.

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# Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) Grants

On September 29th, 2016 the U.S. Department of Education announced that the agency is awarding more than \$26 million to 29 grantees to develop and improve high-quality literacy programs in high-needs schools. The funding can be used for multiyear projects, and the this year's awards ranged from \$225,000 to nearly \$3.2 million.

The IAL program supports high-quality programs designed to develop and improve literacy skills for children and students from birth through 12th grade in high-need local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools. The U.S. Department of Education intends to support innovative programs that promote early literacy for young children, motivate older children to read, and increase student achievement by using school libraries as partners to improve literacy, distributing free books to children and their families, and offering high-quality literacy activities.

The IAL program supports the implementation of high-quality plans for childhood literacy activities and book distribution efforts that are supported by evidence of strong theory.



## Definition of High-Need LEAs

The IAL program is designed for High-Need LEAs, defined by the US DOE as:

An LEA in which at least 25 percent of the students aged 5-17 in the school attendance area of the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for school districts for the most recent income year (Census list) or are similarly defined by a State educational agency.

## School Library Programs and IAL

In April 2016, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the US DOE confirmed "at least 50 percent of available IAL funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) that submit high-quality applications (on behalf of school libraries) for high-quality school library projects that increase access to a wide range of literacy resources (either print or electronic) and provide learning opportunities to all students."

## Examples of Successful IAL Funding Requests

### Philadelphia School District

Anchor Goal: The District's goal is to ensure that every child is a proficient reader no later than age 8.

The School District of Philadelphia and The Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP) worked together to craft a funding proposal in response to the U.S. Department of Education's recent Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant competition to meet this Anchor Goal. IAL is designed to meet the following objectives in 10 of the District's lowest-performing elementary schools: (a) improve curriculum and instruction for students; (b) reinvigorate student learning environments, especially in light of the loss of library staff in many of our schools; and (c) train and meaningfully engage parents and caregivers in the improvement of their children's literacy skills. Key leadership and program personnel from both the District and FLP see the resulting, collaborative **"Building Bridges with Books: Uniting Schools, Public Libraries and Families"** (or "B3") initiative as an opportunity to deepen their partnership, and to achieve the objectives noted above through the following series of activities:

- Provide a broad array of high-quality early literacy activities to students in grades K-1 during the program's inaugural year, and then to many of the same students in grades 1-2 during the second implementation period;
- Leverage the existing library space in District schools by updating the physical book collection with age- and grade-appropriate books and other literacy resources; creating a digital learning environment for students through the introduction of computerized tablets connected to FLP's digital content—including over 1,000 high-quality titles suitable for the early elementary level—and terminals that participating students can use to reserve books from any FLP branch and/or chat with a certified librarian;
- Provide student participants (in grades K-1 in Year One and grades 1-2 in Year Two) on-going access to certified children's librarians through the performance of bi-monthly trips to a neighborhood FLP branch. In addition, certified FLP librarians will visit each of the 10 target schools on a weekly basis to help teachers in the pilot program better utilize the new and innovative resources offered within the augmented library space; and
- Meaningfully engage parents with children participating in the 10-site pilot program by providing them with a sequenced early literacy training program at FLP and bi-monthly reading sessions hosted by their respective schools.

### West Memphis School District

The West Memphis School District's IAL **Common thREAD** initiative targets four high needs schools serving 2,399 Pre-K-12 students for participation in the Innovative Approaches to Literacy grant including: Wonder Elementary, Wonder and East Junior High Schools, and The Academies of West Memphis (formerly West Memphis High School). Innovative approaches include:

- a multi-layered school-community collaborative of child- and family- serving entities that provide staff, facilities, and resources at school/community sites to increase literacy for children Birth to Grade 12;
- Free book distribution and parent training are expected to increase percentage of children entering kindergarten with pre-literacy skills;
- Flexible library hours will increase access to high interest holdings
- iPad technology purchased through Innovative Approached to Literacy funding to support current evidence-based literacy programs aligned with Arkansas's State Literacy Plan;
- Library/Media Specialists will participate in collaborative professional development with content area teachers to integrate formational skills into literacy development across academic content areas

## Examples of Successful IAL Funding Requests

### Houston Independent School District

**Reading Elevates All Learners** through Integrated Technology for Youth (Project Reality) is Houston Independent School District's (HISD) to promote early literacy and prepare young children to read, develop and improve students' reading ability, increase student and parent access to literacy resources, and motivate older children to read. Project activities will include the following:

- (1) Professional development (PD) for teachers, librarians, and library staff on integrating differentiated and technology-infused reading instructional strategies, aligned to the HISD curriculum, across content areas in grades PK to five;
- (2) Professional development for teachers, in grades PK to five, on Reading and literacy content knowledge, as well as skills and resources needed to a quality learning experience for all participating children;
- (3) Training for parents to develop their literacy skills to better support the education of their children and increase student academic achievement in Reading, including training for parents on promoting literacy activities in the home setting;
- (4) Improving the quality of campus libraries to support instruction and learning to meet the needs and demands of the globalized 21st century knowledge-based economy by providing professional development to librarians and library staff, updating the quality, size, and modality of library books and other materials, and expanding access to technology, digital content, and Internet-based resources; and
- (5) Promoting literacy and recreational reading through community outreach by bringing books to distribute and to check out to children, through a mobile library, at summer camps and community centers that are located in the ten schools' neighborhoods.

### Gallia-Vinton Educational Service Center

The Gallia-Vinton Educational Service Center, Gallipolis City Schools, and Wellston City Schools are applying for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy grant to improve the student achievement in Appalachian Southeastern Ohio. Three elementary buildings, one middle school building and one high school building in Gallia County, Ohio, and one elementary, one intermediate, one middle school and one high school building in Jackson County (Wellston), Ohio, are the sites to be served with the plan. Approximately 3500 students and 175 staff members will benefit by participation in the program per year. The economically disadvantaged students (48.4%) and Students with Disabilities (20.6%) are the groups of particular focus. The districts' **Learning Express – Welcome Aboard** plan is focused on improving achievement by mitigating barriers that exist in the high need schools. Program objectives include:

- Increasing the number of books/resources in libraries
- Promoting student access to literacy
- Providing digital resources to teaching and learning
- Supporting teachers and students in the learning process
- Equipping teachers with knowledge to elicit improvement

The two most critical activities to be implemented are improving access to print and providing extended time for students to utilize the materials. The IAL will allow the collaborating districts to greatly improve their library collections and the districts will facilitate students using the libraries for an additional 240 hours per year.

## Examples of Successful IAL Funding Requests

### Sabine Parish School Board

In a state with one of the highest child poverty rates, Louisiana's students are among the most disadvantaged in the nation. Sabine Literacy Legacy represents Sabine Parish's plan to effectively ensure these children receive effective literacy instruction. Built upon research-based best practices and modeled after the districts' **Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy** grant, Sabine Literacy Legacy will meet the following objectives:

- 1) Increase the percentage of 4-year olds participating in the project who achieve significant gains in oral language skills,
- 2) increase the percentage of students in grades 3, 8 and HS who meet or exceed English language arts proficiency on state reading assessments;
- 3) provide high-quality literacy activities inclusive of parental involvement;
- 4) Strengthen literacy development across academic content area by providing a wide-range of literacy resources to effectively support reading and writing;
- 5) Utilize libraries to provide interventions for all readers; and
- 6) provide resources that support college and career ready academic content standards. Activities include distributing free books to children and their families, providing high-quality literacy activities, providing meaningful opportunities for parents to become engaged, increasing access to both print and electronic literacy resources, extended and flexible access to library resources, expand and update school library collections with high interest, grade-level text, providing appropriate interventions based on data for all readers, and high-quality professional development for teachers and school staff.

### Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS) project **Reading Railroad (RR)** will focus on the following goals:

Goal 1: Increase the literacy skills of elementary students through the implementation of a comprehensive plan to promote literacy development which includes book distribution and childhood literacy activities.

Goal 2: Build the efficacy and leadership capacity of the school librarian and other key staff.

Goal 3: Improve the quantity and quality of print and electronic literacy resources at target schools' media centers; and

Goal 4: Increase family engagement in literacy activities, including the use of personalized learning technology tools (E-Readers).

Objectives focus on: Increasing support for family engagement and promoting literacy activities in the home.

# Paterson students reading 50 books or more drops by more than 500 after district cut librarians

September 29, 2016 by Jayed Rahman



The number of students reading 50 or more books in the city's school district dropped by 523 students this year compared to the previous as the Paterson Public Schools reduced the number of librarians, according to education advocates.

In 2015, there were 1,923 students, who read 50 or more books. In 2015, there were 1,400, according to the Paterson Education Fund, an advocacy, which runs the 50 Book Club, a program that promotes literacy.

Rosie Grant, executive director of the Paterson Education Fund, attributed the drop to cuts in librarians at the district. She said cuts in librarians undermines a big effort by multiple groups to get students reading at grade level by third grade.

"They are learning to read through third grade and fourth grade on they need to read to learn. If they don't have the base level of reading mastered at the end of the third grade it puts them more at risk for failure," said Grant.

"It has a huge negative impact on kids," said Linda Reid, president of the Parent Education Organizing Council (PEOC). "Not having librarians in school is a major downfall."

The district has 21 librarians this year which is two more than the previous year, said Terry Corallo, spokeswoman for the Paterson Public Schools. "We had 19 last school year and have added at the two new schools," she said.

In 2014-15 school year, the district had 31 librarians.

Corallo said there could be other factors causing the drop. She said principals at each of the 54 district schools may be the key to encouraging greater participation in the 50 Books Club.

School board president Christopher Irving said he is not surprised by the big drop. He said he is disappointed at the drop adding that the root cause of the cuts were the state's underfunding of the school system.

"This is the ramification of not being fully funded," said Irving. He said librarians are the one who push books to students to get them to read.

"There's a direct correlation," said Errol Kerr, school board member. "They need librarians who will setup systems in the schools to get our kids interested in reading. If you don't have that it's not going to work."

A contingent of school librarians have repeatedly protested the cuts in librarians in the past year. At one point the librarians elicited a promise from state-appointed district superintendent Donnie Evans to restore librarians at the elementary schools.

The same group expressed disappointment at the end of the last school year the promise was not kept.

Grant expressed some optimism stating the new School 16 was provided a librarian. Corallo said the Hani Awadallah School also has a librarian.

"Reading maketh the mind. The more you read, the more knowledge you acquire. We don't have that going on," lamented Kerr.

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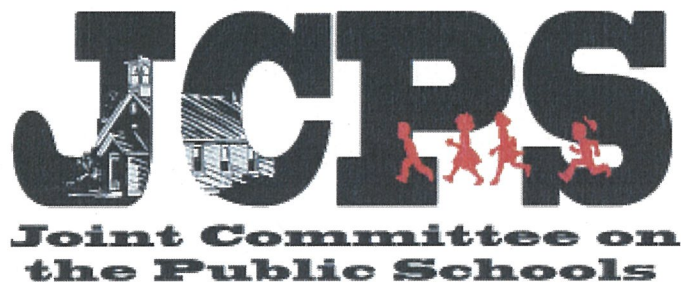
## Educational Equity -- Access to School Library Media Specialists (SLMS)

Legislative Districts/Selected School Districts	NCES 13/14 Data	SLMSs Per Census	# of Schools	Difference	Notes
<b>Legislative District 7</b>					
Bordentown Township	4	5	5	0	
Burlington	2	3	5	-2	1 SLMS Covers Elementary 3 Schools
Cinnaminson	0.6	1	4	-3	None in Elementary or Intermediate Schools
Edgewater Park	0	0	2	-2	None in Elementary or Middle Schools
Florence	1	1	3	-2	K-3 Only Has SLMS
Moorestown	7	7	6	1	2 SLMS at HS
Mount Laurel	8	8	8	0	
Riverside	1	1	3	-2	1 SLMS covers Elementary, MS and HS
Willingboro	0	7	7	0	
<b>Legislative District 6</b>					
Cherry Hill	20	18	19	-1	
Collingswood	1	2	7	-5	1 SLMS Covers 5 Elementary Schools
Haddon	0	1	7	-6	None at Elementary School Level, Shared MS & HS
Haddonfield	3	3	5	-2	2 SLMS Cover 2 Schools Each
Pennsauken	2	2	10	-8	Only MS and HS have SLMS
Voorhees	5	5	5	0	
<b>Legislative District 10</b>					
Brick	12	10	12	-2	
Toms River	6	18	18	0	
<b>Legislative District 12</b>					
Jackson	9	10	10	0	
Old Bridge	9	5	15	-10	SLMS 1 day per week in each Elementary school
Plumsted	1	2	4	-2	No SLMS in Primary or Elementary, PT Middle School
Upper Freehold	2	3	3	0	
<b>Legislative District 18</b>					
East Brunswick	14	13	11	2	2 SLMS at HSs
Edison	6	6	19	-13	Only MS and HS have SLMSs
Highland Park	2	2	4	-2	One SLMS covers 3 schools
South Plainfield	7	7	7	0	

## Educational Equity -- Access to School Library Media Specialists (SLMS)

Legislative Districts/Selected School Districts	NCES 13/14 Data	SLMSs Per Census	# of Schools	Difference	Notes
<b>Legislative District 26</b>					
Kinnelon	4.72	4	4	0	
Parsippany-Troy Hills	11.5	12	11	1	2 SLMS at HS
Rockaway Township	4	4	8	-4	4 SLMSs cover 8 Schools
Verona	4	4	6	-2	2 SLMS's cover 4 schools
Caldwell/West Caldwell	4	6	6	0	
West Milford	8	8	8	0	
<b>Legislative District 27</b>					
Caldwell/West Caldwell	4	6	6	0	
Chatham Township	5	6	6	0	
Livingston	10	10	9	1	2 SLMS at HS
Madison	6	6	5	1	2 SLMS at HS
Millburn	10	7	7	0	
South Orange/Maplewood	10	10	10	0	
West Orange	13	12	11	1	2 SLMS at HS
<b>Legislative District 28</b>					
Bloomfield	9	10	11	-1	
Irvington	9	3	12	-9	
Newark	40	22	64	-42	
Nutley	7	7	7	0	
<b>Legislative District 34</b>					
Clifton	15	7	17	-10	ONLY MS and HS have SLMSs
East Orange	14	16	20	-4	3 MS share 1 SLMS
Orange	7.5	9	11	-2	
<b>Legislative District 30</b>					
Howell	11	12	12	0	
Wall	3	3	7	-4	1 SLMS covers 4 Elementary
<b>Legislative District 35</b>					
Elmwood Park	0	1	5	-4	No SLMS at Elementaries, Shared MS and HS
Garfield	1	1	13	-12	No SLMS at Elementaries, Shared MS and HS

# Statements & School Library Report



Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
October 11, 2016





## New Jersey Library Association Calls on New Jersey to Support Highly Effective School Library Programs

*"And finally, this bill upholds the core value that animated the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act signed by President Lyndon Johnson -- the value that says education, the key to economic opportunity, is a civil right. With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamental American ideal that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make out of their lives what they will."*

President Obama, speaking about ESSA legislation, December 10, 2015, <http://1.usa.gov/1Nf75F3>

The New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) recognizes the value and importance of highly effective school library programs and believes that access to a quality school library/media center staffed by a certified school media specialist is a necessary part of every student's education. The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), with proper implementation by the NJ Department of Education, legislators and school boards, can provide financial support to help schools achieve vibrant literacy, information literacy and school library media programs for our state's students.

School libraries are a safe learning environment where all students have equal and equitable access to learning, support, and information for personal and educational purposes. NJLA believes that our schools must serve as an "equalizer" to provide all students with equal and equitable access to the resources, support and instruction necessary to succeed academically and become productive and engaged citizens in a democratic society.

Research on the value of reading, information literacy, school library programs and certified school library media specialists is extensive and clear. Yet, New Jersey schools have been dismantling these proven programs at an alarming rate over the last 8 years. According to a recently published joint NJLA and New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) study we know now just how serious the problem is. Key findings of this study include:

- 20% fewer School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) in New Jersey than there were in 2007-2008
- 20% of High Schools have no Certified School Library Media Specialist available to students
- 150+ School Library Media Specialists cover more than one school. One SLMS covers 7 schools in one district.
- 91 School Districts have no School Library Media Specialists
- 33 districts have no School Library Media Specialists at the Elementary Level
- Over 280 Elementary Level schools are without School Library Media Specialists

In a society growing more and more dependent on information literacy we cannot justify failing to educate our children in these critical skills. We cannot produce students able to compete effectively in a modern information and technology based world without the most basic skills in navigating the vast amount of information in our society. Skills in navigating information literacy (which includes digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy) are best taught by certified school library media specialists.

## The Value and Importance of Highly Effective School Library Programs

VALE and ACRL-NJ/NJLA-CUS<sup>1</sup>, New Jersey's academic library associations, concur with the New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey Association of School Librarians in acknowledging the value and importance of highly effective school library programs. We, too, hold that "access to a quality school library/media center staffed by a certified school media specialist is a necessary part of every student's education", and further agree that the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides the necessary legislative and financial support needed to "help schools achieve vibrant literacy, information literacy and school library media programs for our state's students."<sup>2</sup>

Academic librarians—most of whom are parents--pay attention to K-12 programs. We have witnessed schools and districts face difficult fiscal decisions in which school libraries and school media specialists are sacrificed to make ends meet. We also see that many college freshmen are poorly prepared to conduct college-level research, requiring professors and librarians to spend more time than they should on basic skills. We live with this cause and effect, frustrated in knowing that many of these students could hit the college ground running with proper training beforehand. All educators comprise a continuum of intervention necessary to help students gain essential career skills. School media specialists have a well-regarded place on this continuum.

NJ Colleges & Universities seek accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). MSCHE requires that students demonstrate information literacy skills. This demand in part is a response to the information explosion of the last couple of decades, which has increased the need for students to develop research skills. We know that employers demand that new-hires have the ability to find and analyze information within a growing universe of data, and have complained that "once on the job, these educated young workers seemed tethered to their computers. They failed to incorporate more fundamental, low-tech research methods that are as essential as ever in the contemporary workplace."<sup>3</sup> We further understand that information literate students—those with strong analytical, critical thinking and problem-solving skills--are more attractive job candidates.

Becoming a strong job candidate means learning how to learn, a process that starts when students are young and is nurtured year after year. Some of this nurturing comes from the unique expertise offered by School Media Specialists and the resources they steward in school libraries. Research collected by the American Library Association<sup>4</sup> reveals that School Media Specialists and school libraries have strong and positive impacts on teacher effectiveness and student growth, especially in information literacy and technological skills. School Media Specialists are information literacy experts, uniquely trained and skilled to help all students develop reading and research skills. School libraries provide equitable access to information and technological resources that lead to increased student motivation, better comprehension,



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 28, 2016**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NJLA LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO CALL FOR HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS**

*Study finds lack of investment in school libraries and librarians, directly impacting student achievement*

The New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) has launched a campaign - [Unlock Student Potential](#) - bolstered by a groundbreaking study and statement, calling on New Jersey to support highly effective school library programs.

The study, which included a census of New Jersey School Library Media Specialists (SLMSs), was developed to coincide with the signing of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which cites School Librarians and school library programs as an essential component in education. SLMSs have completed training and certification requirements in both library science and education established by the NJ State Board of Education.

The report details recent research on the positive impact of certified teacher-librarians in school settings, including increased graduation and literacy rates, higher standardized test scores, and greater proficiency in subject areas.

"New Jersey has seen a frightening decline in certified school librarians," said Pat Tumulty, executive director of NJLA, "especially where students need them most."

According to the study, there are approximately 20% fewer SLMSs in New Jersey than there were in 2007-2008, and over 20% of high schools have no certified SLMS available to students. An overwhelming majority - 89% of respondents - cite Flat, Decreased or No Funding for their school libraries. This divestment directly impacts the potential for students to gain ground in information literacy, technology and critical thinking - the skills touted as necessary for success in college and beyond.

The study also reveals particularly dire situations for school libraries in major urban areas in New Jersey, where literacy rates are among the lowest and school reorganizations are common.

Based on survey results, NJLA, the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) and VALE/New Jersey Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries as well as the College and University Section for NJLA (ACRL-NJ/NJLA-CUS) believe ESSA presents a critical opportunity to reinvest in school library programs, providing equity of access to information and resources.

"School librarians play a vital role in education to help students develop skills that will serve them throughout school, college and beyond," said James Keehbler, co-author of the report and chair of the NJLA task force on Highly Effective School Library Programs. "In the Information Age, how can we not make dedicating resources for school library programs and information literacy a priority? Being able to find, evaluate and utilize information is at the very foundation of opportunity; an opportunity all New Jersey students should have regardless of their zip code."

SLMSs are a vital part of any successful school and are students' professional guides to credible, relevant, and high-quality resources vital to the development of information literacy and critical thinking.

VALE and ACRL-NJ/NJLA-CUS [released a statement](#) in support of the campaign this month, citing experience with incoming students who are unprepared for college-level research. The strain on information literacy resources creates a cause and effect that reaches well into adult life.

"All educators comprise a continuum of intervention necessary to help students gain essential career skills," reads the statement. "School media specialists have a well-regarded place on this continuum."

Recent education reform in New Jersey and changes in performance measures have made collaborative planning between SLMSs and subject teachers on information literacy instruction more difficult, and the impact has been far-reaching. According to NJASL, 49% of teachers report that student's access to technology is one of the "biggest barriers to incorporating technology into their teaching" because the students are "often not digitally literate enough."

A 2015 NJASL study found that 75% of students "have no idea how to locate articles and resources they need for their research," 60% "don't verify the accuracy or reliability of the information they find," and 44% "do not know how to integrate knowledge from different sources."

The full report can be viewed [online](#).

###

### **About NJLA**

Established in 1890, the NJLA is the oldest and largest library organization in New Jersey. It advocates for the advancement of library services for the residents of New Jersey, provides continuing education & networking opportunities for librarians and supports the principles of intellectual freedom & promotes access to library materials for all. Our office in Trenton, NJ provides services to over 1,700 members. For more information, go to [www.njla.org](http://www.njla.org).

## Definition for Effective School Library Program

### POSITION:

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) supports the position that an effective school library program has a certified school librarian at the helm, provides personalized learning environments, and offers equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student.

As a fundamental component of college, career, and community readiness, the effective school library program:

1. is adequately staffed, including a state-certified school librarian who
  - a. is an instructional leader and teacher,
  - b. supports the development of digital learning, participatory learning, inquiry learning, technology literacies, and information literacy, and
  - c. supports, supplements, and elevates the literacy experience through guidance and motivational reading initiatives;
2. has up-to-date digital and print materials and technology, including curation of openly licensed educational resources; and
3. provides regular professional development and collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians.

Effective school libraries are dynamic learning environments that bridge the gap between access and opportunity for all K–12 learners. Under the leadership of the school librarian, the school library provides students access to resources and technology, connecting classroom learning to real-world events. By providing access to an array of well-managed resources, school libraries enable academic knowledge to be linked to deeper, personalized learning. The expanded learning environment of the school library ensures the unique interests and needs of individual students are met. In this way, effective school library programs prepare students for college, career, and community.

Under the leadership of a certified school librarian, the effective school library program delivers a well-rounded educational program (AASL 2009). This program focuses on accessing and evaluating information, providing digital learning training and experiences, and developing a culture of reading. The program uses a variety of engaging and relevant resources. Robust school libraries have high-quality, openly licensed digital and print resources, technology tools, and broadband access. This environment is essential to providing equitable learning opportunities for all students. More than 60 studies in two dozen states show that the “levels of library funding, staffing levels, collection size and range, and the instructional role of the librarian all have a direct impact on student achievement” (Gretes 2013).

