

Summary Report

School Leader Professional Development Series

The Opportunities and Challenges of Implementing the
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in Delaware



October 26, 2016

8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The Outlook at the Duncan Center
500 Loockerman Street, Dover, Delaware 19904

Sponsored by the
Institute for Public Administration *and*
Delaware Academy for School Leadership *at the*
University of Delaware

in cooperation with the
Delaware Association of School Administrators
Delaware School Boards Association
Delaware State Education Association
Delaware State PTA

Summary report prepared and designed by the



**Institute for
Public Administration**

Foreword

As members of the Planning Committee of the School Leader Professional Development Series: The Opportunities and Challenges of Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in Delaware we are pleased to provide you with this report that summarizes the discussions held on Wednesday, October 26, 2016. We organized this event to provide a broad base of education stakeholders in Delaware with the opportunity to learn more about the impact that ESSA will have on the state from both national and local perspectives. This new law provides Delawareans with a great opportunity to truly shape their education system in a way that is most beneficial for students across the state. It is our hope that this document will help guide the conversations of stakeholders across the state as they engage in the development of the state and district plans mandated by ESSA.

The Planning Committee would like to thank the following presenters and facilitators for joining us in this critical discussion:

- Secretary Steven Godowsky, Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)
- Marc Egan, National Education Association
- Karen Field-Rogers, DDOE
- Leslie Finnan, AASA, the School Superintendents Association
- Lucy Gettman, National School Boards Association (NSBA)
- Laura Glass, Delaware Center for Teacher Education
- Amy Grundy, Red Clay Consolidated School District
- Amanda Karhuse, National Association of Secondary School Principals
- Kelly Pollitt, National Association of Elementary School Principals
- Kim Richey, NSBA
- Robin Taylor, R² Educational Consulting
- Jackie Wilson, Professional Development Center for Educators/Delaware Academy for School Leadership (PDCE/DASL)

We also greatly appreciate the contributions of University of Delaware Graduate Public Administration Fellows Laura Askin, Lauren Barkachy, Taylor Hawk, and Lexi West, who work with the Institute for Public Administration (IPA), and Graduate Research Assistant Kevin Mascitelli who works with DASL. All five were integral members of the team; this event would

not have been possible without their assistance. Additional thanks go to Sarah Pragg (IPA) for editing and formatting this report, and for her support in developing materials for the event. The contributions of Nelcenia Downer (IPA) and Cheryl Belmont (IPA) are also tremendously appreciated.

Most importantly, we want to thank you, the educators, school leaders, parents, public servants, and community stakeholders of Delaware that devote countless hours to improving the well-being of students across the state. Our goal is to continue to support you as you engage in this work that is critical to the success of all Delawareans.

Sincerely,

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Executive Summary

As part of the School Leader Professional Development Series, a workshop called The Opportunities and Challenges of Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in Delaware was held in Dover, Delaware, on Wednesday, October 26, 2016. Nearly 140 stakeholders ranging from parents to district level administrators attended. The University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration and Delaware Academy for School Leadership sponsored the event, in cooperation with the Delaware Association of School Administrators, Delaware State PTA, Delaware School Boards Association, and Delaware State Education Association. The purpose of the event was to create a forum to present the challenges and opportunities introduced by the implementation of the federal government's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in Delaware through the points of view of multiple national and local stakeholder groups.

Opening Panel: ESSA Overview

The workshop opened with a panel of leaders in national advocacy organizations who highlighted the differences between ESSA and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Panelists emphasized that ESSA provides state and local stakeholders with great opportunities to develop plans and implement programs that address the unique needs of their students; however, they must develop and implement these plans with fidelity to ensure that this power remains with the state and school districts. The implementation of ESSA is a paradigm shift in which state and local stakeholders will be empowered, especially within the accountability framework, to assess a broader set of measures aimed at improving student learning outcomes. However, the panelists did note that the federal government may attempt to retain influence over education policy, particularly with regards to accountability, through newly proposed regulations and non-binding policy guidance.

Panel Discussion: Implementation of ESSA in Delaware

The second panel provided insight into the implementation of ESSA in Delaware. Panelists agreed that ESSA will lead to increased involvement for state and local stakeholders with regards to the development and implementation of education policy. They emphasized how meaningful and robust stakeholder engagement could lead to the development of a unified

vision for public education in Delaware. Increased collaboration between the Department of Education, school districts, and other key stakeholders is expected to lead to improved trust, and implementing effective communication strategies is a critical step in establishing a cooperative culture.

Working Groups

After the panels, workshop participants divided into three working groups to further discuss three key components of ESSA: (1) Teacher and Leader Training and Evaluation; (2) Statewide Accountability Systems; and (3) School Supports and Interventions.

- **The Teacher Leader Training and Evaluation session** focused on identifying potential ways to use Title II, Part A funds for training new teachers and school leaders. Recommendations included the development of high-quality mentoring programs, a modified schedule for new teachers that provides opportunities for training during the school day, and the hiring of a training coordinator to oversee programs provided to new teachers. Responses regarding the development of effective school leaders focused on the creation of residency programs, succession planning and targeted training for prospective school leaders, and the use of coaches to develop the skillsets of administrators.
- **The Statewide Accountability session** focused on identifying the infrastructure, supports, and strategies needed to develop a robust and meaningful accountability system. Participants agreed that the creation of a high-quality comprehensive plan is dependent upon the development of a consistent process, an understanding of the time demands for staff participating in plan development, meaningful stakeholder consultation, and the use of needs assessments and asset mapping to identify issues and opportunities. Participants also mentioned the need for the development of a statewide data dashboard that includes both qualitative and quantitative measures.
- **The School Supports and Interventions session** focused on the critical needs of school communities and how to use ESSA provisions to more effectively and immediately meet those needs. The conversation focused on the need for school communities to have the flexibility to measure and assess success in a school-wide context. Participants noted that school leaders and educators need additional information on ESSA provisions to understand the opportunities available to them to

address the needs of students. They also mentioned that it is critical for a student's basic needs to be met before meaningful assessment of student learning can occur. The session discussed the development of partnerships between schools and community groups to address student needs in innovative ways and the importance of professional development that provides staff with skills necessary to address the unique needs of their student population. The group reinforced that one-size-fits-all policies and funding opportunities are not the most effective way to improve outcomes for all students.

Conclusion

The discussions held during this event primarily focused on how ESSA empowers state and local stakeholders to develop their own vision and goals for the future. Panelists and participants discussed the supports needed to ensure that school districts are adequately equipped to develop and implement their plans and the importance of robust and meaningful stakeholder consultation. The necessity of accepting that schools and districts each have unique needs that can only be addressed through flexible solutions was also reinforced. Ultimately, it is critical that state and local stakeholders capitalize on this paradigm shift by developing and implementing their plans with fidelity to ensure that they will be able to retain this level of involvement in the future.

Key Components of the Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The federal education law shifts power from the federal government back to the states and local school districts, granting additional flexibility to encourage innovation while maintaining accountability. States have more flexibility to design accountability systems, interventions, and student supports that reflect the state’s vision for education. Additionally, state education agencies were given the responsibility to work in closer cooperation with local stakeholders to create the state plan that will guide the state’s education system. Local education agencies will also be required to develop plans that align with this new legislation. Below is a brief overview of some of the major provisions and opportunities included in the new law.

Assessments

ESSA maintains annual assessments for grades 3–8 and high school¹; however, states have the opportunity to apply for a pilot innovative assessment system. The pilot assessment program will allow seven states to design performance-based assessments.² ESSA also reduces high-stakes summative exams by permitting multiple assessments during a school year; however, results must be combined