In an effective school library program, the school librarian serves as an instructional leader, program administrator, teacher, collaborative partner, and information specialist (AASL 2009). Working with classroom teachers, the school librarian develops information literacy and digital literacy instruction for all students. Serving as an instructional leader, the school librarian contributes to curricular decisions and facilitates professional learning. Additionally, as the library program administrator, the school librarian oversees and manages the program and works with school and community partners. These partnerships result in expanded and improved resources and services for all students.

An effective school library program plays a crucial role in bridging digital and socioeconomic divides. School library programs staffed with state-certified professionals provide an approachable, equitable, personalized learning environment necessary for every student's well-rounded education.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes language for "effective school library programs" in the provisions of Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; Title II, Part B, Subpart 2; Title II, Part B, Subpart 2, Section 2226; and Title IV, Part A. The definition of an effective school library program provides guidance to administrators, school boards, and school librarians in implementing ESSA.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

- **Collaboration:** Working with a member of the teaching team to plan, implement, and evaluate a specialized instructional plan.
- **Community Readiness:** The ability to be a productive, active, engaged member of a democratic society.
- **School Librarian Instructional Role:** [Instructional Role of School Librarians Position Statement](#)

### **REFERENCES:**

- American Association of School Librarians. 2012. 2012 School Libraries Count! National Longitudinal Survey of School Library Programs. [www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/researchandstatistics/slcsurvey/2012/AASL-SLC-2012-WEB.pdf](http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/researchandstatistics/slcsurvey/2012/AASL-SLC-2012-WEB.pdf) (accessed May 20, 2016).
- American Association of School Librarians. 2009. Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs. Chicago, IL. <http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards/guidelines> (accessed July 7, 2016).
- Gretes, Frances. 2013. School Library Impact Studies: A Review of Findings and Guide to Sources. Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. [www.baltimorelibraryproject.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/09/Library-Impact-Studies.pdf](http://www.baltimorelibraryproject.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/09/Library-Impact-Studies.pdf) (accessed May 25, 2016).

### **DISCLAIMER:**

The position taken by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) represents the organization and cannot be applied to individual members or groups affiliated with the association without their direct confirmation.

**APPROVAL/REVISION DATES:** June 25, 2016

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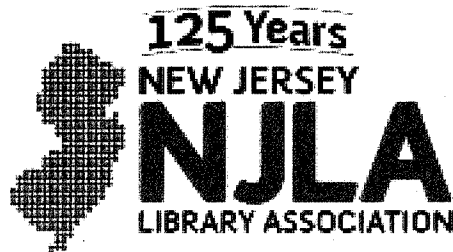
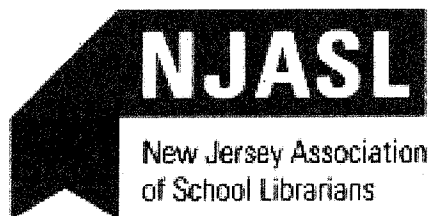
# School Library Programs in New Jersey: Building Blocks for Realizing Student Potential with ESSA Legislation Opportunities

Report by:

Maureen Donohue, Piscataway Public Library

James Keebler, Piscataway Public Library

April 2016



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## Acknowledgements:

Maureen Donohue and James Keebler were primary researchers gathering the census data, administering the survey and preparing the report.

Maureen is a Teen Librarian at the Piscataway Public Library, a member of the New Jersey Library Association Public Policy Committee, and a 2016 New Jersey Library Association Rising Star.

James is the Director of the Piscataway Public Library and a past chair of the New Jersey Library Association Public Policy Committee, as well as 2015/2016 New Jersey Library Association President.

**Thank you to the following organizations and individuals for their support as follows:**

- New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) for their support and assistance with the census and promoting the survey.
- New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) and NJLA Members for their assistance with the census, often calling their own school districts for information.
- Darby Malvey for her support in the creation of the survey questions, ensuring their relevancy.
- The NJASL Executive Board for their input in the survey creation, especially Pat Massey, Janet Clark, and Bruce DuBoff.
- John Chrastka of EveryLibrary for the additional insight in the ESSA legislation, the state level implementation process for New Jersey and its potential for school library programs.
- Special thanks to all school library employees that shared their inspiring and sometimes heartbreaking stories and their notes of thanks. You inspired us to dig deep and carry on.

## Background, Purpose and Methodology

In late 2015 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed by Congress and approved by President Obama. This act updates the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that was last reauthorized in 2001 under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA includes specific references to "effective school library programs" and "school librarians." The legislation provides resources to:

- Develop effective school library programs to provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.
- Provide professional development to support instructional services provided by effective school library programs and develop, administer, and evaluate high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction initiatives.
- Provide time for teachers (and other literacy staff, as appropriate, such as school librarians or specialized support personnel) to meet to plan comprehensive literacy instruction
- Promote literacy programs in low income communities. May include providing professional development for school librarians, books and up-to-date materials to high need schools
- Block grants can be made available to increase "access to school libraries" and provide training to "use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement

(American Library Association, 2015)

The federal legislation leaves much of the implementation to the states. The regulations in New Jersey will be written by the New Jersey Department of Education.

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians and the New Jersey Library Association recognized a need to determine the current situation of the school library programs in New Jersey in order to act as a foundation for ESSA implementation in New Jersey.

Step One was a census to determine how many School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) were working in New Jersey School districts, utilizing the NJ School Directory from the NJ Department of Education, and comparing this number with the data from 2007/2008 to determine if a trend was revealed.

Step Two was a survey sent out to the SLMSs and school library staff to gain further insight into the current status of school library programs across New Jersey.

### Note:

The literature on the value of literacy, information literacy, school library programs and certified school library media specialists is extensive. In the report we have included select examples, but we have only scratched the surface. To find further research, there exist three excellent tools:

Kachel, Debra E., School Library Research Summarized: A Graduate Class Project, Revised Edition, Mansfield University, PA. <http://keithcurrylance.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/MU-LibAdvoBklt2013.pdf>

School Libraries Work: a Compendium of Research Supporting the Effectiveness of School Libraries, (2016), Scholastic. <http://www.scholastic.com/SLW2016/>

Gretes, Frances, (2013), School Library Impact Studies: A Review of Findings and Guide to Sources, Gretes Research Services. <http://www.baltimorelibraryproject.org/download/Library-Impact-Studies.pdf>

## Executive Summary

In an effort to determine the current status of School Library Media Specialists (SLMS), School Libraries, and funding for School Library programs in New Jersey, The New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) and the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) collaborated on:

1. A census of certified School Library Media Specialists (SLMS)
2. A survey to gain further insight into New Jersey School Library Programs

The survey was developed to coincide with the recent signing of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which includes School Librarians and school library programs as an essential component in education. This reauthorization provides new opportunities for school librarians and school library funding. Based on survey results, NJLA and NJASL believe ESSA presents a critical opportunity to reinvest in school library programs, to unlock the potential in New Jersey students and prepare them for college and beyond.

In New Jersey, as well as many states, the economic downturn and expanding expectations from schools has forced difficult fiscal decisions for many New Jersey school districts. Survey results found that 89% of school libraries are receiving flat, decreased, or no funding for their school library programs. The census and survey both show a reduction in SLMS positions as well as a reduction in the support staff for school libraries. In some districts this situation is complicated by SLMS having to cover multiple schools or numerous other non-traditional SLMS roles.

Results determined that SLMSs spend 40% of their time performing non traditional duties. Some of these duties include art teacher, basic skills instructor, electives teacher, locker room monitor, administrative assistant, and substitute teacher. In addition, 71% indicated they "never" or "rarely" have time to collaborate with teachers to promote library resources. The survey results confirm SLMSs with more support and funding can provide greater opportunity for New Jersey school students.

Survey respondents repeatedly voiced concerns that a result of eliminating certified SLMSs would see the staff, the students, and the school as a whole suffer. They believe curricula become unsupported, test scores decrease, and students become unprepared for higher education. Schools will "lack a professional guide to credible, relevant, and high-quality resources which is vital to the development of information literacy." These statements are strongly supported by recent relevant research cited in this report.

The ESSA legislation offers an opportunity for all stakeholders to work together to create vibrant, forward-thinking and valued school library programs in all New Jersey schools to increase literacy levels, critical thinking, and information literacy and research skills. It is time to reinvest in our school library programs with ESSA related funding and support to provide New Jersey students with the opportunity that is provided by strong literacy and information literacy skills.

## Discussion of Tools

### Stage 1 - Census

In early December 2015 through the middle of January 2016 we worked to determine the current school library staffing levels in New Jersey Schools in order to find comparative data to use with the 2007-2008 New Jersey Association of School Librarians data. We utilized the New Jersey School Directory from the State of New Jersey Department of Education for our starting point. Our inquiries, where possible, gathered the names and e-mail addresses of the staff responsible for the school library.

Our tools included:

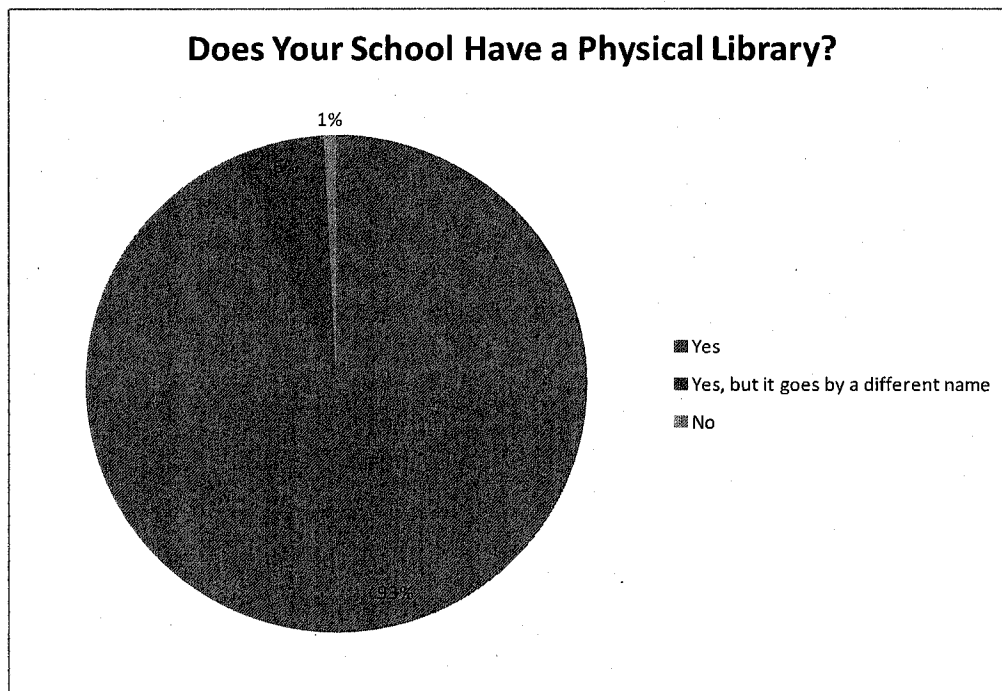
1. Reaching out to public librarians in the communities to ascertain the school library scenario
2. Researching school web sites
3. Reaching out through NJASL to members
4. Directly contacting school administrators
5. Verifying our findings with National Center for Education Statistics Database (<http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/index.asp>) 2013-2014 School Year data, accounting for changes since report.

### Key findings:

- There are approximately 20% fewer School Library Media Specialists(SLMS) in New Jersey than there were in 2007-2008
- Over 20% of High Schools have no certified School Library Media Specialist available to students.
- Over 150 School Library Media Specialists cover more than one school. One SLMS covers 7 schools in one district.
- 91 School Districts have no School Library Media Specialists (Not including charter schools)
- 33 districts have no School Library Media Specialists at the Elementary Level
- Over 280 Elementary Level schools are without certified School Library Media Specialists
- In the nearly 100 charter schools, there are fewer than 10 School Library Media Specialists.

### Stage 2 - Survey

The survey was distributed to school library contacts throughout the state. The survey was open for a 3 month period and over 600 responses were collected. Utilizing the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey, we distributed a 20 question survey to 1,518 email addresses gathered from the census process, with a bounce rate of 3.3%. E-mailing the survey through SurveyMonkey insured no one person would be able to respond twice to the survey. The survey was available from February 23, 2016 to April 1, 2016. We received 611 responses, accounting for the bounced e-mails, the response rate was 41.6%.



#### Findings:

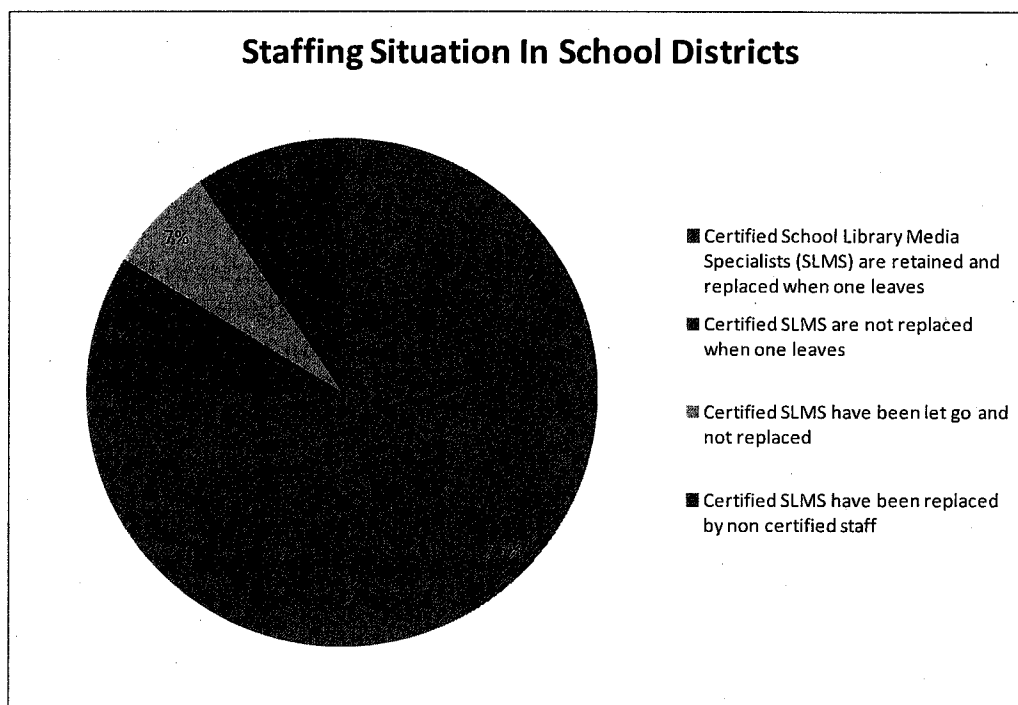
This question was designed based on some limited stories of school libraries being closed, and school library staff working "from a cart." It is clear that most respondents still worked in a school library or media center. However, a number of respondents commented on how their spaces were being made unavailable for PARCC testing or used as cafeterias. ESSA provides new opportunities for funding to enhance literacy through the *Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)* program and the now codified *Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)* program.

#### Recent Relevant Research:

- Children who are more proficient in comprehension and technical reading and spelling skills read more; because of more print exposure, their comprehension and technical reading and spelling skills improved more with each year of education. In preschool and kindergarten print exposure explained 12% of the variance in oral language skills, in primary school 13%, in middle school 19%, in high school 30%, and in college and university 34%. (Mol, S.E., Bus, A.G., 2011)
- Consistently, all students and all studied cohorts at schools with larger book collections are more likely to earn Advanced and less likely to earn Below Basic scores than their counterparts at schools with smaller book collections. (Lance, C.K., Schwarz, B., 2012)

#### From New Jersey SLMS in the field:

- "From working in an urban, high poverty, low functioning district, I have seen first hand the positive effects a school library with a certified media specialist has on a population like this. Most students do not have books at home or anyone at home to read to them. The simple opportunity to visit the library to pick their own book is very empowering and special."
- "We were closed last year for 3 months due to PARCC testing. We will be closed for 4 weeks this year and although this is an improvement, we will still be without the physical library resources and a teacher-librarian for a considerable amount of time."
- "Please continue to fight for School Library Media Specialist and School Libraries. It appears as if the Common Core and PARCC testing has moved into our spaces..."



**Findings:**

Nearly 10% of Certified SLMS are not replaced when one leaves and 7.63% work in districts where Certified SLMS have been let go and not replaced. Finally, 10.61% work in districts where the SLMS have been replaced with non-certified staff. The Census revealed entire districts without certified SLMS as well as none at various levels of instruction. The 20% reduction of certified SLMS's in the past eight years, combined with the continuing trend of not replacing or eliminating SLMS positions moving forward, will impact literacy and information literacy for all New Jersey students if not reversed through thoughtful implementation of ESSA state regulations.

**Recent Relevant Research:**

- Students who attend schools with certified teacher-librarians and quality library facilities perform better on standardized tests and are more likely to graduate, even after controlling for school size and student income level.
- The presence of a certified teacher-librarian on staff has a particularly high relationship to a school's five year graduation rate. (85% compared to 79% without certified teacher-librarians). The five year graduation rate in high poverty schools was 78.8% "five-year" graduation rate versus 43.2% without a certified teacher-librarian.

(Coker, E., 2015)

- After controlling for the level of resources available to schools, the study found that students at schools with certified SLMSs have, on average, higher fourth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) scores than students at schools without a certified SLMS.

(Small, R.V., Snyder, J., Parker, K., 2009)

- It (the study) shows that having at least a part-time LMS (and preferably, a full-time LMS) tends to yield notably higher proficiency rates in all five subject areas than does having no LMS.

(Dow, M.J., McMahon-Lakin, J., 2012)

- We found that students at schools that gained or maintained an endorsed librarian to manage the library program averaged higher CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program) reading scores and higher increases in those scores over time than students at schools whose library programs were run by either non-endorsed librarians or library assistants.

(Lance, C. K., Hofschire, L., 2012)

- On average, almost nine percent (8.6%) more students score Advanced in Reading where students have a full-time, certified librarian with support staff than where they have a full-time, certified librarian alone. Further, almost eight percent (7.9%) more students score Advanced in Reading where students have a full-time, certified librarian than where they do not (i.e., anything from a part-time librarian to none at all).
- On average, the percentage of students scoring Advanced in Writing is two and a half times higher for schools with vs. schools without a full-time, certified librarian (13.2% vs. 5.3%). Similarly, the average percentage of students scoring Advanced in Writing is almost twice as high for schools with a full-time, certified librarian with support staff vs. those with a full-time certified librarian alone (16.7% vs. 9.2%).

(Lance, C. K., Schwarz, B., 2012)

- For elementary schools that have at least one full-time endorsed librarian, the percentage of third, fourth, and fifth grade students scoring proficient or advanced in reading is consistently higher than for schools with lower staffing levels – a 4 to 5 percent absolute difference and a 6 to 8 percent proportional difference.

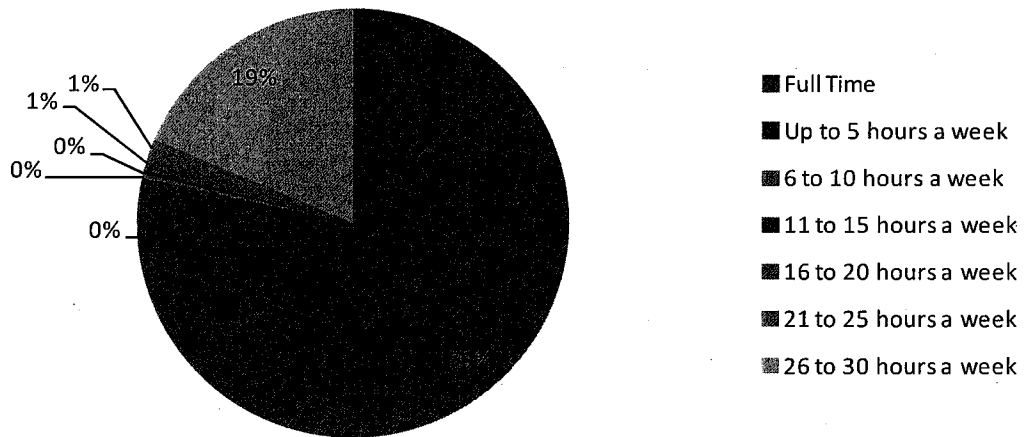
(Francis, B.H, Lance, C.K. & Lietzau, Z., 2010)

**From New Jersey SLMS in the field:**

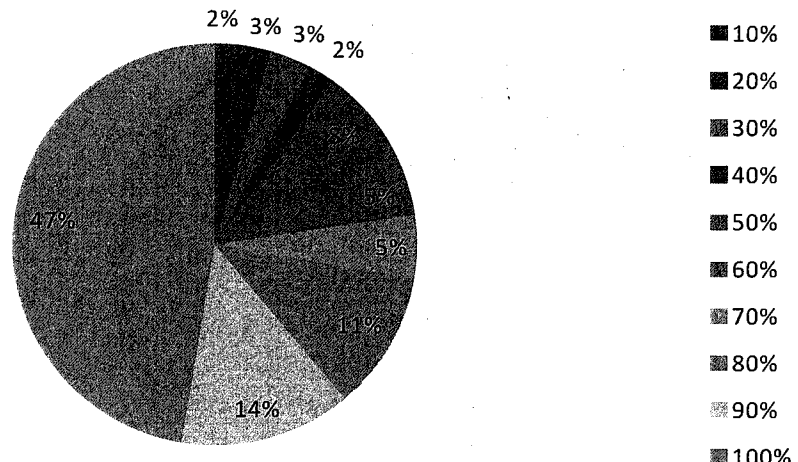
- "SLMSs must remain the connective, collaborative force within the school to maintain both 21st Century Skills and Common Core Standards."
- "I have spent over 60 years visiting and working in libraries, I have seen the difference a librarian can make in the life of a child. Reading is everything."

# School Library Media Specialist Availability

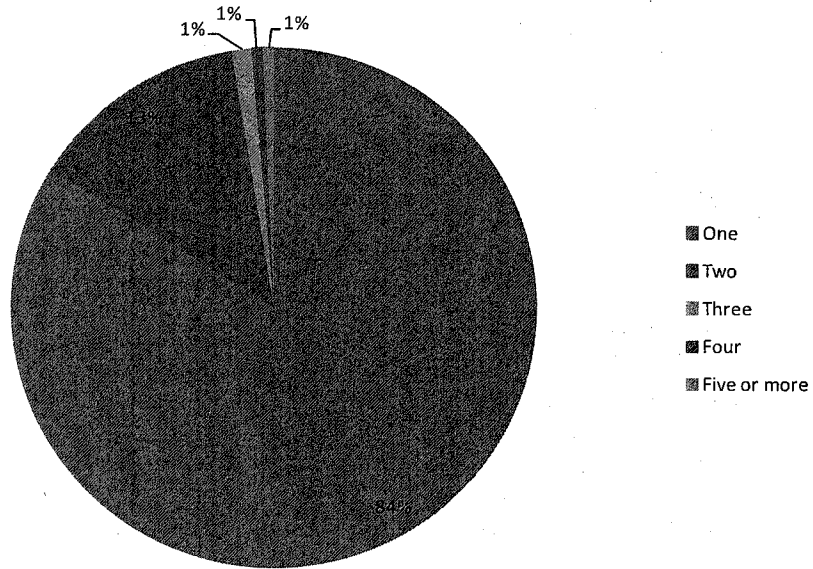
## How Many Hours a Week Do Respondents Work for the District?



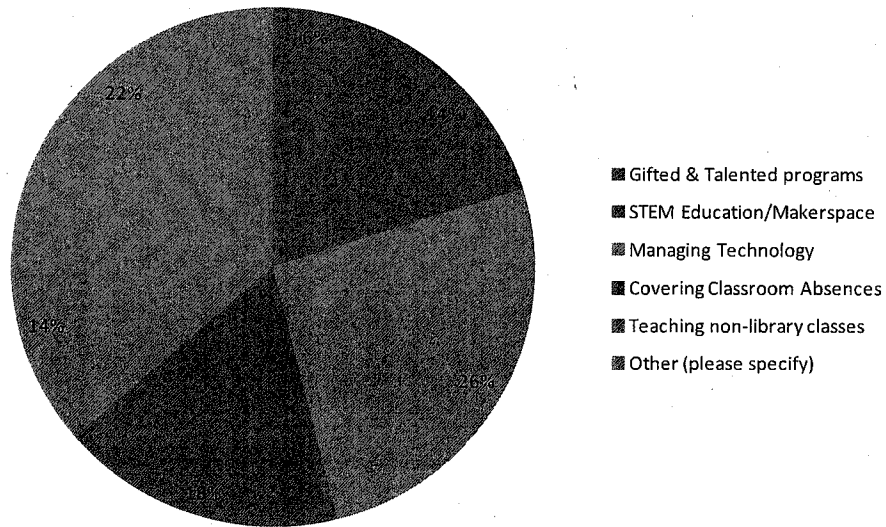
## What percentage of your time is dedicated to SLMS tasks?



### Number of Schools Covered by One SLMS



### Responsibilities Beyond Traditional School Library Activities



## Findings:

21.7% of the respondents are part time employees, with 18.56% working between 26 to 30 hours a week. We can also see that the reduced time available to focus on SLMS tasks with 28% of respondents spending 70% or less of their time on SLMS tasks. The SLMSs have clearly taken on other responsibilities with 26% managing technology for the school and 18% covering classroom teacher absences.

"Other" responsibilities listed included cover lunch times, 10 times a week 40 minutes a lunch, PARCC Test Coordinator, Computer/Technology Teacher, managing school technology, making copies for teachers, bus duty, teaching special education classes, maintain school web site and substituting. Finally, 16% of SLMS cover more than one school, with one SLMS covering 7 schools in one district. The research demonstrates the potential in improving student outcomes with a well supported school library program.

## Recent Relevant Research:

- All three groups of educators associate flexible scheduling of library access and instructional collaboration between teachers and librarians with library excellence in teaching all four 21st Century Learner standards. Where such teaching is assessed as excellent, administrators are more likely to value flexible scheduling and teacher-librarian collaboration as essential and teachers and librarians are more likely to report them occurring at least weekly. (Lance, C. K., Schwarz, B., 2012).

- A Rubric to Evaluate Highly Effective School Library Programs

The school librarian has...

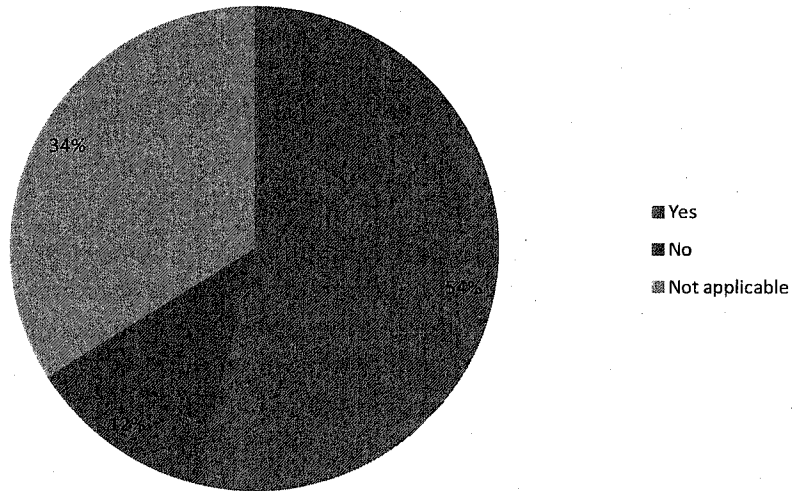
- One or more full-time support staff (para-librarian) assigned to the library. He or she assists users with non-instructional needs and runs daily operations and support of the library. Volunteers assist with other duties as well. **(Highly Effective)**
  - One full-time support staff assigned to the library to assist users with non-instructional needs; some volunteers provide assistance to the para-librarian. **(Effective)**
  - One part-time support staff assigned to the library to assist users with non-instructional needs; volunteers may or may not provide assistance to the para-librarian. **(Progressing Toward Effective)**
  - Volunteers replace para-librarian role and sporadic library assistance occurs. **(Ineffective)**
- (Colorado Department of Education, 2016)

## From New Jersey SLMS in the field:

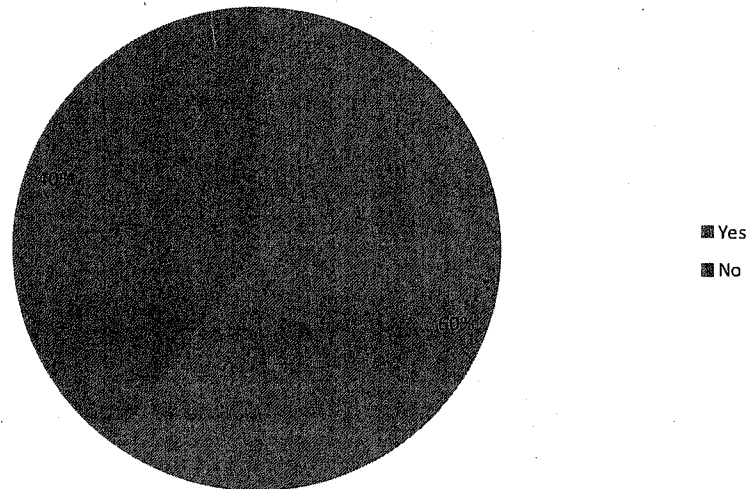
- "I love my job, and do feel appreciated, but my teaching load has increased by over 50% in the last two years. All "library maintenance" time was taken out of my schedule to get the most bang for the buck."
- "...I am circulating over 1000 books a week...that's a lot of records to maintain, books to shelve and keep organized, etc. There is NEVER time to actually read a review of even prepare a dynamic lesson... I'm tired of running."
- "We have 12 elementary schools that are serviced by 2 librarians."
- "My paid help is here one and a half periods a day (not full time). Our middle school librarians are half-time in the library and half-time in a classroom; our elementary libraries do not have librarians any more and instead parent volunteers run the library program."

# Information Literacy Curriculum in NJ Schools

**Does the SLMS Provide Input To Help Shape the Information Literacy Curriculum?**



**Does the School District Have an Information Literacy Curriculum in Place?**



**Findings:**

40% of districts do not have an Information Literacy Plan in place while another 12% are not able to provide input to shape the curriculum. The research reveals the need for Information Literacy to be taught at all levels of instruction, and the SLMS has the training and expertise to provide consistent training throughout New Jersey schools with supported school library programs.

ESSA authorizes school districts to include in their local plans how schools will “develop digital literacy skills and improve academic achievement.” (American Library Association, 2015)

For college readiness, one can look to the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* from the Association of College and Research Libraries:

“Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.”

**Recent Relevant Research:**

- 75% have no idea how to locate articles and resources they need for their research.
- 60% don't verify the accuracy or reliability of the information they find.
- 44% do not know how to integrate knowledge from different sources.

(New Jersey Association of School Librarians, 2015)

- 49% of teachers report that student's access to technology is one of the “biggest barriers to incorporating technology into their teaching” because the students are “often not digitally literate enough.”
- 56% of teachers of the lowest-income students say that lack of resources among students to access digital technologies is a “major challenge” to incorporating more digital tools into their teaching

Today's Digital Technologies Teachers Report:

- 83% Information available online is overwhelming for most students
  - 60% Digital technologies make it harder for students to find and use credible sources of information
  - 71% Digital technologies discourage students from finding and using a wide range of sources
- (American Association of School Librarians, 2014)

- School librarians have deep expertise in digital literacy skills; have well-developed instructional strategies based on thinking critically, communicating creatively in a variety of media, and solving problems creatively; and are often role models for strong leadership, initiative, and other career and life skills.

(Trilling, B., 2010 )

**From New Jersey SLMS in the field:**

- “Our district does not have elementary school librarians and it is a disservice to our students. They enter middle school lacking basic library skills.”

# In your own words, how would the absence of a certified SLMS impact the school, students, and/or staff?

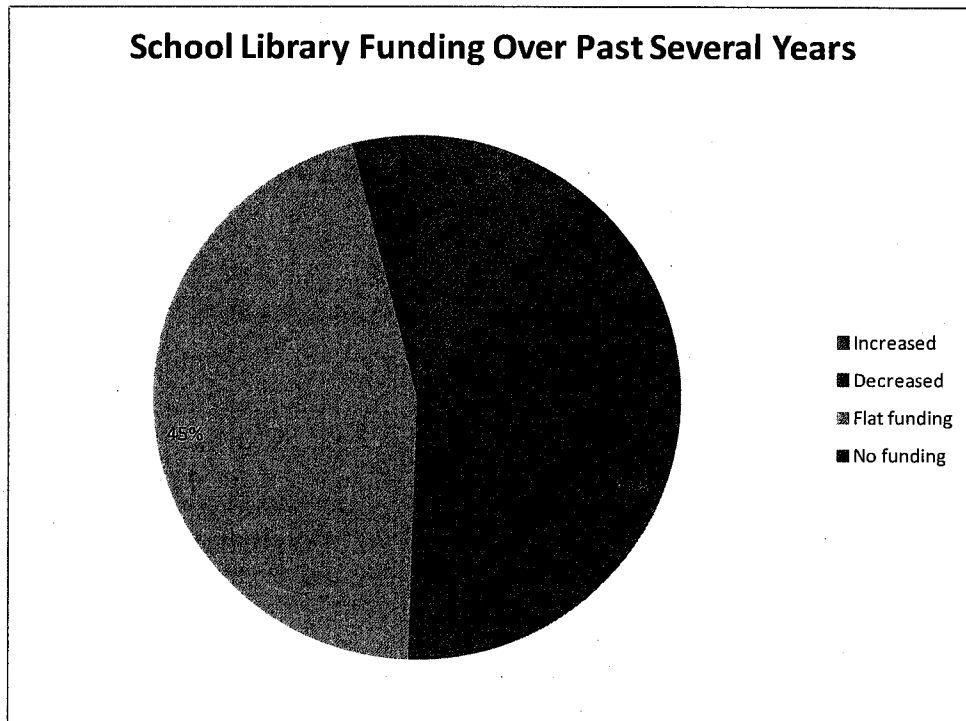
## Examples of how students would be affected according to respondents:

- Students will lack research skills and this will leave them unprepared for higher education
- There would be no support for literacy through various programs that the library offers. This will affect students' interest in reading as well as their scores
- Literacy rates would decline
- Students will lack skills necessary to decipher quality resources
- Test scores would decrease due to lack of curriculum support
- Digital literacy would disappear: just because "digital natives" are born in the age of computer technology does not mean they have the proper skills
- Students would not learn how to ethically access, use, create, and share information which is crucial to succeed in today's world
- Students would lack a professional guide to credible, relevant, and high-quality resources which is vital to the development of information literacy
- Students would not have instruction in finding reliable, authoritative digital resources, using resources responsibly, creating citations, and avoiding plagiarism
- Students' test scores would plummet
- Students' reading levels would decrease
- Students would be unprepared for college level research
- Low income/urban students will not have access to a fully staffed and fully stocked library
- Students would lack knowledge on plagiarism and intellectual property

## Examples of how staff would be affected according to respondents:

- Staff would miss the resources that the library provides in support of the curriculum that they are handling in the classroom
- Teachers would be overburdened with struggling readers and have no assistance with research process
- Staff would not know how to navigate, evaluate, and utilize information.
- Staff would lack a professional guide to credible, relevant, and high-quality resources which is vital to the development of information literacy
- Staff would not have expert assistance selecting books for independent or whole class reading, for research, or to supplement or extend the curriculum
- Staff would not have access to a library filled with resources that effectively support the curriculum
- Staff would suffer from lack of help selecting appropriate resources for curriculum units

## School Library Funding Over Past Several Years



### Findings:

89% of respondents cite Flat, Decreased or No Funding for their school library. There is opportunity moving forward: "ESSA includes new provisions that authorize States, as well as school districts, to use grant and sub-grant funds for "supporting the instructional services provided by effective school library programs" also block grants are available for school libraries through Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. (American Library Association, 2015)

### Recent Relevant Research:

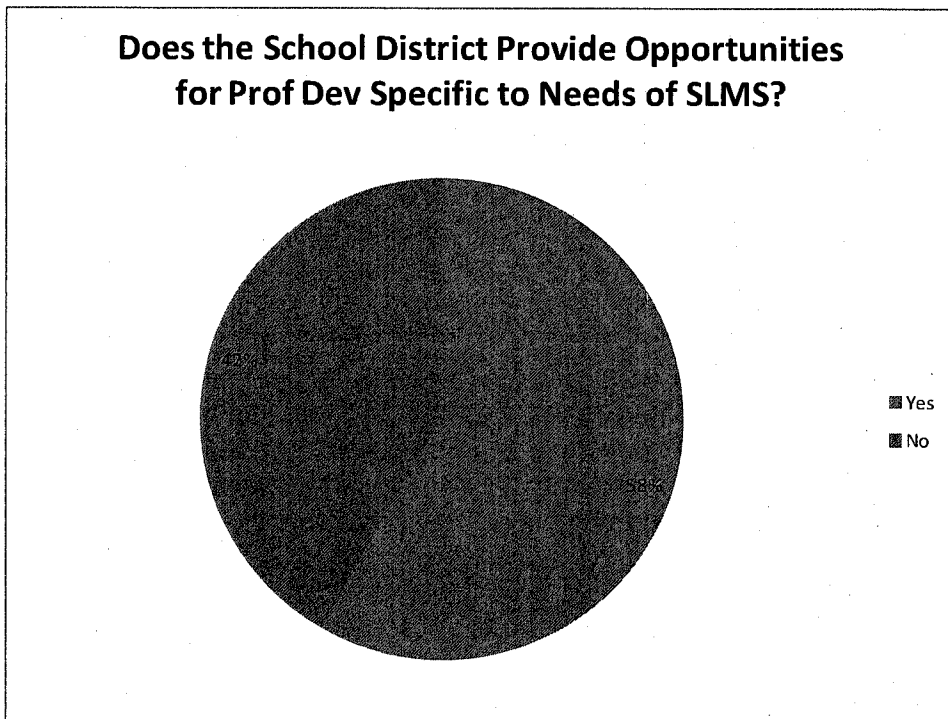
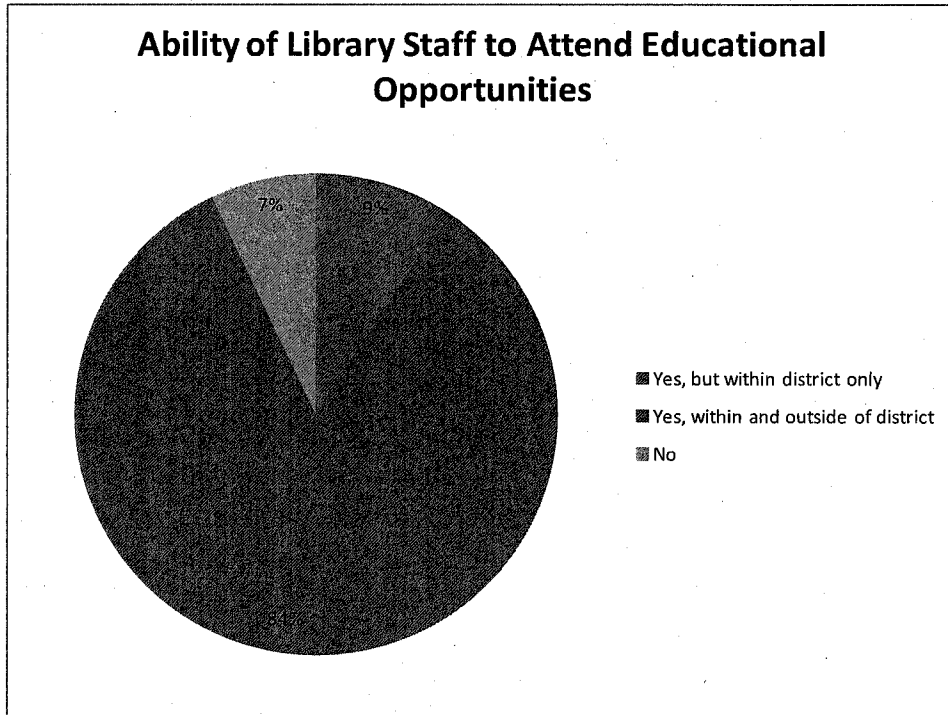
- The clearest results were for elementary schools. When elementary schools with stronger school libraries (more weekly staff hours, larger collections, more visits, larger budgets) were compared to those with weaker libraries, library variables were associated with proportional increases in third-grade test results of seven to eleven percent (6.8% to 11.0%).  
(Lance, C.K., Rodney, J. & Russell, B.I., 2007)

- For all students, excellence on PASS Writing and English Language Arts (ELA) standards was associated with the following characteristics of school library programs:
  - a. Having at least 1 full-time librarian and a full- or part-time library assistant
  - b. Spending \$7,500 or more annually and \$13.33 or more per student
  - c. Logging 20,000 or more checkouts and 36 or more items per student  
(Lance, C.K., Schwarz, B. & Rodney, M.J., 2014)

### From New Jersey SLMS in the field:

- "When I started working here in 1992, I had a budget of approximately \$30,000 for my school alone which covered all facets of the position at that time...my budget has shrunk to approximately \$4,000.00 per year to cover all facets of the position."
- "We are being asked to wear many hats and the shift to digital materials is challenging. This is particularly true when budgeting. We have to decide if we are going to buy print or digital with half the money than we had in the past. Our district has been cutting our funds across the board..."

# Professional Development Opportunity



**Findings:**

84% of library staff responding are able to attend educational opportunities inside and outside the school district. 7% reply that they are not able to attend educational opportunities inside or outside of the school district. The earlier question about responsibilities demonstrates the critical roles the SLMS plays in technology in many districts, which requires constant updating of knowledge. In professional development, ESSA once again provides opportunity to invest in the SLMS and the school library staff.

"ESSA also authorizes (but does not require) States to use funds to assist school districts in providing SLMS and other school personnel with knowledge and skills to use technology effectively, including effective integration of technology, to improve instruction and student achievement." (American Library Association, 2015)

Further focus on professional development is necessary as the roles of the SLMS continue to expand, including hosting STEM based training in makerspaces and managing technology.

Regarding STEM education and makerspaces for example, 63 New Jersey Schools participated in *New Jersey Maker's Day* in 2016.

**Examples of School Libraries with Makerspaces in New Jersey:**

- Park Ridge Middle/High School Media Center
- Waldwick Middle and High School Media Center
- Von E Mauger Middle School (Middlesex)
- Woodbridge High School

**"Public and school libraries are spearheading the makerspace movement in K-12 education."**  
(Horizon Report 2015)

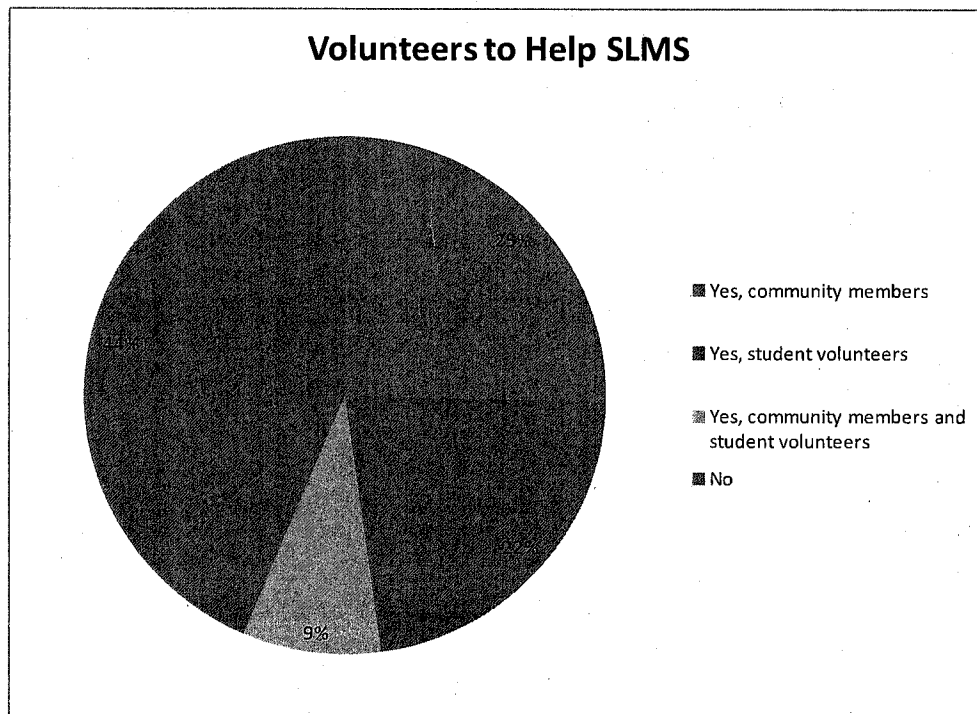
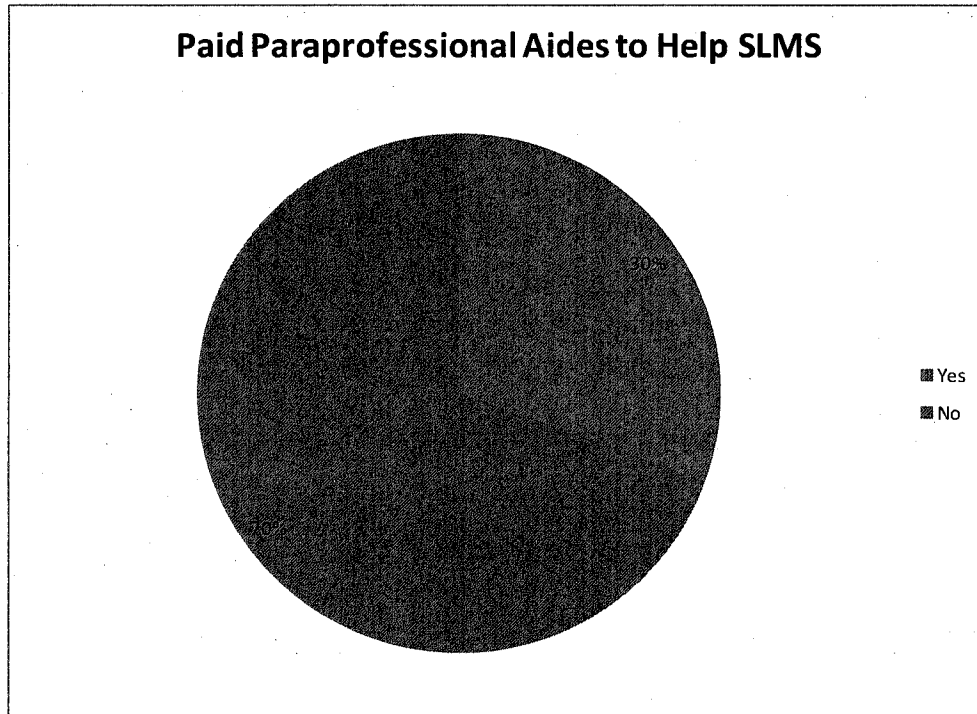
**Recent Relevant Research:**

We propose the active participation of the school library media program toward the development of STEM identities among young people by having school librarians

- (1) provide advisory information on the science-infused books and programs that young people can read—the school librarian as the information specialist;
- (2) collaborate with STEM teachers and provide intellectual and physical access that further enriches the STEM learning—the school librarian as the instructional partner; and
- (3) act as technology allies to help educators and students experiment with new media tools and on-line communities."

(Subramaniam, M.M., Ahn,J., Fleischmann, K.R & Druin, A., 2012)

# Support Staffing in School Libraries



### Findings:

70% of SLMS do not have paid paraprofessional aides to help. Compounding this is that 44% do not have volunteers to help. The concern would be the inability to fully develop and administer the information literacy program and be fully integrated into the school without clerical assistance.

### Recent Relevant Research:

- Higher library staffing levels are linked to higher reading performance for elementary, middle, and high schools (increases of almost 13 percent, over eight percent, and more than seven percent, respectively). At elementary and middle school levels, the positive relationship between better-staffed libraries and writing performance is even stronger (increases of more than 17 and 18 percent, respectively). At the high school level, better-staffed libraries help to increase their schools' average ACT scores by almost five percent over schools with more poorly-staffed libraries. (Lance, C.K., Rodney, M.J. & Hamilton-Pennell, C., 2005)

- For all students, excellence on PASS Writing and English Language Arts (ELA) standards was associated with the following characteristics of school library programs:
  - a. Having at least 1 full-time librarian and a full- or part-time library assistant
  - b. Spending \$7,500 or more annually and \$13.33 or more per student
  - c. Logging 20,000 or more checkouts and 36 or more items per student
  - d. Providing access to 40 or more e-books
  - e. Having public access computers in the school library and 18 or more (versus fewer than 6) elsewhere in the school

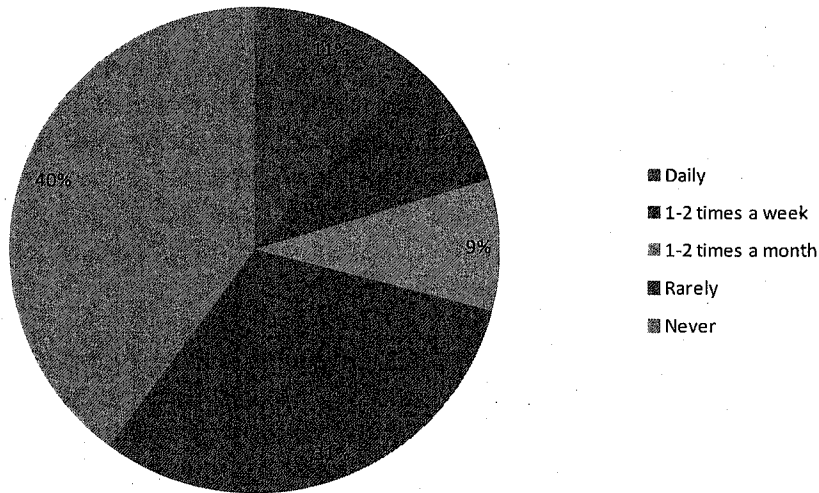
(Lance, C.K., Schwarz, B. & Rodney, M.J., 2014)

- On average, almost nine percent (8.6%) more students score Advanced in Reading where students have a full-time, certified librarian with support staff than where there they have a full-time, certified librarian alone. (Lance, C. K., & Schwarz, B., 2012)

- Our research shows that the strongest relationship between school libraries and STAR test scores occurs at the high school level, which has, as a percentage, over 3 ½ times more fully-staffed libraries (a full-time teacher librarian and a full time clerk) than the middle schools, and over 25 times more fully staffed libraries than the elementary schools.

(California Department of Education)

### Dedicated Planning Time to Collaborate with Teachers to Promote Library Resources



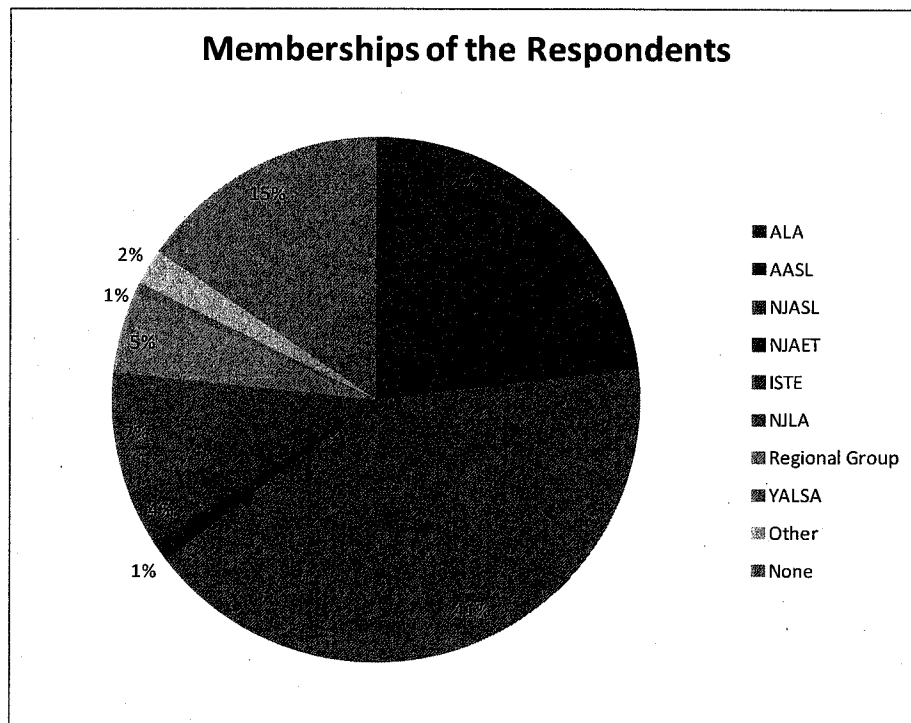
#### Findings:

71% of respondents have indicated they "never" or "rarely" have time to collaborate with teachers to promote library resources. Previously cited research has shown the importance of school library programs for literacy and reading scores.

"In addition, ESSA allows for all local subgrants to be used to provide time for teachers and school librarians to meet, plan and collaborate on comprehensive literacy instruction."  
(American Library Association, 2015)

#### Recent Relevant Research:

- Across grade levels, better-performing schools tended to be those whose principals placed a higher value on:
  - a. LMSs providing in-service opportunities to classroom teachers (proportional inc. of 29.5%)
  - b. regular meetings between themselves and their LMSs (16.9%)
  - c. having their LMSs serve on key school committees (10.2%)
  - d. collaboration between LMSs and teachers in the design and delivery of instruction (7.8%)
 (Lance, C.K., Rodney, M.J. & Russell, B.I., 2007)
  
- The study results identified key indicators within the library program that impact student academic achievement: access to high-quality library facilities and resources, and collaborative planning with professional library staff.  
(Farmer L., 2006)



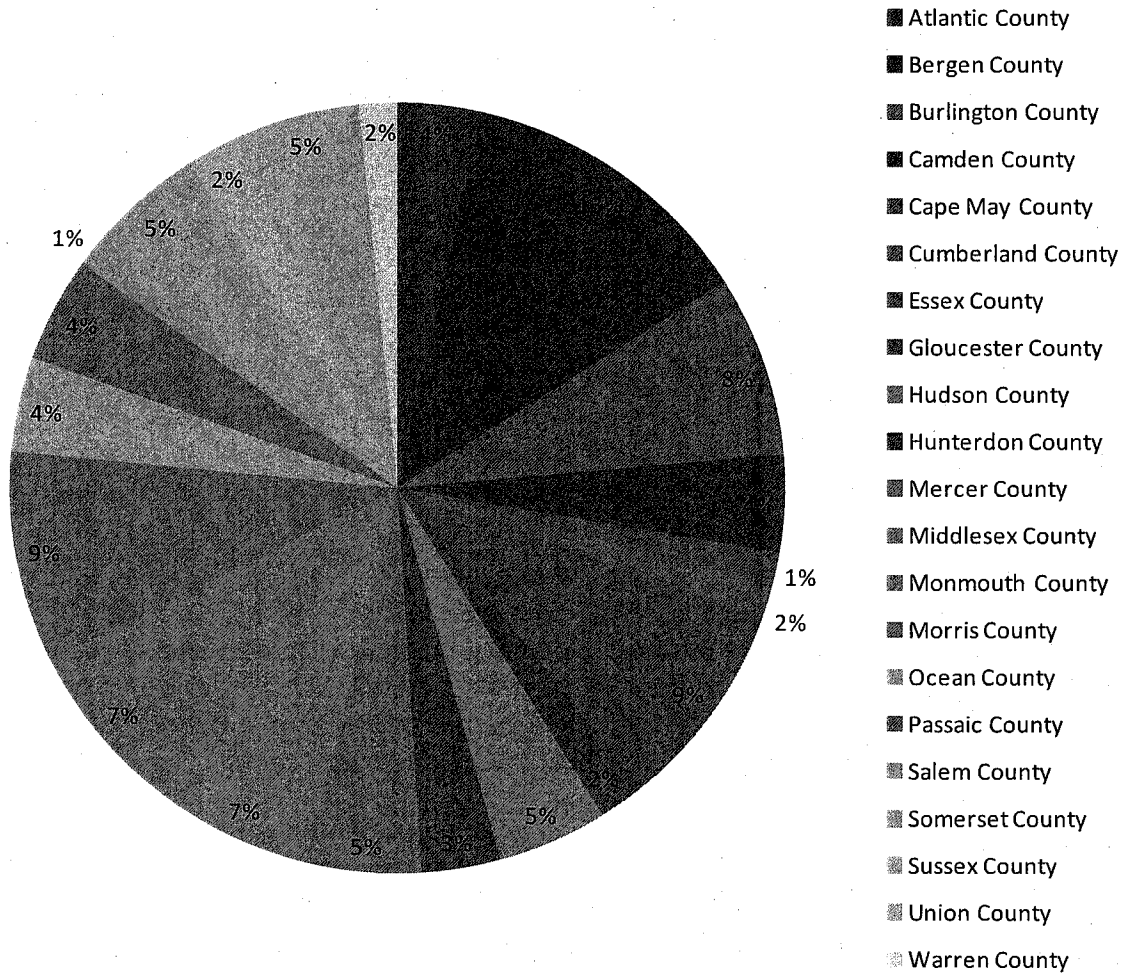
**Findings:**

Participation in organizations is a key method of communication for professionals. Unfortunately, no single organization even accounts for half of those who responded to the survey. Also, 15% of the respondents said they were not a member of any organization, which is a higher percent than any group outside of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians.

In the "Other" field respondents cited reasons for not joining, including "the district used to pay for membership but no longer does", "dues are too expensive", and "the organizations do not meet my needs."

Moving forward, in particular with a discussion of ESSA application in New Jersey, there will need to be considerable outreach through a variety of venues for communication.

## Respondents by County



### Findings:

The *Respondents by County* data reflects the population of the state, where the more populous areas have a higher number of responses than the less populated counties such as Salem, Cape May and Cumberland counties. Respondents were not asked to supply specific information about their locations beyond which county they worked in. Survey designers believed respondents would be more forthcoming if the respondents felt their anonymity was secure.

## Conclusion

The 2015/16 SLMS Census depicts a stark reduction of School Library Media Specialists at our New Jersey Schools. Contributing factors most likely include the economic downturn, changing priorities in our schools and the lack of focus for school library programs in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The 2015/16 SLMS Census also revealed particularly dire situations for school libraries in the major urban areas in New Jersey, where literacy rates are also among the lowest and school reorganizations are common. According to the *Kids Count Data Center*, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>, in 2015 79% of New Jersey fourth grade students *eligible for free/reduced school lunch* scored below proficient reading level compared to only 43% of those *not eligible for free/reduced lunch*.

The census revealed approximately only 46% of schools in the Former Abbott Districts have SLMSs. On the following page we have included 2015 PARCC results for English Language Arts for 3rd Grade and 11th Grade for the Former Abbott Districts. In the Former Abbott Districts 81.2% of 3rd Grade students and 73.2% of 11th Grade *Economically Disadvantaged Students* \* are not meeting expectations, compared to 56% and 59% statewide respectively. The differences are more extensive when you compare the *Economically Disadvantaged Students* in the Former Abbott Districts, to the *Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students* Statewide numbers. *Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students* have considerably higher rates of meeting expectations, 39.1% higher for 3rd Grade and 20.2% higher for 11th Grade than the *Economically Disadvantaged Students* in the Former Abbott Districts.

The threat to New Jersey's School Library Media Specialists continues even outside the Former Abbott Districts. In early 2016, the South Orange/Maplewood school district announced the elimination of the SLMSs at the middle school level due to budget issues.

The 2015/2016 Census also revealed that there is little clear consensus around support for school library programs from New Jersey school districts. Some districts had eliminated all elementary level SLMS, while others had eliminated their high school level SLMS, while others continue to support fully staffed school library programs. When reviewing the extensive research demonstrating the importance of school library program for literacy and information literacy, it appears to have major disadvantages to not support school library programs at any grade level.

The challenges of the SLMS and the school library continue as we observed that the majority of budgets were reduced or at best stayed flat. The vast majority of SLMSs did not have paid para-professional aides, which is particularly concerning with the increasing roles the SLMSs are responsible for. Adding to the difficulties for offering effective school library programs, 97 of the respondents reported they were responsible for more than one school.

ESSA reflects a major opportunity for New Jersey education to reinvest in school library programs. The research about the positive effect of school library programs and information literacy is extensive, only a few of which are sampled in this report. Literacy, critical thinking, and research and information literacy skills are building blocks that New Jersey students require to achieve their goals.

## 2015 PARCC Results - English Language Arts - Former Abbott Districts

Former Abbott District	PARCC ELA 3rd Grade (Economically Disadvantaged Student Data, When Available)			PARCC ELA 11th Grade (Economically Disadvantaged Student Data, When Available)		
	Median Scale Score	Not Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Median Scale Score	Not Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations
Pleasantville**	723	79.3%	20.7%	714	87.5%	12.5%
Garfield	733	65.0%	34.9%	722	81.6%	18.4%
Burlington City	710	84.3%	15.8%	729	76.2%	23.8%
Pemberton Twp.	719	81.6%	18.4%	721	66.7%	33.3%
Camden City	696	95.6%	4.3%	703	93.3%	6.8%
Gloucester City	732	64.2%	35.8%	742	56.4%	43.8%
Bridgeton	706	92.1%	7.9%	740	61.7%	38.4%
Millville	709	86.0%	14.1%	731	66.2%	33.9%
Vineland	722	78.5%	21.4%	721	82.9%	17.1%
East Orange	726	73.8%	26.2%	716	85.7%	14.1%
Irvington	711	85.8%	14.2%	725	77.9%	22.0%
Newark	713	84.8%	15.3%	725	74.0%	26.0%
Orange	710	86.5%	13.6%	724	73.6%	26.3%
Harrison	734	67.6%	32.3%	725	76.5%	23.5%
Hoboken	724	77.3%	22.7%	719	77.2%	22.8%
Jersey City	726	74.9%	25.2%	733	67.7%	32.3%
Union City	728	74.5%	25.7%	749	49.2%	50.9%
West New York	727	75.4%	24.6%	738	61.9%	38.1%
Trenton	711	87.6%	12.4%	722	75.9%	24.1%
New Brunswick	715	88.1%	11.9%	740	58.1%	41.8%
Perth Amboy	723	76.9%	23.2%	705	89.3%	10.7%
Asbury Park *	707	91.6%	8.5%	705	88.6%	11.4%
Keansburg	716	76.7%	23.3%	722	69.5%	30.4%
Long Branch	708	89.4%	10.6%	732	66.8%	33.1%
Neptune Twp.	712	87.5%	12.4%	718	82.1%	17.9%
Passaic City	712	85.7%	14.3%	721	79.3%	20.7%
Paterson	716	84.8%	15.2%	711	89.1%	10.9%
Salem City *	713	87.1%	12.9%	725	65.9%	34.0%
Elizabeth	725	75.9%	24.0%	756	33.6%	66.3%
Plainfield	714	85.2%	14.9%	708	89.5%	10.5%
Phillipsburg	730	72.1%	27.9%	739	64.9%	35.2%
<b>Former Abbott Dist Averages</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>81.2%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>73.2%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>
<b>Statewide Non-Econ Disadvantaged</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>43.0%</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>54.0%</b>	<b>47.0%</b>
<b>State Average</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>56.0%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>59.0%</b>	<b>41.0%</b>
* No Data Breakdown for Economically Disadvantaged, Utilized All Student Data						
** No Data Breakdown for Economically Disadvantaged for Grade 11, Utilized All Student Data						

(Source: New Jersey Statewide Assessment Reports: 2015 PARCC Results,  
<http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/achievement/15/parcc/>)

## Recommendations:

With the passage of the ESSA legislation and the development of the regulations in New Jersey as the determining factor of implementation, it is critical that all school library program stakeholders collaborate in short order.

## Stakeholders could include representatives from:

1. New Jersey Association of School Librarians
2. New Jersey Library Association
3. New Jersey Education Association
4. New Jersey Department of Education
5. Rutgers School of Information
6. LibraryLinkNJ - Statewide New Jersey Library Cooperative
7. College and University Section of the New Jersey Library Association
8. The New Jersey State Library

The American Library Association has prepared a document, *P.L. 114-95, The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015: Opportunities for School Librarians*, ([http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/esea/ALA-ESSA\\_Library\\_Opportunities.pdf](http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/esea/ALA-ESSA_Library_Opportunities.pdf)) which outlines the steps to be taken at the various levels of government.

## Suggested Framework for Progress:

1. Organize a meeting for the stakeholders to review the current status of New Jersey school library programs and the related research as discussed in this document.
2. Request resolutions from the New Jersey Library Association and other related organizations to state the need for well-funded and supported school libraries.
3. Host a stakeholder meeting to discuss and create action plans for the recommended *Next Steps* sections of the ALA document in relation to ESSA legislation. Ensure NJ Department of Education develops regulations for well-funded and supported school library programs in all districts.
4. Plan a statewide advocacy program about the value of New Jersey School Libraries.
5. Work with stakeholders to develop a rubric for New Jersey Highly Effective School Library Programs.

## New Jersey Specific Recommendations from John Chrastka of EveryLibrary:

1. When the DOE announces if and how an ESSA Implementation task force or work group is set up, it's key for library advocates to have a seat at the table.
2. Recommend that NJ library advocates look at Title 18A for specific places to map NJ school library programs and school librarian positions, as now authorized by ESSA, into NJ state code. What would it look like to create a "Teaching of Information Literacy" mandate as a new Chapter 40B, or a new 53A that would allow for the maintenance of school libraries and collections, specifically?
3. The DOE Rules (via <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/>) need to be reviewed for places to insert and extend specific mention of school librarians and school libraries.
4. Stakeholders need to anticipate an active, targeted, and engaged series of comments by NJ library advocates even if we influence phase one of the Rulemaking and Title 18A amendment process.
5. There is also a 'public process' for Rulemaking that stakeholders should get familiar with as a Plan B: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/petitions/>.

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# 2016 New Jersey School Library Media Specialist (SLMS) Census Results

There are approximately 20% fewer School Library Media Specialists (SLMSs) in New Jersey than there were in 2007-2008



## SLMS Math

91 School Districts have no School Library Media Specialists \*



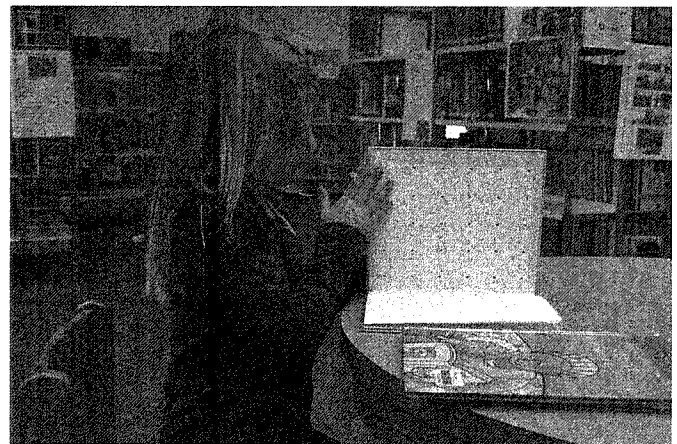
33 districts have no School Library Media Specialists at the Elementary Level



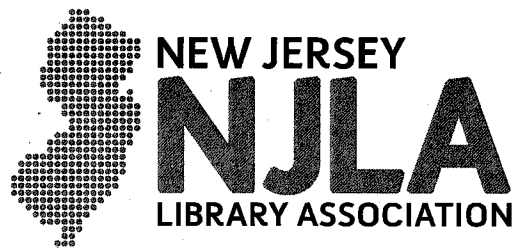
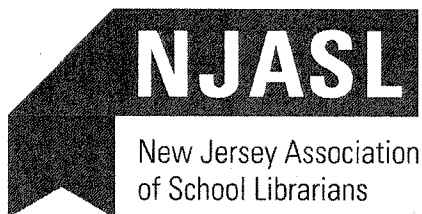
Over 280 Elementary Level schools without School Library Media Specialists

### Additional Data:

- Over 20% of High Schools have no Certified School Library Media Specialist available to students.
- Over 150 School Library Media Specialists cover more than one school. One SLMS covers 7 schools in one district.
- In the nearly 100 charter schools, there are less than 10 School Library Media Specialists.



\* does not include Charter School Districts



## Survey Questions

1. Does your school have a physical school library?

Yes

Yes, but it goes by a different name

No

2. Check those that correspond to the staffing situation in your district?

Certified School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) are retained and replaced when one leaves

Certified SLMS are not replaced when one leaves

Certified SLMS have been let go and not replaced

Certified SLMS have been replaced by non certified staff

3. How many hours a week do you work for the district?

4. What percentage of your time is dedicated to SLMS tasks?

5. Beyond traditional school library activities, what, if any, responsibilities fall to the certified SLMS in your school?

Gifted & Talented programs

STEM Education/Makerspace

Managing Technology

Covering Classroom Absences

Teaching non-library classes

Other (please specify)

6. In your own words, how would the absence of a certified SLMS impact the school, students, and/or staff?

7. Does your school or district have a Information Literacy curriculum in place?

Yes

No

8. If so, are you able to provide input and help shape that curriculum?

Yes

No

Not applicable

9. Has school library funding increased, decreased, or remained stagnant over the past several years?

Increased

Decreased

Flat funding

No funding

10. Which technology does the school library include:

PC's

iPads

Laptops

Chromebooks

Other (please specify)

11. Does your school or district provide opportunities for professional development specific to the needs of the certified SLMS?

Yes

No

12. Are you able to attend educational opportunities both within the building/district and outside (state conferences, professional association meetings, etc.)?

Yes, but within district only

Yes, within and outside of district

No

13. How many schools do you cover as a SLMS?

14. Do you have paid paraprofessionals aides to help?

Yes

No

15. Do you have volunteers to help?

Yes, community members

Yes, student volunteers

Yes, community members and student volunteers

No

16. Do you have dedicated planning time to collaborate with teachers to promote library sources?

Daily

1-2 times a week

1-2 times a month

Rarely

Never

17. What professional organizations are you a member of?

American Library Association (ALA)

American Association of School Librarians (AASL)

New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL)

Association for Educational Communications & Technology (AECT)

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)

New Jersey Library Association (NJLA)

None

Other(s) or if multiple organizations from above please list all of them here:

18. Please select the county where you work

Name

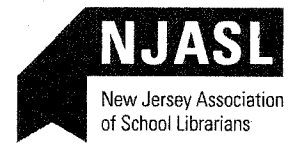
Preferred Email Address

19. If you like to be contacted about advocacy and education efforts in relations to ESSA legislation, please enter your name and preferred email address(OPTIONAL) Learn more about ESSA, <http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/legislation/essa>

20. Anything else you would like to share?



# Fact Sheet: Public Libraries and School Libraries



To meet the needs of communities across the United States, both school and public libraries are vital.

Public and school libraries help learners of all ages access information and technology to further their interests and education. These essential institutions, in neighborhoods and schools across the United States, provide complementary services in the pursuit of shared goals:

- Equity of access to information and resources
- Appreciation of reading
- Lifelong learning
- Critical use of information and technology
- Knowledgeable and informed citizens

Both public and school libraries pursue these goals by providing:

- A safe, welcoming environment
- Responsive, knowledgeable, well-trained staff
- Convenient access to the Internet
- Information in a variety of media

Although each type of library works in similar ways to achieve these goals, important differences exist. The chart below contrasts some key information about public and school libraries.

Public Library		School Library
To meet the informational, learning, and recreational needs of customers, providing an open environment for our community	<b>MISSION</b>	To prepare students to become effective, efficient, and ethical users of information and ideas, capable of lifelong learning, problem solving, knowledge creation and communication
General public, all ages - pre-schoolers to senior citizens	<b>USERS</b>	Specific, known community of youth and those who teach them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadest spectrum of community needs and interests</li> <li>• Popular interests</li> <li>• Homework/research assignments</li> <li>• Summer reading requirements</li> </ul>	<b>FOCUS OF COLLECTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for curricular and instructional needs of school</li> <li>• Personal reading interests and abilities of students</li> <li>• Professional needs of teachers and administrators</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loan a variety of materials</li> <li>• Reference Services</li> <li>• Homework/research support</li> <li>• Community networking and outreach</li> <li>• Independent selection of resources</li> <li>• Programming to meet community needs and interests of all ages</li> </ul>	<b>PRIMARY SERVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction in research skills and use of information and communication technologies</li> <li>• Curriculum planning and support</li> <li>• Guided selection of resources</li> <li>• Collaborative planning and teaching</li> <li>• Programming to promote reading for students/school community</li> </ul>
Year-round, all day, with evening, and weekend hours	<b>HOURS</b>	Generally open when school is in session, with some before and after school hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting Rooms</li> <li>• Open public access</li> </ul>	<b>FACILITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible instruction space</li> <li>• Secure access within school for student safety</li> </ul>



# Unlock *student* Potential

Support Highly Effective School Library Programs in New Jersey

## Information Literacy Education: Equity of Opportunity for NJ Students

### Definition:

Information literacy (which includes digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy) education gives all students the inquiry based research skills to access, collect, and evaluate information credibly, accurately, and ethically.

### Issue:

In an increasingly complex information age, students have access to an abundance of information - at their fingertips, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. However, we must ask ourselves, how much of this information is valid enough to be utilized for critical tasks, including academic research, health related questions, or financial decisions? According to a report from the American Association of School Librarians, students are five and a half times more likely to use Google and nearly four and a half times more likely to use Wikipedia for research than databases of peer reviewed journal articles available through school, public and academic libraries. Without proper information literacy education, students are considerably less likely to be able to effectively access valid research, consider the source of the information, seek diverse perspectives and be able to analyze potential biases.

### Opportunity:

We have the opportunity to develop an Information Literacy curriculum that teaches all students how to use an inquiry based research process to proactively seek information, analyze information for credibility, and use information ethically. Through this curriculum students will not only have access to technology, but be proficient in using these technologies. We can help students effectively and efficiently access information, as well as organize and communicate their research to others. Finally, with information literacy skills, we are preparing students to make informed decisions and become engaged citizens for the rest of their lives.

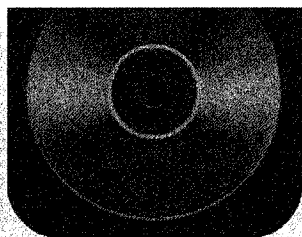
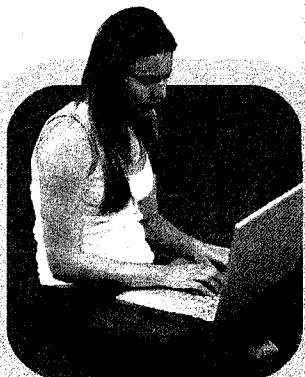
Support for Information Literacy and New Jersey school library programs can provide equity of opportunity for New Jersey students in all school districts. The ability to retrieve and analyze information in an increasingly complex information age is vital for higher education and beyond, and must be taught as a basic skill to all students.

Sign the Petition at: <http://unlockstudentpotential.org>



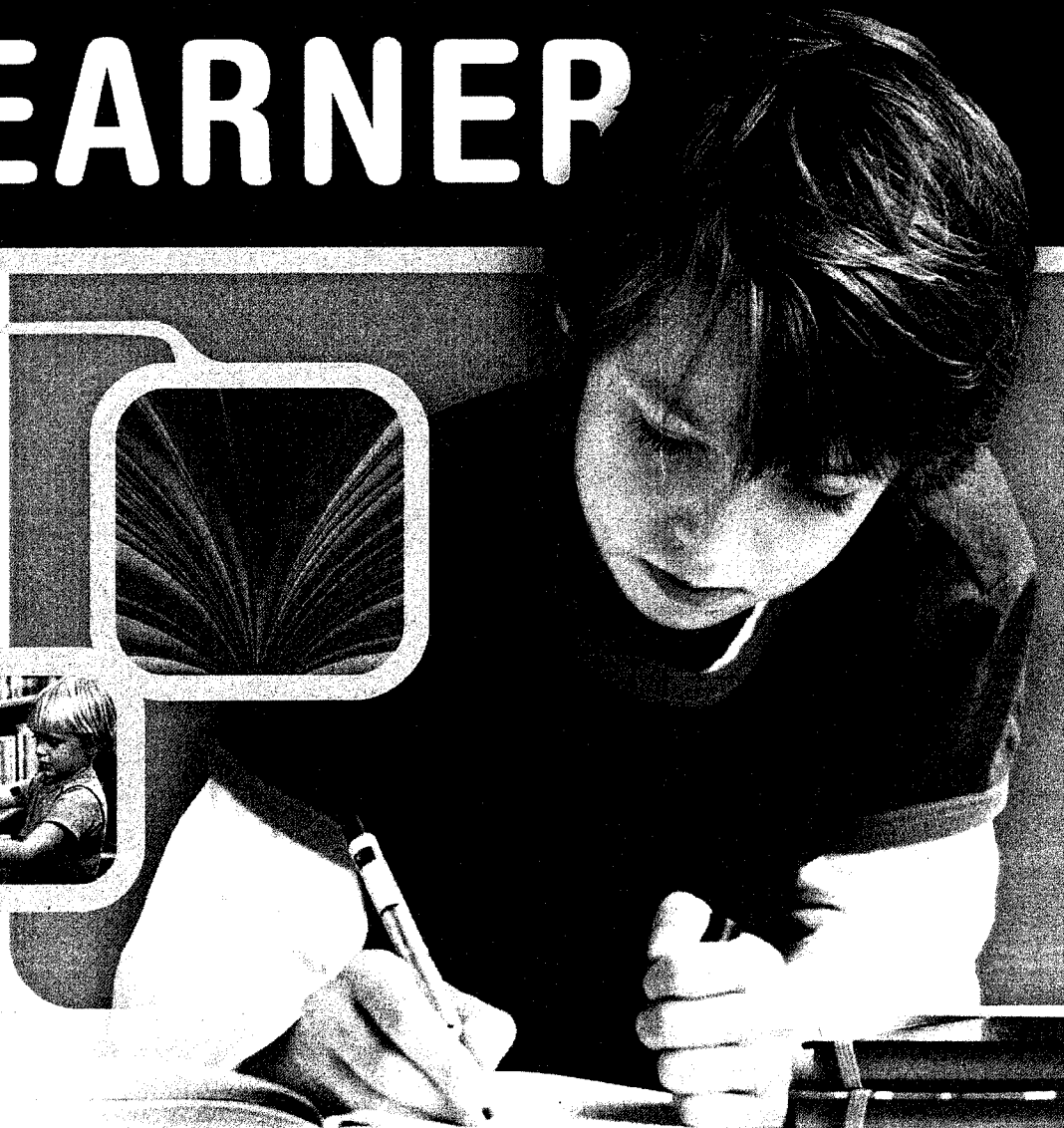
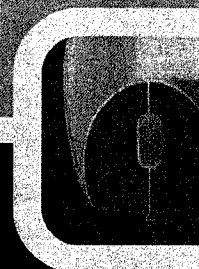
AASL

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS



STANDARDS FOR THE

# 21st-CENTURY LEARNER



# COMMON BELIEFS

## **Reading is a window to the world.**

Reading is a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment. The degree to which students can read and understand text in all formats (e.g., picture, video, print) and all contexts is a key indicator of success in school and in life. As a lifelong learning skill, reading goes beyond decoding and comprehension to interpretation and development of new understandings.

## **Inquiry provides a framework for learning.**

To become independent learners, students must gain not only the skills but also the disposition to use those skills, along with an understanding of their own responsibilities and self-assessment strategies. Combined, these four elements build a learner who can thrive in a complex information environment.

## **Ethical behavior in the use of information must be taught.**

In this increasingly global world of information, students must be taught to seek diverse perspectives, gather and use information ethically, and use social tools responsibly and safely.

## **Technology skills are crucial for future employment needs.**

Today's students need to develop information skills that will enable them to use technology as an important tool for learning, both now and in the future.

## **Equitable access is a key component for education.**

All children deserve equitable access to books and reading, to information, and to information technology in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

**The definition of information literacy has become more complex as resources and technologies have changed.**

Information literacy has progressed from the simple definition of using reference resources to find information. Multiple literacies, including digital, visual, textual, and technological, have now joined information literacy as crucial skills for this century.

**The continuing expansion of information demands that all individuals acquire the thinking skills that will enable them to learn on their own.**

The amount of information available to our learners necessitates that each individual acquire the skills to select, evaluate, and use information appropriately and effectively.

**Learning has a social context.**

Learning is enhanced by opportunities to share and learn with others. Students need to develop skills in sharing knowledge and learning with others, both in face-to-face situations and through technology.

**School libraries are essential to the development of learning skills.**

School libraries provide equitable physical and intellectual access to the resources and tools required for learning in a warm, stimulating, and safe environment. School librarians collaborate with others to provide instruction, learning strategies, and practice in using the essential learning skills needed in the 21st century.



**LEARNERS USE SKILLS, RESOURCES, & TOOLS TO:**

1

2

3

4

# 1

## Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.

### 1.1 Skills

- 1.1.1 Follow an inquiry-based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real-world connection for using this process in own life.
- 1.1.2 Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning.
- 1.1.3 Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding.
- 1.1.4 Find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.
- 1.1.5 Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.
- 1.1.6 Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.

- 1.1.7 Make sense of information gathered from diverse sources by identifying misconceptions, main and supporting ideas, conflicting information, and point of view or bias.
- 1.1.8 Demonstrate mastery of technology tools for accessing information and pursuing inquiry.
- 1.1.9 Collaborate with others to broaden and deepen understanding.



### 1.2 Dispositions in Action

- 1.2.1 Display initiative and engagement by posing questions and investigating the answers beyond the collection of superficial facts.

- 1.2.2 Demonstrate confidence and self-direction by making independent choices in the selection of resources and information.
- 1.2.3 Demonstrate creativity by using multiple resources and formats.
- 1.2.4 Maintain a critical stance by questioning the validity and accuracy of all information.
- 1.2.5 Demonstrate adaptability by changing the inquiry focus, questions, resources, or strategies when necessary to achieve success.
- 1.2.6 Display emotional resilience by persisting in information searching despite challenges.
- 1.2.7 Display persistence by continuing to pursue information to gain a broad perspective.



### 1.3 Responsibilities

- 1.3.1 Respect copyright/intellectual property rights of creators and producers.
- 1.3.2 Seek divergent perspectives during information gathering and assessment.
- 1.3.3 Follow ethical and legal guidelines in gathering and using information.
- 1.3.4 Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community.
- 1.3.5 Use information technology responsibly.

### 1.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

- 1.4.1 Monitor own information-seeking processes for effectiveness and progress, and adapt as necessary.
- 1.4.2 Use interaction with and feedback from teachers and peers to guide own inquiry process.
- 1.4.3 Monitor gathered information, and assess for gaps or weaknesses.
- 1.4.4 Seek appropriate help when it is needed.

# 2

## Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.

### 2.1 Skills

- 2.1.1 Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical-thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge.
- 2.1.2 Organize knowledge so that it is useful.
- 2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real-world situations, and further investigations.
- 2.1.4 Use technology and other information tools to analyze and organize information.
- 2.1.5 Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.

- 2.1.6 Use the writing process, media and visual literacy, and technology skills to create products that express new understandings.

### 2.2 Dispositions in Action

- 2.2.1 Demonstrate flexibility in the use of resources by adapting information strategies to each specific resource and by seeking additional resources when clear conclusions cannot be drawn.

- 2.2.2 Use both divergent and convergent thinking to formulate alternative conclusions and test them against the evidence.
- 2.2.3 Employ a critical stance in drawing conclusions by demonstrating that the pattern of evidence leads to a decision or conclusion.
- 2.2.4 Demonstrate personal productivity by completing products to express learning.

### 2.3 Responsibilities

- 2.3.1 Connect understanding to the real world.
- 2.3.2 Consider diverse and global perspectives in drawing conclusions.
- 2.3.3 Use valid information and reasoned conclusions to make ethical decisions.

### 2.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

- 2.4.1 Determine how to act on information (accept, reject, modify).
- 2.4.2 Reflect on systematic process, and assess for completeness of investigation.
- 2.4.3 Recognize new knowledge and understanding.
- 2.4.4 Develop directions for future investigations.



# 3

## Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.

### 3.1 Skills

- 3.1.1 Conclude an inquiry-based research process by sharing new understandings and reflecting on the learning.
- 3.1.2 Participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners.

3.1.3 Use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively.

3.1.4 Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.

3.1.5 Connect learning to community issues.

3.1.6 Use information and technology ethically and responsibly.

### 3.2 Dispositions in Action

3.2.1 Demonstrate leadership and confidence by presenting ideas to others in both formal and informal situations.

3.2.2 Show social responsibility by participating actively with others in learning situations and by contributing questions and ideas during group discussions.

3.2.3 Demonstrate teamwork by working productively with others.

### 3.3 Responsibilities

3.3.1 Solicit and respect diverse perspectives while searching for information, collaborating with others, and participating as a member of the community.

3.3.2 Respect the differing interests and experiences of others, and seek a variety of viewpoints.

3.3.3 Use knowledge and information skills and dispositions to engage in public conversation and debate around issues of common concern.

3.3.4 Create products that apply to authentic, real-world contexts.

3.3.5 Contribute to the exchange of ideas within and beyond the learning community.

3.3.6 Use information and knowledge in the service of democratic values.

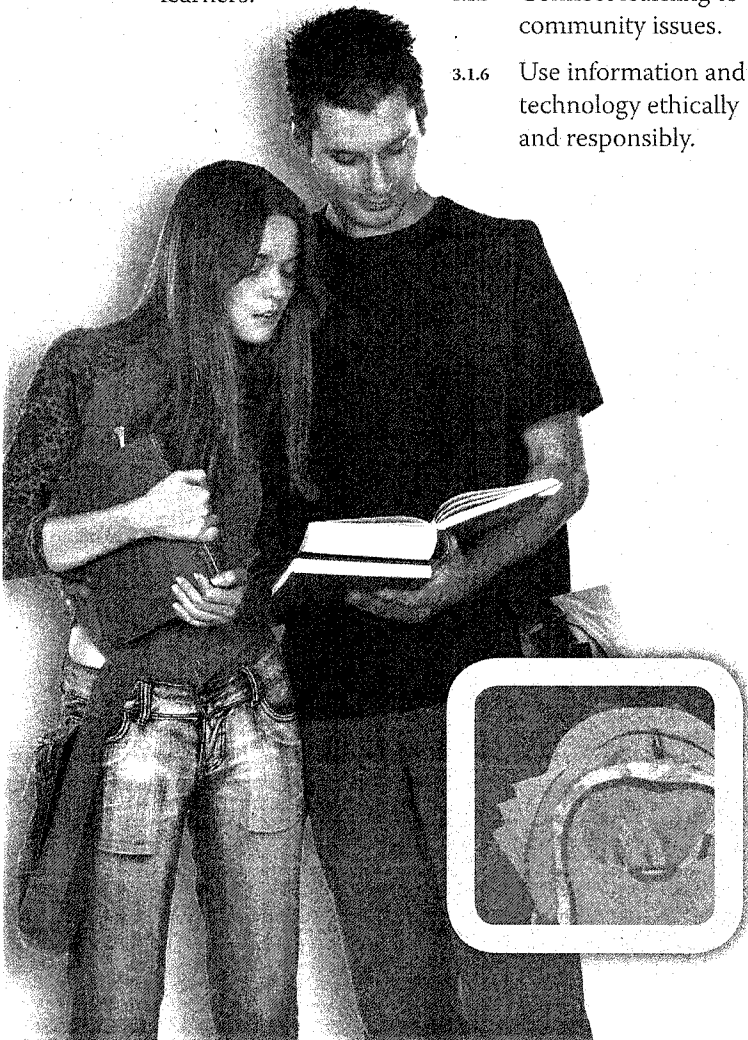
3.3.7 Respect the principles of intellectual freedom.

### 3.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

3.4.1 Assess the processes by which learning was achieved in order to revise strategies and learn more effectively in the future.

3.4.2 Assess the quality and effectiveness of the learning product.

3.4.3 Assess own ability to work with others in a group setting by evaluating varied roles, leadership, and demonstrations of respect for other viewpoints.



# 4

## Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

### 4.1 Skills

- 4.1.1 Read, view, and listen for pleasure and personal growth.
- 4.1.2 Read widely and fluently to make connections with self, the world, and previous reading.
- 4.1.3 Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.
- 4.1.4 Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.
- 4.1.5 Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experience.
- 4.1.6 Organize personal knowledge in a way that can be called upon easily.
- 4.1.7 Use social networks and information tools to gather and share information.
- 4.1.8 Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.



### 4.2 Dispositions in Action

- 4.2.1 Display curiosity by pursuing interests through multiple resources.
- 4.2.2 Demonstrate motivation by seeking information to answer personal questions and interests, trying a variety of formats and genres, and displaying a willingness to go beyond academic requirements.
- 4.2.3 Maintain openness to new ideas by considering divergent opinions, changing opinions or conclusions when evidence supports the change, and seeking information about new ideas encountered through academic or personal experiences.

- 4.2.4 Show an appreciation for literature by electing to read for pleasure and expressing an interest in various literary genres.

### 4.3 Responsibilities

- 4.3.1 Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.
- 4.3.2 Recognize that resources are created for a variety of purposes.
- 4.3.3 Seek opportunities for pursuing personal and aesthetic growth.
- 4.3.4 Practice safe and ethical behaviors in personal electronic communication and interaction.



### 4.4 Self-Assessment Strategies

- 4.4.1 Identify own areas of interest.
- 4.4.2 Recognize the limits of own personal knowledge.



- 4.4.3 Recognize how to focus efforts in personal learning.
- 4.4.4 Interpret new information based on cultural and social context.
- 4.4.5 Develop personal criteria for gauging how effectively own ideas are expressed.
- 4.4.6 Evaluate own ability to select resources that are engaging and appropriate for personal interests and needs.

American Association of School Librarians  
50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611

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# 21st CENTURY LEARNERS

## Skills

Key abilities needed for understanding, learning, thinking, and mastering subjects.

### Key question

*Does the student have the right proficiencies to explore a topic or subject further?*

## Dispositions in Action

Ongoing beliefs and attitudes that guide thinking and intellectual behavior that can be measured through actions taken.

### Key question

*Is the student disposed to higher-level thinking and actively engaged in critical thinking to gain and share knowledge?*

## Responsibilities

Common behaviors used by independent learners in researching, investigating, and problem solving.

### Key question

*Is the student aware that the foundational traits for 21st-century learning require self-accountability that extends beyond skills and dispositions?*

## Self-Assessment Strategies

Reflections on one's own learning to determine that the skills, dispositions, and responsibilities are effective.

### Key question

*Can the student recognize personal strengths and weaknesses over time and become a stronger, more independent learner?*

# Rules and Regulations From Other States



Joint Committee on the Public Schools  
October 11, 2016



# Public School Library Programs Maryland Administrative Code

## TITLE 13A. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

### SUBTITLE 05. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, CHAPTER 04. PROGRAMS FOR LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES

#### COMAR 13A.05.04.01 (2016)

##### .01 Public School Library Programs.

A. Each local school system shall establish in each school a unified school library media program for the use of all students which shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) An organized and centrally managed collection of instructional materials and technologies;
- (2) Instruction emphasizing information literacy skills integrated into all content areas;
- (3) Appropriate materials and technologies to support the instructional programs of the local school systems; and
- (4) Certified school library media personnel and support staff.

B. The school library media program shall be integrated with the local school system's instructional programs by having certified school library media personnel:

- (1) Participate in the development and implementation of all educational programs;
- (2) Instruct students, in cooperation with other teachers, in information literacy skills including reading, research, and critical thinking skills which have been integrated into other areas of the curriculum.

C. Each local school system shall develop and implement a plan for its school library media program which shall include the following goals and subgoals to:

(1) Provide direct instruction to help students become information literate through the achievement of the following learner outcomes:

- (a) Locating and using information resources including technologies,
- (b) Reviewing, evaluating, and selecting materials for an identified information need,
- (c) Learning and applying reading, research, and critical thinking skills to organize information,
- (d) Comprehending content in various types of media,
- (e) Retrieving and managing information,
- (f) Demonstrating an appreciation of literature and other creative expressions as sources of information and recreation,
- (g) Creating materials in various formats,
- (h) Applying ethical behavior to the use of information;

(2) Support instruction by:

- (a) Collaborating with school and system level staff as well as with other individuals and organizations,
- (b) Participating in curriculum development implementation and evaluation,
- (c) Providing resources to support instruction,
- (d) Providing professional development services;

(3) Provide services which include but are not limited to:

- (a) Evaluating and selecting instructional materials and technologies in accordance with local board of education policies,
- (b) Implementing procedures for the acquisition, organization, circulation, and removal of instructional materials and technologies,
- (c) Providing reference and information assistance for specific requests,
- (d) Promoting instructional materials, technologies, and services to students, staff, parents, and the community,
- (e) Providing access to people and information outside the school community;

(4) Provide personnel who include:

- (a) Certified school library media personnel with technical and clerical assistance at the school building level to organize and operate a school library media program,
- (b) Central office leadership and technical and clerical assistance to support and coordinate the school library media program;

(5) Make accessible a comprehensive and organized collection of selected instructional materials and technologies according to policies established by local boards of education;

(6) Provide an adequate physical facility which is accessible and conducive to learning.

D. Each local school system shall have school library media program implementation documents which are reviewed and updated on a periodic basis. These documents shall include:

- (1) Selection and removal policies and procedures;
- (2) Curriculum and instruction documents for teaching information literacy skills including reading, research, and critical thinking skills;
- (3) Handbooks or manuals of operational procedures.

E. Each local school system superintendent shall certify to the State Superintendent that the elementary and secondary school library media programs meet or are working towards meeting the requirements set forth in these regulations, according to the periodic review schedule established by the State Department of Education.

F. The State Department of Education shall implement a procedure for conducting periodic reviews of local school system school library media programs in order to identify program and professional development needs that exist in library media programs. The Department shall submit a copy of the results of its periodic review to the appropriate local school system superintendent.

# CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

## Information Literacy

### Administrative Rules of Montana

#### **TITLE 10: EDUCATION**

#### **CHAPTER 54: CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

#### **SUB-CHAPTER 65: INFORMATION LITERACY/LIBRARY MEDIA CONTENT STANDARDS**

#### **MONT. ADMIN. R. 10.54.6510 (2016)**

#### **10.54.6510 INFORMATION LITERACY/LIBRARY MEDIA CONTENT STANDARD 1**

(1) To satisfy the requirements of information literacy/information literacy/library media content standard 1, a student must identify the task and determine the resources needed.

(History: 20-2-114, MCA; IMP: 20-2-121, 20-3-106, 20-7-101, MCA; NEW, 2000 MAR p. 2685, Eff. 10/6/00; AMD, 2008 MAR p. 1693, Eff. 8/15/08.)

#### **MONT. ADMIN. R. 10.54.6511 (2016)**

#### **10.54.6511 BENCHMARK FOR INFORMATION LITERACY/LIBRARY MEDIA CONTENT STANDARD 1 FOR END OF GRADE 4**

(1) The benchmark for information literacy/information literacy/library media content standard 1 for a student at the end of grade 4 is the ability to:

- (a) define the problem;
- (b) identify types of information needed; and
- (c) choose from a range of resources.

(History: 20-2-114, MCA; IMP: 20-2-121, 20-3-106, 20-7-101, MCA; NEW, 2000 MAR p. 2685, Eff. 10/6/00; AMD, 2008 MAR p. 1693, Eff. 8/15/08.)

#### **MONT. ADMIN. R. 10.54.6512 (2016)**

#### **10.54.6512 BENCHMARK FOR INFORMATION LITERACY/LIBRARY MEDIA CONTENT STANDARD 1 FOR END OF GRADE 8**

(1) The benchmark for information literacy/library media content standard 1 for a student at the end of grade 8 is the ability to:

- (a) analyze the parts of the problem to be solved;
- (b) identify information resources needed; and
- (c) evaluate and select appropriate resources.

(History: 20-2-114, MCA; IMP: 20-2-121, 20-3-106, 20-7-101, MCA; NEW, 2000 MAR p. 2685, Eff. 10/6/00; AMD, 2008 MAR p. 1693, Eff. 8/15/08.)

**MONT. ADMIN. R. 10.54.6513 (2016)**

**10.54.6513 BENCHMARK FOR INFORMATION LITERACY/LIBRARY MEDIA CONTENT STANDARD 1 UPON GRADUATION**

(1) The benchmark for information literacy/library media content standard 1 for a student upon graduation is the ability to:

- (a) evaluate the purpose and scope of the problem;
- (b) determine the nature and extent of information needed; and
- (c) evaluate and select appropriate resources.

(History: 20-2-114, MCA; IMP: 20-2-121, 20-3-106, 20-7-101, MCA; NEW, 2000 MAR p. 2685, Eff. 10/6/00; AMD, 2008 MAR p. 1693, Eff. 8/15/08.)

**TITLE 10: EDUCATION**

**CHAPTER 54: CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

**SUB-CHAPTER 66: INFORMATION LITERACY/LIBRARY MEDIA PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS**

**MONT. ADMIN. R. 10.54.6611 (2016)**

**10.54.6611 UPON GRADUATION PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS FOR CONTENT STANDARD 1 AT THE NEARING PROFICIENT LEVEL**

(1) A graduating student at the nearing proficient level in information literacy/library media demonstrates partial mastery of the prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficiency in information literacy/library media performance. He/she, with guidance:

- (a) determines the parameters of the problem;
- (b) formulates questions to guide problem solving;
- (c) brainstorms search terms to guide problem solving;
- (d) narrows or broadens the topic to a manageable focus;
- (e) decides the types and the amount of information needed to solve the problem;
- (f) identifies possible resources;
- (g) evaluates resources; and
- (h) selects resources to solve the problem.

(History: 20-2-114, MCA; IMP: 20-2-121, 20-3-106, 20-7-101, MCA; NEW, 2008 MAR p. 1693, Eff. 8/15/08.)

# INSTRUCTION: PREKINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE

## Information Literacy

### Nevada Administrative Code

#### CHAPTER 389. EXAMINATIONS, COURSES, STANDARDS AND DIPLOMAS PREKINDERGARTEN, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION: PREKINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE

##### NAC 389.2433 (2016)

##### 389.2433 Second grade: Information literacy. (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520)

By the end of the second grade, pupils must know and be able to do everything required in the previous grades to be information literate. Instruction in the second grade, regardless of whether it takes place in the library or the classroom, must be designed so that pupils meet the following standards for information literacy by the completion of the second grade:

1. For the areas of understanding the process of obtaining information in such a manner as to access information efficiently and effectively, evaluate information critically and competently, and use information accurately and creatively, a pupil must demonstrate the ability to:
  - (a) Recognize the need for information by giving examples of situations in which information beyond the pupil's own knowledge is needed to resolve an information problem or question.
  - (b) Recognize that accurate and comprehensive information is the basis for intelligent decision making by selecting examples of accurate and inaccurate information and complete and incomplete information.
  - (c) Formulate questions by stating at least one broad question that will help in finding the needed information.
  - (d) Identify a variety of potential sources of information by listing several sources of information and explaining the kind of information found in each source.
  - (e) Develop and use successful strategies for locating information by listing some ideas for identifying and finding the needed information.
  - (f) Distinguish among fact, point of view and opinion by recognizing those concepts in various sources and products of information.
  - (g) Select information appropriate to a specific problem or question by recognizing information that is applicable to that problem or question.
  - (h) Organize information for practical application by describing several ways to organize information, including chronologically, topically and hierarchically.
  - (i) Integrate new information into a pupil's existing knowledge by recognizing and understanding new information and ideas.
  - (j) Apply information using critical thinking and problem-solving skills by identifying information that meets a particular need for information.
  - (k) Produce and communicate information and ideas in appropriate formats by naming a variety of different formats for presenting different kinds of information.
  
2. For the areas of pursuing information related to personal interests, appreciating literature and other creative expressions of information, and striving for excellence in seeking information and generating knowledge, a pupil must demonstrate the ability to:
  - (a) Seek information relating to various dimensions of personal well-being, such as vocational interests, involvement in community, matters concerning health and recreational pursuits by:
    - (1) Occasionally seeking information about topics of personal interest or aspects of well-being; and
    - (2) Generally expanding beyond the pupil's own knowledge to seek information concerning topics of personal interest or aspects of well-being.

(b) Design, develop and evaluate information and conclusions based upon that information relating to topics of personal interest to the pupil by organizing and presenting basic information gathered by the pupil relating to those topics of personal interest.

(c) Function as a competent and self-motivated reader by explaining and discussing various examples of fiction.

(d) Derive meaning from information presented creatively in a variety of formats by explaining and discussing films, plays and other creative presentations of information.

(e) Develop creative methods of conveying information in a variety of formats by expressing information and ideas creatively in simple formats.

(f) Assess the quality of the process and outcome of the pupil's efforts to obtain information by retracing the steps the pupil took to find information and explaining which were most useful for resolving a problem or question concerning the information.

3. For the areas of recognizing the importance of information to a democratic society, practicing ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology, and participating effectively in groups to pursue and generate information, a pupil must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) Seek information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines and cultures by identifying several appropriate sources for resolving an information problem or question.

(b) Respect the principle of equitable access to information by explaining why it is important for all pupils to have access to information, information sources and information technology.

(c) Respect the principles of intellectual freedom by defining or giving examples of "intellectual freedom."

(d) Respect intellectual property rights by giving examples of what it means to respect intellectual property rights.

(e) Use information technology responsibly by stating the main points of the policy of the pupil's school regarding the use of computing and communications hardware, software and networks.

(f) Share and contribute knowledge and information with other pupils in groups by seeking and communicating specific facts, opinions and points of view related to information problems or questions.

(g) Respect the ideas and backgrounds of other pupils and acknowledge the contributions of other pupils by describing their ideas accurately and completely.

(h) Collaborate with others, both in person and through technologies, to identify information problems and to seek solutions by:

(1) Expressing the pupil's own ideas appropriately and effectively, in person and remotely through technologies, while working in groups to identify and resolve information problems;

(2) Participating actively in discussions with others, in person and remotely through technologies, to analyze information problems and suggest solutions; and

(3) Participating actively in discussions with others, in person and remotely through technologies, to devise solutions to information problems that integrate the information and ideas of group members.

(Added to NAC by Bd. of Education by R071-01, eff. 11-1-2001; A by R013-03, 10-30-2003)

# INSTRUCTION: SIXTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADES

## Information Literacy

### Nevada Administrative Code

#### CHAPTER 389. EXAMINATIONS, COURSES, STANDARDS AND DIPLOMAS PREKINDERGARTEN, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION: SIXTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADES

##### NAC 389.299 (2016)

##### **389.299 Sixth grade: Information literacy. (NRS 385.080, 385.110, 389.0185, 389.520)**

By the end of the 6th grade, and continuing through the 12th grade, pupils must know and be able to do everything required in the previous grades to be information literate. Instruction in the 6th grade, regardless of whether it takes place in the library or the classroom, must be designed so that pupils meet the following standards for information literacy by the completion of the 6th grade and continuing through the completion of the 12th grade:

1. For the areas of understanding the process of obtaining information in such a manner as to access information efficiently and effectively, evaluate information critically and competently, and use information accurately and creatively, a pupil must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) Recognize the need for information by:

- (1) Giving examples of situations in which additional information beyond the pupil's own knowledge is needed to resolve an information problem or question;
- (2) Determining whether additional information beyond the pupil's own knowledge is needed to resolve an information problem or question; and
- (3) Assessing whether a range of information problems or questions can be resolved based on the pupil's own knowledge or whether additional information is required.

(b) Recognize that accurate and comprehensive information is the basis for intelligent decision making by:

- (1) Selecting examples of accurate and inaccurate information and of complete and incomplete information;
- (2) Explaining the difference between accurate and inaccurate information and between complete and incomplete information; and
- (3) Judging the quality of decisions in terms of the accuracy and completeness of the information on which they are based.

(c) Formulate questions by:

- (1) Stating at least one broad question that will help in finding the needed information;
- (2) Stating both broad and specific questions that will help in finding the needed information; and
- (3) Revising, adding and deleting questions as the needs for information change.

(d) Identify a variety of potential sources of information by:

- (1) Listing several sources of information and explaining the kind of information found in each source;
- (2) Brainstorming a range of sources of information that will meet a need for information; and
- (3) Using a full range of information sources to meet different needs for information.

(e) Develop and use successful strategies for locating information by:

- (1) Listing some ideas for identifying and finding information that is needed;
- (2) Explaining and applying a plan to access information that is needed; and
- (3) Formulating and revising plans for accessing information for a range of needs and situations.

- (f) Determine accuracy, relevance and comprehensiveness by:
- (1) Defining the terms "accuracy," "relevance" and "comprehensiveness" and giving examples of their application;
  - (2) Comparing and contrasting sources related to a topic; and
  - (3) Judging the accuracy, relevance and comprehensiveness of sources of information in relation to a range of topics and information problems.
- (g) Distinguish among fact, point of view and opinion by:
- (1) Recognizing those concepts in various sources and products of information;
  - (2) Explaining how each concept is different from the others; and
  - (3) Assembling them, as appropriate, in the pupil's own work.
- (h) Identify inaccurate and misleading information by:
- (1) Recognizing inaccurate and misleading information in sources and products of information;
  - (2) Explaining how such information can lead to faulty conclusions; and
  - (3) Judging, and supporting judgments of, the degree of inaccuracy, bias or misleading information in sources and products of information.
- (i) Select information appropriate to a specific problem or question by:
- (1) Recognizing information that is applicable to that problem or question;
  - (2) Analyzing information from a variety of sources to determine its applicability to that problem or question;
- and
- (3) Integrating accurate, relevant and comprehensive information to resolve that problem or question.
- (j) Organize information for practical application by:
- (1) Describing several ways to organize information, including chronologically, topically and hierarchically;
  - (2) Organizing the information in different ways according to the specific information problem or question;
- and
- (3) Organizing a product of information that presents different types of information in the most effective ways.
- (k) Integrate new information into the pupil's existing knowledge by:
- (1) Recognizing and understanding new information and ideas;
  - (2) Combining what is already known about a topic with new information and drawing conclusions using the combined information; and
  - (3) Integrating the pupil's existing knowledge with information from a variety of sources to create new meaning.
- (l) Apply information in critical thinking and problem solving by:
- (1) Identifying information that meets a particular need for information;
  - (2) Using information from a variety of sources to resolve an information problem or question; and
  - (3) Devising creative approaches to use information to resolve information problems or questions.
- (m) Produce and communicate information and ideas in appropriate formats by:
- (1) Naming a variety of different formats for presenting different kinds of information;
  - (2) Choosing an appropriate format for presenting information based on the information itself, the audience, and the nature of the information problem or question; and
  - (3) Choosing the most appropriate format for presenting information and justifying that choice.

2. For the areas of pursuing information related to personal interests, appreciating literature and other creative expressions of information, and striving for excellence in seeking information and generating knowledge, a pupil must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) Seek information relating to various dimensions of personal well-being, such as vocational interests, involvement in community, matters concerning health and recreational pursuits by:

- (1) Occasionally seeking information about topics of personal interest or aspects of well-being;
- (2) Generally expanding beyond the pupil's own knowledge to seek information concerning topics of personal interest or aspects of well-being; and
- (3) Exploring a range of sources to obtain information concerning topics of personal interest or aspects of well-being.

(b) Design, develop and evaluate information and conclusions based upon that information relating to topics of personal interest to the pupil by:

- (1) Organizing and presenting basic information gathered by the pupil relating to those topics of personal interest;
- (2) Creating solutions and methods of conveying information concerning those topics of personal interest; and
- (3) Judging the quality of the pupil's own solutions and methods of conveying information concerning those topics of personal interest.

(c) Function as a competent and self-motivated reader by:

- (1) Explaining and discussing various examples of fiction;
- (2) Choosing fiction and other types of literature to read and analyze; and
- (3) Reading avidly and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of literature read.

(d) Derive meaning from information presented creatively in a variety of formats by explaining and discussing films, plays and other creative presentations of information.

(e) Develop creative methods of conveying information in a variety of formats by:

- (1) Expressing information and ideas creatively in simple formats; and
- (2) Expressing information and ideas creatively in ways that combine several formats.

(f) Assess the quality of the process and outcome of the pupil's efforts to obtain information by:

- (1) Retracing the steps the pupil took to obtain information and explaining which were most useful for resolving a problem or question concerning the information;
- (2) Assessing each step the pupil took to obtain information with respect to a specific problem concerning the information and assessing the result; and
- (3) Evaluating the process of obtaining information at each step as it occurs and making such adjustments as are necessary to improve both the process and the outcome.

(g) Devise basic strategies for revising, improving and updating self-generated knowledge by:

- (1) Explaining those strategies;
- (2) Selecting and applying such strategies as are appropriate; and
- (3) Recognizing gaps in the pupil's own knowledge and applying appropriate strategies for filling those gaps.

3. For the areas of recognizing the importance of information to a democratic society, practicing ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology, and participating effectively in groups to pursue and generate information, a pupil must demonstrate the ability to:

(a) Seek information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines and cultures by:

- (1) Identifying several appropriate sources for resolving an information problem or question;
- (2) Using a variety of sources covering diverse perspectives to resolve an information problem or question; and
- (3) Seeking sources representing a variety of contexts, disciplines and cultures and evaluating their usefulness for resolving an information problem or question.

(b) Respect the principle of equitable access to information by:

(1) Explaining why it is important for all pupils to have access to information, information sources and information technology;

(2) Using information, information sources and information technology efficiently so that they are available for other pupils to use; and

(3) Proposing strategies for ensuring that pupils and others have equitable access to information, information sources and information technology.

(c) Respect the principles of intellectual freedom by:

(1) Defining or giving examples of "intellectual freedom";

(2) Analyzing a situation in terms of its relationship to intellectual freedom, including, without limitation, issuing a personal opinion of a book or video in the library media center; and

(3) Predicting what might happen if the principles of intellectual freedom were ignored in the pupil's own community.

(d) Respect intellectual property rights by:

(1) Giving examples of what it means to respect intellectual property rights;

(2) Analyzing situations to determine the steps necessary to respect intellectual property rights, including, without limitation, the creation of a term paper or the development of a multimedia product; and

(3) Avoiding plagiarism, citing sources properly and making copies and incorporating text and images only with appropriate approval when creating products of information.

(e) Use information technology responsibly by:

(1) Stating the main points of the policy of the pupil's school regarding the use of computing and communications hardware, software and networks;

(2) Locating appropriate information efficiently with the school's computing and communications hardware, software and networks; and

(3) Following all guidelines and policies of the school relating to the use of computing and communications hardware, software and networks when resolving information problems or questions.

(f) Share and contribute knowledge and information with other pupils in groups by:

(1) Seeking and communicating specific facts, opinions and points of view related to information problems or questions;

(2) Using information sources and selecting information and ideas that will contribute directly to the success of group projects; and

(3) Integrating the pupil's own knowledge and information with that of other pupils in the group.

(g) Respect the ideas and backgrounds of other pupils and acknowledge their contributions by:

(1) Describing the ideas of other pupils accurately and completely;

(2) Encouraging consideration of ideas and information from all group members; and

(3) Helping to organize and integrate the contributions of all the members of the group into products of information.

(h) Collaborate with others, both in person and through technologies, to identify information problems and to seek a solution by:

(1) Expressing the pupil's own ideas appropriately and effectively, in person and remotely through technologies, while working in groups to identify and resolve information problems;

(2) Participating actively in discussions with others, in person and remotely through technologies, to analyze information problems and suggest solutions; and

(3) Participating actively in discussions with others, in person and remotely through technologies, to devise solutions that integrate the information and ideas of group members.

(i) Collaborate with others, both in person and through technologies, to design, develop and evaluate products and solutions of information by:

(1) Working with others, in person and remotely through technologies, to create and evaluate simple products of information;

(2) Working with others, in person and remotely through technologies, to create and evaluate products of information that communicate complex information and ideas; and

(3) Working with others, in person and remotely through technologies, to create and evaluate complex products of information that integrate information in a variety of formats.

(Added to NAC by Bd. of Education by R071-01, eff. 11-1-2001; A by R013-03, 10-30-2003)

# Priority Academic Student Skills: Information Literacy

## Oklahoma Administrative Code

### TITLE 210. STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### CHAPTER 15. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION, SUBCHAPTER 3. PRIORITY ACADEMIC STUDENT SKILLS, PART 21. INFORMATION LITERACY

#### O.A.C. § 210:15-3-172 (2015)

#### 210:15-3-172 Overview

(a) Information literacy is no longer a simple matter of being able to locate information in reference books. Digital information has increased the complexity of information literacy to include digital, visual, and technological literacy, in addition to textual literacy. These literacy skills are essential to success in the modern world.

(b) STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY LEARNER, by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) (2007), addresses the new complexity of information literacy. Because these standards outline the skills our students will need for future success, they have been adopted as the PRIORITY ACADEMIC STUDENT SKILLS for Information Literacy with the permission of AASL. These standards consist of skills, dispositions, responsibilities, and self-assessment strategies. Skills are the key abilities needed for understanding, learning, thinking, and mastering subjects (AASL). Dispositions are ongoing beliefs and attitudes that guide thinking and intellectual behavior that can be measured through actions taken (AASL). Responsibilities are common behaviors used by independent learners in researching, investigating, and problem solving (AASL). Self-assessment strategies are reflections of one's own learning to determine that the skills, dispositions, and responsibilities are effective (AASL). Taken together, these four strands, or components, outline the knowledge and skills a student must possess to become a responsible digital citizen.

(c) Information literacy standards are to be taught as an integral part of curriculum content in science, social studies, language arts, reading, etc. To facilitate the identification of information literacy skills, a book icon follows each standard or objective within the curriculum document which has information literacy embedded within the curriculum. Students are best served when these are taught in collaboration and cooperation between the classroom teacher and the library media specialist. The classroom teacher and media specialist should provide opportunities for students to use information literacy skills in completion of class assignments.

(d) Specific benchmarks for each of the standards are provided in the Benchmarks for Information Literacy document. This document is excerpted from STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNER IN ACTION by the American Association of School Librarians (2009). This publication is considered an essential tool for library media specialists and should be part of the professional collection for all school libraries.

CHAPTER AUTHORITY: 47 O.S., § 6-105; 70 O.S., §§ 1-114, 3-104, 3-104.5, 5-117.4, 6-189, 10-105.4, 11-103 et seq., 11-103.3, 11-103.5, 11-103.6(a), 11-103.6(h), 11-103.7, 13-101 through 13-114.4 and 13-121 through 13-129, 19-113 through 19-121, 24-152, 1210.301 through 1210.308, 1210.558, 285(46); Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 through 1420); Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401 through 1418, 1420, and 1483); Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, Title II, Critical Skills Improvement, Part A Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act, §§ 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2005 (P.L. 108-446); 34 CFR 208.1 through 208.25, 208.41 through 208.53, 300.511(C), and 300.512; P.L. 107-110, § 1116; Laws 1981, c. 347, § 34; SB1328

SOURCE: Added at 20 Ok Reg 159, eff 10-10-02 (emergency); Added at 20 Ok Reg 821, eff 5-15-03; Amended at 27 Ok Reg 2641, eff 6-21-10 (emergency); Amended at 28 Ok Reg 1050, eff 6-11-11.

CHAPTER SOURCE: Codified 12-31-91

**TITLE 210. STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**CHAPTER 15. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**  
**SUBCHAPTER 3. PRIORITY ACADEMIC STUDENT SKILLS, PART 21. INFORMATION LITERACY**  
**O.A.C. § 210:15-3-173 (2015)**  
**210:15-3-173 Information literacy**

(a) Standard 1: Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge. (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY LEARNER)

(1) Skills.

- (A) Follow an inquiry-based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real world connection for using this process in own life.
- (B) Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning.
- (C) Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding.
- (D) Find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.
- (E) Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.
- (F) Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.
- (G) Make sense of information gathered from diverse sources by identifying misconceptions, main and supporting ideas, conflicting information, and point of view or bias.
- (H) Demonstrate mastery of technology tools for accessing information and pursuing inquiry.
- (I) Collaborate with others to broaden and deepen understanding.

(2) Dispositions.

- (A) Display initiative and engagement by posing questions and investigating the answers beyond the collection of superficial facts.
- (B) Demonstrate confidence and self-direction by making independent choices in the selection of resources and information.
- (C) Demonstrate creativity by using multiple resources and formats.
- (D) Maintain a critical stance by questioning the validity and accuracy of all information.
- (E) Demonstrate adaptability by changing the inquiry focus, questions, resources, or strategies when necessary to achieve success.
- (F) Display emotional resilience by persisting in information searching despite challenges.
- (G) Display persistence by continuing to pursue information to gain a broad perspective.

(3) Responsibilities.

- (A) Respect copyright/ intellectual property rights of creators and producers.
- (B) Seek divergent perspectives during information gathering and assessment.
- (C) Follow ethical and legal guidelines in gathering and using information.
- (D) Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community.
- (E) Use information technology responsibly.

(4) Self-Assessment Strategies.

- (A) Monitor own information-seeking processes for effectiveness and progress, and adapt as necessary.
- (B) Use interaction with and feedback from teachers and peers to guide own inquiry process.
- (C) Monitor gathered information, and assess for gaps or weaknesses.
- (D) Seek appropriate help when it is needed.

(b) Standard 2: Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge. (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY LEARNER)

(1) Skills.

(A) Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical-thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge.

(B) Organize knowledge so that it is useful.

(C) Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real-world situations, and further investigations.

(D) Use technology and other information tools to analyze and organize information.

(E) Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.

(F) Use the writing process, media and visual literacy, and technology skills to create products that express new understandings.

(2) Dispositions.

(A) Demonstrate flexibility in the use of resources by adapting information strategies to each specific resource and by seeking additional resources when clear conclusions cannot be drawn.

(B) Use both divergent and convergent thinking to formulate alternative conclusions and test them against the evidence.

(C) Employ a critical stance in drawing conclusions by demonstrating that the pattern of evidence leads to a decision or conclusion.

(D) Demonstrate personal productivity by completing products to express learning.

(3) Responsibilities.

(A) Connect understanding to the real world.

(B) Consider diverse and global perspectives in drawing conclusions.

(C) Use valid information and reasoned conclusions to make ethical decisions.

(4) Self-Assessment Strategies.

(A) Determine how to act on information (accept, reject, modify).

(B) Reflect on systematic process, and assess for completeness of investigation.

(C) Recognize new knowledge and understanding.

(D) Develop directions for future investigations.

(c) Standard 3: Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society. (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY LEARNER)

(1) Skills.

(A) Conclude an inquiry-based research process by sharing new understandings and reflecting on the learning.

(B) Participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners.

(C) Use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively.

(D) Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.

(E) Connect learning to community issues.

(F) Use information and technology ethically and responsibly.

(2) Dispositions.

- (A) Demonstrate leadership and confidence by presenting ideas to others in both formal and informal situations.
- (B) Show social responsibility by participating actively with others in learning situations and by contributing questions and ideas during group discussions.
- (C) Demonstrate teamwork by working productively with others.

(3) Responsibilities.

- (A) Solicit and respect diverse perspectives while searching for information, collaborating with others, and participating as a member of the community.
- (B) Respect the differing interests and experiences of others, and seek a variety of viewpoints.
- (C) Use knowledge and information skills and dispositions to engage in public conversation and debate around issues of common concern.
- (D) Create products that apply to authentic, real-world contexts.
- (E) Contribute to the exchange of ideas within and beyond the learning community.
- (F) Use information and knowledge in the service of democratic values.
- (G) Respect the principles of intellectual freedom.

(4) Self-Assessment Strategies.

- (A) Assess the processes by which learning was achieved in order to revise strategies and learn more effectively in the future.
- (B) Assess the quality and effectiveness of the learning product.
- (C) Assess own ability to work with others in a group setting by evaluating varied roles, leadership, and demonstrations of respect for other viewpoints.

(d) Standard 4: Pursue personal and aesthetic growth. (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], STANDARDS FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY LEARNER)

(1) Skills.

- (A) Read, view, and listen for pleasure and personal growth.
- (B) Read widely and fluently to make connections with self, the world, and previous reading.
- (C) Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.
- (D) Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.
- (E) Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experience.
- (F) Organize personal knowledge in a way that can be called upon easily.
- (G) Use social networks and information tools to gather and share information.
- (H) Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.

(2) Dispositions.

- (A) Demonstrate curiosity by pursuing interests through multiple resources.
- (B) Demonstrate motivation by seeking information to answer personal questions and interests, trying a variety of formats and genres, and displaying a willingness to go beyond academic requirements.
- (C) Maintain openness to new ideas by considering divergent opinions, changing opinions or conclusions when evidence supports the change, and seeking information about new ideas encountered through academic or personal experiences.
- (D) Show an appreciation for literature by electing to read for pleasure and expressing an interest in various literary genres.

(3) Responsibilities.

- (A) Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person.
- (B) Recognize that resources are created for a variety of purposes.
- (C) Seek opportunities for pursuing personal and aesthetic growth.
- (D) Practice safe and ethical behaviors in personal electronic communication and interaction.

(4) Self-Assessment Strategies.

- (A) Identify own areas of interest.
- (B) Recognize the limits of own personal knowledge.
- (C) Recognize how to focus efforts in personal learning.
- (D) Interpret new information based on cultural and social context.
- (E) Develop personal criteria for gauging how effectively own ideas are expressed.
- (F) Evaluate own ability to select resources that are engaging and appropriate for personal interests and needs.

CHAPTER AUTHORITY: 47 O.S., § 6-105; 70 O.S., §§ 1-114, 3-104, 3-104.5, 5-117.4, 6-189, 10-105.4, 11-103 et seq., 11-103.3, 11-103.5, 11-103.6(a), 11-103.6(h), 11-103.7, 13-101 through 13-114.4 and 13-121 through 13-129, 19-113 through 19-121, 24-152, 1210.301 through 1210.308, 1210.558, 285(46); Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 through 1420); Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401 through 1418, 1420, and 1483); Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, Title II, Critical Skills Improvement, Part A Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act, §§ 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2005 (P.L. 108-446); 34 CFR 208.1 through 208.25, 208.41 through 208.53, 300.511(C), and 300.512; P.L. 107-110, § 1116; Laws 1981, c. 347, § 34; SB1328

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CHAPTER SOURCE: Codified 12-31-91

## Legal Status of School Librarians across the United States

### Method

This research looked specifically for a mandate to employ school librarians within a State's Code or Regulations. For the most part, mandates for school library buildings, materials, or general funding were not included. Attempts were made to quote the exact language of the Codes and Regulations under the "Statute" and "Regulation" columns to provide examples for future New Jersey draft legislation. Also tracked was the term used to describe the position of "school librarian" in the various jurisdictions which often varied widely.

### Findings

- 22 jurisdictions mandate the employ of a school librarian either via Code or Regulations.
  - AR, D.C., GA, IN, IA, KY, LA, MD, MS, MT, NE, NH, NJ, NY, ND, OK, SC, TN, VT, VA, WA, WI
- 16 jurisdictions contain a mandate in their Regulations
  - AR, IN, LA, MD, MT, NH, NJ, NY, ND, OK, SC, TN, VT, VA, WI
- 4 jurisdictions contain a mandate in their Code
  - D.C, IA, KY, WA
- 2 jurisdictions contain a mandate in both their Code & Regulations
  - GA, MS
- 12 jurisdiction utilize a student enrollment formula to determine the employ of school librarians
  - AR, GA, MS, MT, NE, NY, ND, OK, SC, TN, VT, VA
  - Of these, 2 apply different formulas for elementary/middle/high schools (TN, VA)
- 2 jurisdictions tie access to regional library / special funding to the employ of school librarians
  - MA, SD

### New Jersey

New Jersey **does** have language in its Regulations regarding school librarians:

"Each school district shall provide these library-media services under the direction of a certified school library media specialist." (N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1).

Despite this regulation using the term "shall", it is deficient because it 1) speaks only to school districts and not individual schools; 2) "under the direction" is far too ambiguous of a term; 3) arguably, "shall" could be modifying only "library-media services" and NOT "school library media specialist"; 4) in light of NJLA's report on school librarians, this regulation is not being followed or implemented as a mandate for a school librarian to be in each school district.

### Enrollment Formulas

- National Average Student Enrollment per school to require 1 FT school librarian: **448**
- Low Threshold for 1 FT: **250** (MT)

- Choice Formulas
  - Montana
    - 126-249 = .5 FT
    - 250-500 = 1 FT
    - 501-1,000 = 1.5 FT
    - 1,001-1,500 = 2 FT
    - 1,501-2,000 = 2.5 FT
    - 2,000+ = 3 FT
  - Virginia
    - Elementary
      - <299 = .5 FT
      - 300+ = 1 FT
    - Middle / High
      - <299 = .5 FT
      - 300-999 = 1 FT
      - 1,000+ = 2 FT
  - Arkansas
    - <300 = part-time
    - 300+ = 1 FT
    - 1500+ = 2 FT
  - Vermont
    - <300 = “pro rata”
    - 300+ = 1 FT
  - North Dakota
    - 450+ = 1 FT
    - Additional fractional time based on 60 minutes per day per 80 students

#### Other Findings

- Mississippi created a School Library Media Guide (SLMG) through a joint working group of school, academic, and public librarians. The SLMG was a comprehensive document detailing visions, mission statements, best practices, and resources for school librarians. Most impressive, the SLMG was incorporated wholesale into the MS state regulations. A copy of the SLMG can be found here:  
<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/curriculum-and-instructions-library/mississippi-school-library-guide-2014-new.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

6/9/16 JRW – NJLA Public Policy Committee



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
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DAVID C. HESPE  
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July 29, 2016

The Honorable John B. King, Jr.  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary King:

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) appreciates the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) commitment to collaboration and support as states transition to the implementation of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. In particular, the NJDOE welcomes ED's outreach efforts, such as holding stakeholder sessions and receiving comments on where in the law the field needs clarity; undergoing and publishing in a timely manner all materials from this spring's negotiated rulemaking; and appearing before both House and Senate committees to explain how it plans to support the implementation of the *ESSA*.

The NJDOE's singular focus is to ensure all students, regardless of their background, are prepared for career and/or college demands beyond high school. Therefore, the NJDOE supports the *ESSA's* continued emphasis on holding all students to high academic standards while acknowledging the importance of a well-rounded education.

Moreover, the NJDOE appreciates the increased flexibility the *ESSA* provides, particularly in the areas of accountability and assessment. Such flexibility provides greater opportunities for the NJDOE to work with local stakeholders to foster an aligned and equitable accountability and support system that identifies at-risk and underperforming students, and provides for appropriate, effective and timely supports to improve student outcomes.

While the regulations proposed by ED on May 31, 2016, maintain much of the flexibility established in law, the NJDOE is concerned that a few areas of the regulations overly prescribe how states must implement specific aspects of their accountability and support systems.

To ensure that each state, in consultation with its stakeholders, has the opportunity to establish an accountability and support system that meets its needs, the NJDOE offers the following recommendations and requests for clarity:

1. **How to include participation rate in states' accountability systems:** Proposed § 200.15(b)(2) would require a school failing to have 95% of all students or a subgroup of students take a statewide academic assessment to:
  - Receive a lower summative rating in the accountability system;
  - Receive the lowest possible rating on the academic achievement indicator;
  - Be identified as in need of targeted support; or
  - Be subject to an equally rigorous state-determined action.

While the proposed regulations allow for an “equally rigorous” state-determined action, listing prescriptive actions to which a state-determined action must be compared could cause confusion, because what is considered “equally rigorous” could be subjectively interpreted. Also, requiring a state-determined action to be “equally rigorous” to the first three actions assumes that the first three actions are themselves “equally rigorous.” This does not appear to be the case, since receiving a lower summative rating, the lowest academic achievement rating, or being identified as in need of targeted support may not have the same effect on the rating of a school’s overall performance or require the same corrective action. To prevent such confusion, the NJDOE recommends ED allow states to explain how they will factor participation rates into their accountability systems, rather than listing prescriptive actions.

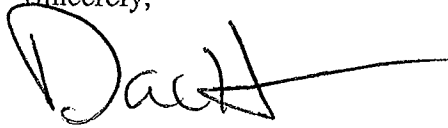
2. **How states meaningfully differentiate among schools:** Proposed § 200.18(b)(4) and § 200.31(b)(2)(ii)(A) would require each state’s accountability system to result in summative ratings for schools and for each school’s summative rating to be prominently displayed on local educational agency (LEA) report cards. The NJDOE supports the annual meaningful differentiation of schools required under *Section 1111(c)(4)(C)* of the *ESEA* as amended by the *ESSA* and is committed to reporting on a variety of school quality and performance measures to promote rich dialogue about each school’s successes and areas for growth. However, a single summative rating would undermine this effort to promote a comprehensive look at school performance, and therefore, the NJDOE recommends ED allow states to explain how they will meaningfully differentiate between schools, rather than requiring a summative rating.
3. **Notifying LEAs of targeted and comprehensive schools:** Proposed § 200.19(d)(2), § 200.21(a), and § 200.22(a) combined would require each state to use the immediately preceding school year’s data in its accountability calculations and notify LEAs of identified schools by the start of the following school year. The NJDOE is committed to informing LEAs of identified schools as early as possible in order to provide maximum planning time for the development and implementation of meaningful interventions. *Section 1111(d)(1)(A)* and *(2)(A)(i)* require only that each SEA notify LEAs of identified schools. The law does not prescribe a date by when such notification must occur. Due to different constraints regarding when the data needed for identifying schools is available in each state, the NJDOE requests that ED allow states to articulate in their state plans their timelines for accountability calculations, LEA notifications, and improvement plan development and implementation, instead of prescribing when SEAs must notify LEAs of identified schools.

4. **Graduation rate for identifying comprehensive schools:** Proposed § 200.19(a)(2) would require states to use only the four-year graduation rate when determining whether a high school failed to graduate at least 67% of its students and, consequently, be identified as in need of comprehensive support and improvement. The NJDOE supports using the four-year graduation rate to identify schools in need of comprehensive support and improvement, but believes flexibility is needed for unique circumstances, specifically for students whose Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) specify that they be allowed five years to graduate. With this in mind, the NJDOE recommends ED work with states to collaborate across offices at the federal level to ensure that such circumstances are taken into account and schools are not unfairly penalized for serving a high percentage of high-needs students.
5. **Date for releasing SEA and LEA report cards:** Proposed § 200.30(e)(1) would require state and LEA report cards to be released by December 31 of each year. The NJDOE is committed to getting accurate and useful information on school performance released to educators, parents, and other stakeholders as soon as possible each year. However, requiring a uniform deadline for doing so may lead to the release of inaccurate or incomplete information, as states would release data when they have to rather than when it is ready after undergoing careful quality checks. In consideration of differences in each state's data collection and quality assurance processes, the NJDOE recommends that ED require states to articulate in their state plans when they will release report cards each year, rather than establishing a deadline for doing so.
6. **Date on which enrollment must be determined for per-pupil expenditure calculations:** Proposed § 200.35(c)(2) would require per-pupil expenditures to be calculated using student enrollment data as of October 1 of each year. Due to variation in states' school start dates and differences in when states collect enrollment data—for instance, New Jersey collects its enrollment data on October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year—this deadline will be disruptive to states' data collection processes without a clear benefit. The NJDOE recommends ED require states to describe in their state plans their procedure for calculating per-pupil expenditures, including the date used for determining a school's enrollment.
7. **Exit criteria from English learner (EL) status:** Proposed § 299.19(c)(3)(iii) would prohibit states from including performance on "academic content assessments" in its exit criteria for English learners. Since academic content assessment is not defined in either statute or regulations, it would be helpful if ED clarified what academic content assessment means in this context.
8. **Exit criteria for targeted school:** Proposed § 200.22(e) would require LEAs to set exit criteria for schools identified as in need of targeted support and improvement due to consistently underperforming subgroup(s). While the NJDOE supports having LEAs approve and monitor the implementation of improvement plans for such schools, it recommends ED designate SEAs, which would work in collaboration with LEAs and other stakeholders, as the entities responsible for setting exit criteria for these schools. Forcing LEAs to set these criteria could be incredibly onerous, especially for smaller New Jersey

school districts that have limited district-level capacity. Establishing SEAs as the entities responsible for setting these exit criteria will ensure consistency and prevent undue burden on school districts.

The NJDOE thanks Secretary King and the U.S. Department of Education for your thoughtful consideration of these and other stakeholder concerns as you move toward final regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hespe", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David C. Hespe  
Commissioner

DCH/ma



## **SUMMARY OF THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT, LEGISLATION REAUTHORIZING THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT**

### **Legislative History**

A conference committee met on November 18 and 19 to resolve the differences between H.R. 5, the Student Success Act, and S. 1177, the Every Child Achieves Act, which passed their respective chambers in July, and voted to adopt the conference framework by a vote of 38-1. Legislative language was completed over Thanksgiving. The conference report then passed the House on December 2 by a vote of 359-64, and the Senate on December 9 by a vote 85-12. The bill's title is the "Every Student Succeeds Act," abbreviated in the summary as ESSA. It reauthorizes programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for four years.

### **Major Provisions**

#### Transition/Effective Dates

For noncompetitive programs the effective date is July 1, 2016, and most competitive programs are in effect October 1, 2016. The U.S. Secretary of Education ("Secretary") will take steps to provide an "orderly transition to and implementation of" programs authorized by the Act. Certain waivers are terminated as of August 1, 2016, specifically those under Section 9401 of No Child Left Behind, as first introduced in a letter to chief state school officers on September 23, 2011. The transition to new state plans will begin in the 2016-2017 school year, with full implementation occurring in the 2017-2018 school year.

### **Title I**

#### Part A

Grants to LEAs are authorized in the amounts below:

- FY 2017... \$15,012,317,605
- FY 2018... \$15,457,459,042
- FY 2019...\$15,897,371,442
- FY 2020...\$16,182,344,591

*Other grants authorized in Title 1:*

- *State assessments \$378,000,000 for FYs 2017 through FY 2020*
- *Education of Migratory Children \$374,751,000 for FYs 2017 through 2020*
- *Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk Children and Youth. \$47,614,000 for FYs 2017 through 2020*

School Improvement Grants

School Improvement Grants in their current form are ended. Instead, to carry out statewide system of technical assistance and support for local educational agencies, each state shall reserve either seven percent of Title I Part A or the amount the state had reserved for school improvement in 2016 and the amount it received, whichever is greater.

Not less than 95 percent of the amount would go in grants to LEAs on formula or competitive basis for schools implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities or the SEA may directly provide those activities. These would be four year grants.

State plans

The State Education Agency (SEA) must submit a Title I plan to the U.S. Department of Education that is developed with timely and meaningful consultation with Governors, members of the state legislature, and state board of education (if the state has such a board). The list also includes other entities including local education agencies, Indian tribes, teachers and principals and parents, among others. ***This represents a real corrective from the original ESEA which focused solely on the state education agency. The language was a top priority in NCSL lobbying on reauthorization.*** Plans must ensure coordination between programs in the following laws: IDEA, the Rehabilitation Act, Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, WIOA, CCDBG, Education Sciences Reform Act, Education Technical Assistance Act, NAEP, McKinney-Vento, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

Standards

Each state's plan shall provide an assurance that the state has adopted challenging academic content standards and aligned academic achievement standards ("challenging state academic standards") that include not less than three levels of achievement. Standards must apply to all public schools and public school students in a state. States are required to have academic standards for math, reading or language arts, and science and may have them for any other subject determined by the state. Standards must be aligned with entrance requirements for credit-bearing coursework at state higher education institutions and with relevant state career and technical education standards.

States are allowed to adopt alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant disabilities, provided those standards align with state academic standards and promote access to the general education curriculum consistent with IDEA, and are aligned to ensure that a student who meets the alternative standards is on track to pursue postsecondary education.

States must also show in their plan that they have adopted English language proficiency standards. English language proficiency standards must be derived from four domains (speaking, listening, reading and writing), address the different proficiency levels of English learners, and be aligned with the challenging state academic standards.

## Academic Assessments

States are required to implement a set of high-quality student academic assessments in math, reading/language arts, and science, and may implement assessments in other subjects. These assessments (with exceptions regarding alternative assessments for certain students) must be administered to all elementary and secondary students and must measure the achievement of all students. Assessments must be aligned with challenging state academic standards.

The bill keeps the current schedule of federally required statewide assessments. Math and reading/language arts have to be assessed yearly in grades three through eight, and once in grades nine through 12. Science must be assessed at least once in grades three through five, grades six through nine, and once in grades 10 through 12. States may assess other subjects.

These assessments must involve multiple measures of student achievement, including measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding, which may include measures of student growth and may be partially delivered in the form of portfolios, projects or extended performance tasks. They must provide appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities. The assessments can be administered through a single summative assessment or through multiple assessments during the course of the academic year. Results must be disaggregated with each state, local education agency, and school by:

- Racial and ethnic group;
- Economically disadvantaged students compared to students who are not economically disadvantaged;
- Children with disabilities as compared to children without disabilities;
- English proficiency status;
- Gender; and
- Migrant status

Alternate assessments are to be aligned with alternative academic standards and achievement goals. Only one percent of the total number of all students in the state can be assessed using these alternate assessments.

LEAs may administered a nationally-recognized high school academic assessment approved by the state in place of a required statewide assessment. *NOTE: other provisions regarding assessments are contained in Part B of Title I of the bill, including new flexibility to develop innovative assessments, and are described below.*

ESSA contains a parental rights statement that ESSA does not preempt a state or local law regarding the decision of a parent to not have their child participate in the assessments. However, that child is still counted against the 95% participation rate requirement.

Subject to federal or state requirements related to assessments, evaluations, and accommodations, states may set a target limit on the number on the aggregate amount of time devoted to assessments in each grade, expressed as a percentage of instructional hours.

## Statewide Accountability System

Each state must have a statewide accountability system that is based on the challenging state academic standards for reading/language arts and math to improve student academic achievement and school success. States shall:

- Establish ambitious state-designed long-term goals for all students and each subgroup of students in the state for improved:
  - Academic achievement as measured by proficiency on the annual assessments
  - High school graduation rates including the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and at the state's discretion the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate
  - Percent of English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency
- The indicators of the system, for all students and separately for each subgroup
  - Academic achievement as measured by proficiency on annual assessments
  - Another indicator of academic achievement
  - For high schools, a measure of the graduation rate.
  - Progress of English learners in achieving English language proficiency
  - An indicator of school quality and student success such as student engagement, educator engagement, student access to advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate and safety, or other measure.

States must also incorporate test participation in some way in their accountability system. States must count academic factors more heavily. A state must use this system to meaningfully differentiate all public schools in the state based on all indicators for all students and subgroups of students and puts substantial weight on each indicator. The system must differentiate any school in which any subgroup of students is consistently underperforming. Those subgroups are:

- Economically disadvantaged students
- Students from major racial and ethnic groups
- Children with disabilities
- English learners

#### Identification of schools

States must establish a methodology to identify (beginning in 2017-2018 school year and then at least every three years subsequently) those schools in need of comprehensive support and improvement, which will include the lowest performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I funds and any high school failing to graduate 1/3 or more of their students. There must be an annual measure of achievement that includes 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of all students in each subgroup. States will also notify LEAs of any school in its district in which a subgroup of students is consistently underperforming, and this will result in a school-level targeted support and improvement program.

#### School Support and Improvement Activities

SEAs will notify each local educational agency of any school in that LEA's jurisdiction that is identified for comprehensive support and improvement. The LEA, in partnership with stakeholders (including principals and other school leaders, teachers, and parents) will locally develop and implement a plan to improve student outcomes that is informed by all the indicators, including student performance against state-determined long-term goals; includes evidence-based interventions; is based on a school-level

needs assessment; identifies resource inequities; and is approved by the school, the LEA, and the SEA. An LEA may provide all students enrolled in a school identified by the state for improvement with the option to transfer to another public school if state law permits. Special consideration can be given to any high school that predominately serve students returning to education, or who are off-track to meet graduation requirements. If it serves less than 100 students, the LEA can forgo implementing improvement strategies.

To ensure continued support for school and LEA improvement, the SEA must: establish statewide exit criteria for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that if not satisfied within four years, shall result in more rigorous state-determined action and for schools where subgroups of students are not succeeding; review resource allocations to support school improvement in schools identified for support; and provide technical assistance. States may initiate additional improvement in LEAs with large numbers of schools needing improvement; and consistent with state law, establish alternative evidence-based strategies that can be used by the LEAs to assist schools.

#### Report cards

Annual state report card is required and must be disseminated widely. The report card must be accessible on-line, and provide a clear and concise description of the state's accountability system, including the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for all students and subgroups of students, the state's system for meaningfully differentiating all public schools, the number and name of all public schools identified for improvement, and the exit criteria for no longer being identified for improvement. The report card will identify all the indicators, and other factors including the professional qualifications of teachers, per-pupil expenditures, National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, and also, where available and beginning with the 2017 report card, information about post-secondary attainment. LEAs will also prepare report cards containing information on student performance on academic assessments.

#### Schoolwide Title I programs

LEAs can consolidate and use Title I and other federal, state and local funds for schoolwide Title I programs in schools serving a school attendance area where not less than 40 percent of the children are from low-income families, or where 40 percent of the children enrolled are from such families.

Note: funds can be used for preschool programs or dual/concurrent enrollment programs.

Parent and family engagement (formerly parental engagement) efforts receive an allotment of one percent of Title I grants. LEAs shall use parent and family engagement funds to do not less than one of the following: support schools and nonprofit organizations providing professional development in this area; support programs to reach parents and family members at home; disseminate best practices information on parent and family engagement; and collaborate with entities with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.

#### Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Requirement

The current requirement maintaining effort at 90 percent of prior funding is continued, and federal funding is reduced if a state also fails to meet the MOE requirement for one or more of the five immediate preceding years. However, the Secretary can waive the MOE requirement in the case of exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances like a natural disaster or change in the organizational structure of the state, or precipitous decline in the financial resources of the state.

## Part B State Assessment Grants

The Secretary will award grants to state educational agencies to enable the states to carry out one or more of the following activities:

- Paying the costs of developing state assessments and standards
- Administering the assessments
  - Ensuring appropriate accommodations for English learners
  - Developing challenging assessments in other subjects in which the state wants to assess students
  - Ensuring the continued validity and reliability of state assessments
  - Refining assessments so that they are continually aligned with challenging state academic standards
  - Developing balanced assessment systems that include summative, interim or formative assessments
  - Refining required science assessments to incorporate engineering design skills
  - Developing or improving assessments for children with disabilities
  - Allowing for collaboration for research to improve the quantity, validity, and reliability of state academic assessments
  - Measuring student academic achievement using multiple measures of student academic achievement
  - Evaluating students through competency-based models
  - Designing the report cards and reports required under ESSA in a user-friendly model that allows cross-tabulation of student information that the state deems appropriate.

## State Option to Conduct Assessment System Audits

Grants are authorized to states to enable states to audit state assessment systems and ensure that LEAs audit local assessments. A first grant allows states to come up with a plan for this audit; a subsequent grant can be used to carry out the plan.

## Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority

Innovative assessments include competency-based, interim, and cumulative year-round assessments, or performance-based assessments that combine into an annual summative determination, and may be administered through computer adaptive assessments.

SEAs or a consortium of not more than four SEAs can apply to exercise demonstration authority for a period that shall not exceed five years. Initially, the Secretary shall provide not more than seven participating state agencies (including those in a consortium) with said authority. States may use this authority to allow LEAs to innovate assessments with the intent that the assessments would be scaled up to eventually be statewide.

## Part C Education of Migratory Children

Federal funds for programs to assist migrant students are allocated by the following basic formula: the sum of the average number of identified eligible migratory children aged 3-12 residing in the state based on data for the three preceding years and the number of eligible migrant children aged three through 21

who received services under this part in summer or intersession programs multiplied by 40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure in the state (which will not be less than 32 percent or more than 48 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure in the U.S.)

Part D Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are neglected, delinquent or at-risk

Included in this section is a requirement that states must establish provisions for, or timely re-enrollment of, youth placed in the juvenile justice system, including opportunities to participate in credit-bearing coursework.

Part E Flexibility for Equitable Per-Pupil Funding

Allows LEAs to consolidate eligible federal funds and state and local education funding in order to create a single school funding system based on weighted per-pupil allocations for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged students. Demonstration agreements for this local flexibility provision would be for not more than three years. 50 LEAs can receive approval from the Secretary for these demonstration programs; the program may expand beginning with the 2019 and 2020 school year.

**Title II**

The most important change in Title II is a change in the state allotment formula. The formula will shift from the current formula, of which 35 percent is based on total student population aged 5-17 in the state proportionally relative to this population in all states and 65 percent is based on student population aged 5-17 from families below the poverty line in the state proportionally relative to this population in all states to:

- 35/65 in FY 2017
- 30/70 in FY 2018
- 25/75 in FY 2019
- 20/80 in FY 2020 and succeeding years

ESSA maintains the requirement that 95% of state allotments be subgranted to LEAs, but a state may reserve up to three percent of the 95% for state activities for principals and other school leaders.

Subgrants to LEAs in a state will be made on the following formula: 20 percent based on total student population aged 5-17 in the area served by the LEA proportionally relative to all such areas in the state and 80 percent based on student population aged 5-17 from families below the poverty line in the area served by the LEA proportionally relative to all such areas in the state.

Funding for national activities (between about \$470 and 490 million for each year FY 2017-2020) is included for the following activities:

- Development of teacher/school leader incentive programs and grants
- Literacy education program and grants (including early reading and K-12 programs)
- American history and civics education programs
- School leader training and recruitment
- State-led STEM master teacher corps programs

Regarding teachers, it is important to note that ESSA ends the federal mandate for teacher evaluation, and eliminates the “highly qualified teacher” requirement of No Child Left Behind.

### **Title III (Language Instruction for English Language Learners and Immigrant Students)**

The accountability measures for English language learners (ELLs) are moved out of Title III and into Title I as previously noted, to show that proficiency for ELL students is as important as proficiency for other students.

ELL programs have funding authorized that gradually increases from \$756 million in FY 2017 to \$885 million by FY 2020. States can use funds to make subgrants to eligible entities as long as 95 percent of state funding is used for purposes described in relevant Title III sections. States receive funding based 80 percent on population of ELLs in that state proportionally relative to that population in all states and 20 percent based on population of immigrant children and youth in that state proportionally relative to that population in all states. This title lays out eligible uses of funds, guidelines for the aforementioned subgrants to local entities, reporting guidelines (to be submitted every other year), and national professional development project guidelines. ESSA maintains the prohibition in existing law on federal prescription of curricular or pedagogical approach to educating ELLs.

### **Title IV (21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools)**

This section of the bill is the place where some programs are eliminated or rolled into a single grant.

#### Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

The purpose of these grants is to improve students’ academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, LEAs, schools, and local communities to

- Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education;
- Improve school conditions for student learning; and
- Improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

Formula grants for states with a small state minimum:

- ½ of one percent for allotments for payments to the outlying areas;
- ½ of one percent for Bureau of Indian Education schools; and
- Two percent for technical assistance and capacity building.

States would submit a plan describing how the SEA will use funds for state level activities, award grants to LEAs ensure that the SEA will review existing resources and programs across the state to coordinate those resources and programs with existing resources and programs. States are directed to award 95 percent of the allotment to LEAs, reserve not more than 1 percent for administration, and use the rest for state activities.

LEAs would undertake a comprehensive needs assessment every three years to determine needs in the areas of:

- Access to, and opportunities for, a well-rounded education for all students;

- School conditions for student learning in order to create a healthy and safe school environment; and
- Access to personalized learning experiences supported by technology and professional development for the effective use of data and technology.

Activities and programs covered under this grant to support access to a well-rounded education must be coordinated with other schools and with community-based services and programs, and can be partnerships with higher education institutions, business, nonprofits, community-based organizations, or other public or private entities. Activities can include:

- College and career guidance and counseling programs;
- Programs and activities that use music and the arts as tools to support student success through the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem solving, and conflict resolution;
- Programming and activities to improve instruction and student engagement in science; technology, engineering, and mathematics including computer science; and
- Efforts to raise student academic achievement through accelerated learning programs.

Each LEA will use a portion of its funds to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive programs and activities coordinated with other schools and with community-based services and programs that foster safe, healthy, supportive and drug-free environments that support student academic achievement, include parental involvement, and may be conducted in partnership with an institution of higher education, community-based organization, or other public or private entity. These programs may include evidence-based drug and violence prevention programs; mental health services; programs or activities that integrate health and safety practices into school athletic programs; programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle, help prevent bullying and harassment, improve instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills (to prevent coercion, violence or abuse), provide mentoring and school counseling for children at risk of academic failure or dropping out of school or delinquency, establish or improve school dropout and re-entry programs; providing learning environment and teaching skills for school readiness and academic success. The grants can also provide high-quality training for school personnel to allow to respond to various issues and dollars for child sexual abuse awareness and prevention activities. Other uses: designing and implementing a locally-tailored plan to reduce exclusionary discipline practices, schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports; and site resource coordinators.

A portion of funds shall also be used for activities to support the effective use of technology which may include:

- Professional learning tools, devices, content and resources for educators, school leaders, and administrators
- Building technological capacity and infrastructure
- Developing or using strategies for delivery of specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula through the use of technology
- Carrying out blended learning projects
- Professional development in the use of technology
- Providing students in rural, remote and underserved areas resources to take advantage of high-quality digital learning experiences, digital resources, and access to online courses

There is a limitation that no more than 15 percent of funds may be used for purchasing technology infrastructure.

This subpart is authorized at \$1,650,000,000 for FY 2016 and \$1,600,000,000 for each of FYs 2018-2020.

#### Part B 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

This part provides opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in community learning centers that provide opportunities for academic enrichment, offer students a broad array of additional services, programs and activities, and offers families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their child's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development. Funding is made available for continuation of certain current grants; there are reservations for national activities, and for Bureau of Indian Education schools. There is a local competitive subgrant program. The program is authorized at \$1,000,000,000 for FY 2017 and \$1,100,000,000 for each of FYs 2018-2020.

#### Part C Charter School Grants

The Secretary is authorized to carry out a charter school program that supports charter schools that serve early childhood, elementary school or secondary school students by supporting the establishment of new charter schools and the replication and expansion of high quality charter schools; assists charter schools in assessing credit for acquiring and renovating facilities; carrying out national activities to support those goals, along with disseminating best practices, evaluating charter schools and strengthening charter school authorizing practices. There are reserves for charter school facility assistance (12.5%) and carrying out national activities (22.5%). The Secretary will award competitive grants to a state entity (the SEAs, state charter school board, Governor, or charter school support organization) to allow the entity to award subgrants:

- to applicants to open and prepare for operation new charter schools replicated high-quality charter schools or expand high-quality charter schools;
- to provide technical assistance to applicants; and
- to work with authorized public chartering agencies to improve authorizing quality

Grants are for a five year period. Priority for receiving a grant shall go to state entities in states that allow at least one entity that is not an LEA to be an authorized public chartering agency (or has an appeals process), that ensure equitable financing for charters, and provides one or more of the following: funding for facilities, assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, ability to share bonds or levies, right of first refusal of a public school building, and low- or no-cost leasing privileges. The state entity should also support charter schools in other ways.

The authorization for Part C is \$270,000,000 for FY 2017; \$270,000,000 for FY 2018; \$300,000,000 for FY 2019; and \$300,000,000 for FY 2020.

#### Part D Magnet School Assistance

Assistance for magnet schools is provided with an authorization of \$94,000,000 for FY 2017; \$96,820,000 for FY 2018; \$102,387,150 for FY 2019; \$108,530,379 for FY 2020.

#### Part E Family Engagement in Education Programs

The Secretary is authorized to award grants to statewide organizations to establish statewide family engagement centers to carry out parent and family engagement programs or provide comprehensive training and technical assistance. Minimum award is \$500,000 and a non-federal match requirement, in cash or in-kind. Authorization is \$10,000,000.

#### Part F National Activities

\$200,741,000 for FYs 2017 and \$220,741,000 for FYs 2019 and 2020. Under this heading are grants for education innovation and research; community support for school support (95 percent of the money would go to Promise Neighborhoods and full service community schools); national activities for school safety; and academic enrichment.

#### **Title VI and Title VII**

Title IV Provides for Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education programs, and Title VII provides:

#### Impact Aid

A number of policy changes were made to the Impact Aid program. It makes permanent technical and formula changes to federal properties that have already reduced subjectivity in the program and increased the timeliness of payments. It eliminates the Federal Properties "lockout" provision that currently prevents eligible federally impacted school districts from accessing Impact Aid funding. It adjusts the Basic Support formula to ensure equal proration when appropriations are sufficient to fund the proration formula (Learning Opportunity Threshold). It includes a hold harmless provision to provide budget certainty to school districts facing a funding cliff or significant changes to their federally-connected student enrollment. The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools has noted that the authorization for Impact Aid is stagnant for the first three years of the four-year authorization.

#### **Title VIII**

Education for the Homeless reauthorized with a Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth and LEA liaisons for homeless children and youth established in each state as part of the program. One provision requires immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth pending documentation including relevant academic and health records. The authorization for this program is \$85,000,000 for FYs 2017-2020.

#### **Title IX**

This title includes the Preschool Development grants, which are intended to allow states to

- Develop, update, or implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among existing early childhood care and education programs in a mixed delivery system across a state;
- Encourage partnerships among Head Start providers, state and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, private entities, and LEAs to improve coordination, program quality, and delivery of services; and
- Maximize parental choice among a mixed delivery system of providers.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. The grant period is one year, and grants may be renewed. There is a 30 percent matching requirement from non-federal funds (cash or in-kind). States can use the funds to conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing programs, the number of children being served in existing programs, and the number of children awaiting services; develop a strategic plan; maximize parental choice and knowledge; share best practices; and improve the overall quality of early childhood education programs. Renewal grants may be available to enable states to implement activities to address improvement in early care and education programs, or to develop new programs. Funding is authorized at \$250,000,000 for each of FYs 2017 to 2020.

**Prohibitions on Federal Influence Found in ESSA**

A state shall not be required to submit any standards to the Secretary for review or approval. The Secretary shall not have the authority to mandate, direct, control, coerce, or exercise any direction or supervision over any of the challenging academic standards adopted or implemented by the state.

The Secretary is not permitted to promulgate any rule or regulation on the development or implementation of the statewide accountability system that would add new requirements or criteria that are inconsistent with or outside the scope of the law's requirements, or as a condition of approval of the state plan or revisions or amendments to the state plan or approval of a waiver request, requires states to add or delete any elements to the accountability plan or standards or prescribe numeric long-term goals or measurements of interim progress for subgroups of students, or specific academic assessments or assessment items, or indicators, or weight of any indicators, specific methodology or specific school support and improvement strategies for school improvements, or any aspect or parameter of a teacher, principal or school leader evaluation system.

The Secretary cannot require additional assessment reporting requirements, data elements or information to be reported unless they are explicitly authorized under this act.

Title II contains a prohibition against federal mandates, direction or control over a state, LEA or school's instructional content or materials, curriculum, program of instruction, academic standards, or academic assessments; teacher, principal, or other school leader evaluation system; specific definition of teacher, principal, or other school leader effectiveness, or teacher, principal, or other school leader professional standards, certification or licensing.

The general provisions section (Title VIII) contains a prohibition against federal mandates, direction or control stating that no officer or employee of the federal government, shall through grants, contracts or other cooperative agreements, mandate, direct or control a state, LEA or schools' specific instructional content, academic standards and assessments, curricula, or program of instruction developed and implemented to meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (including any requirement, direction, or mandate to adopt the Common Core State Standards or any academic standards common to a significant number of states, or any assessment, instructional content or curriculum aligned to such standards. No officer or employee of the federal government shall condition or incentivize the receipt of any grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, or preference for such awards, or receipt of a waiver upon a state, local education agency, or school's adoption or implementation of specific instructional content, academic standards, and assessments, curricula, or program of instruction.

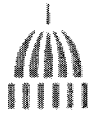
The federal government is also prohibited from:

- Mandating states or subdivisions to spend any funds or incur costs not covered in ESSA;
- Endorsing any curriculum
- Developing incentivizing, pilot testing, implementing, administering, or distributing any federally sponsored national test in reading, mathematics, or other subject if not specifically and explicitly authorized by law

Some of these prohibitions are restated in another Sense of Congress passage, and there is also a sense of Congress that a state retains the right to make decisions concerning its system of early learning and child care free from federal intrusion, and to decide whether or not to use funding under the ESSA to offer early childhood education programs.

Finally, there's a sense of Congress statement:

"It is the sense of Congress that state and local officials should be consulted and made aware of the requirements that accompany participation in activities authorized under this Act prior to a State or local agency's request to participate in such activities."



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES  
*The Forum for America's Ideas*

**Frequently Asked Questions:**  
**The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

**ASSESSMENTS**

**Q:** Does my state still have to test 95 percent of its students?

**A:** In short, yes. ESSA requires that a state's accountability system must measure the performance of 95 percent of students by looking at a variety of indicators. One of the indicators is "academic achievement as measured by proficiency on the annual assessments." For this reason, in order to measure the overall achievement of 95 percent of students, 95 percent must take the annual assessments.

**Q:** How do the students (up to 1 percent) who receive the alternate assessment count in terms of the state's 95 percent requirement?

**A:** As long as they meet the other requirements around alternate assessments (e.g. alignment with the state's standards), states may count students who are assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards for purposes of meeting the 95 percent participation rate.

**STANDARDS**

**Q:** What are the related mandates or prohibitions related to Common Core?

**A:** While states must maintain "challenging academic standards" (floor set as: at least three achievement levels in math, English/language arts, and science), there is a strong prohibition on the federal government using any of its authority to mandate or incentivize the use of particular standards. This prohibition not only applies to standards, but also assessments, curriculum, etc. The bill does note, however, that nothing in the law prohibits states from voluntarily entering into partnerships on standards.

**Q:** What kind of alignment is required between elementary and secondary standards and higher education?

**A:** ESSA requires that states demonstrate that their challenging academic standards are aligned with entrance requirements for public institutions of higher education (IHEs) within that state. However, the legislation was also clear that this does permit the state's IHEs to set or determine the state's standards.

**Q:** Are states required to submit their standards for approval by the U.S. Department of Education?

**A:** No. There is clear language in the bill that no state shall be required to submit its standards to the federal government for review or approval. (Standards underlie the accountability system, which is part of the state Title I plan submitted to the Department.) Again, states must maintain challenging academic standards, but the law is very clear that states are not required to seek federal approval of their standards and can make changes to them without federal approval.

## **GENERAL**

**Q:** What constitutes “timely and meaningful consultation” that must occur with state legislators on the state’s Title I plan?

**A:** That remains to be seen. The legislation left it intentionally open-ended so that states could decide what process works best for them. In some states, legislatures could be satisfied by procedures already in place in which the state department of education communicates with them regarding the Title I plan. In others, they may want to set up a new process consistent with state law.

## **The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): An Update on Early Learning Opportunities** ***Monday, August 8, McCormick Place, Chicago***

### **ESSA Background**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorized ESEA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, last reauthorized in 2002 as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). From a state perspective, NCLB had several flaws. It included an unworkable measure of how schools and students were doing based on a single test score (AYP, Adequate Yearly Progress) that eventually required 100% of students to be proficient, and included an inflexible series of interventions in schools. The new law provides much more state authority over accountability, assessments and interventions in low-performing schools.

#### **Accountability Systems**

States can design systems with multiple measures of how well students and subgroups of students are doing. The federally required indicators of school and student performance are below, but states can add additional indicators.

- Academic achievement as measured by proficiency on annual assessments
- A measure of academic progress (for schools other than high schools)
- For high schools, graduation rates
- Progress of English language learners
- A measure of school quality and student success

#### **Assessments**

ESSA continues NCLB schedule of federally required state-wide assessments, with a 95% participation rate still required, although performance on these assessments is not the sole measure of school performance. States can use federal assessment funding to audit their assessment system to look at the issue of over-testing. States can administer the statewide assessment as a single test or break the assessment into smaller parts given throughout the year. Assessments may be partially delivered in the form of portfolios, projects or extended performance tasks. ESSA provides some other assessment options:

- 8<sup>th</sup> grade math students taking a higher level math class can take an end of course exam instead of the statewide assessment.
- States can allow LEAs to use a nationally recognized high school assessment (such as the ACT or SAT) instead of the statewide assessment.
- States can apply to be part of the innovative assessment pilot to allow LEAs to use different tests, with the idea that a more innovative assessment could be used statewide. This is an option initially for seven states.

#### **School Improvement**

Schools must be identified as needing improvement if they fall into one of the following categories

- Schools that are in the bottom five percent
- Any high school failing to graduate 1/3 or more of its students
- Any school in which a subgroup of students is consistently underperforming

Interventions start at the local level (must be approved by the state and evidence-based) and are monitored by the state.

**Specific Provisions in ESSA Regarding Early Learners**

Title IX of ESSA contains the Preschool Development Grants, authorized at \$250,000,000. These grants will be administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. The grants have three purposes: support strategic partnerships for high-quality early learning; encourage partnerships to deliver programs; and maximize parental choice. The grants will be awarded for an initial period of one year and renewed for up to three.

There are several places where ESSA programs can support early learning. In ESSA, Title I funds for disadvantaged students are explicitly allowed to support early childhood education. Title II of ESSA provides states and LEAs with options to include early childhood educators in state and local professional development plans. For example, early childhood program directors and providers are able to participate in efforts to address the transition to elementary school. Title II also includes the “Literary Education for All, Results for the Nation” (LEARN) literacy program that specifies that 15% of the funds should be used for children from birth through kindergarten entry, and the U.S. Department of Education can invest in pediatric literacy programs. In Title III, focused on English learners, the competitive National Professional Development projects can include efforts to promote school readiness for English learners and their transition from early childhood programs to elementary school and funding can be used for new language instruction and academic content programs for English learners in early childhood education programs. Programs in Title IV that can support the youngest learners include 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, charter schools, Promise Neighborhoods, and Community Schools.

**Stakeholder Consultation**

ESSA requires that stakeholders be consulted before the SEA (State Education Agency) submits a state’s Title I or consolidated plan to the U.S. Department of Education. Who is a stakeholder?

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| governor   | charter school leaders           |
| state legislators  | parents and families             |
| state board members                                      | community based organizations    |
| LEAs, including rural LEAs                               | civil rights organizations       |
| representatives of Indian tribes                         | institutions of higher education |
| teachers, principals, other school leaders and personnel | employers                        |
|  | the public                       |

**ESSA TIMELINE**

**Consultation with stakeholders should be happening NOW.** *State plans are due March 6 or July 5; assurances for any program are due March 6 so that federal allocations for the programs will be made. The timeline means that any needed statutory and budgetary changes will to come to a state legislature early next session. Remember as well that the Secretary has up to 120 days to review the plan. Taken together, this means that 2016-2017 is going to be a busy year to ensure that states are ready for school year 2017-2018 and full implementation of ESSA’s provisions that year.*

**For more information:**

**NCSL’s ESSA page:** <http://www.ncsl.org/ESSA>

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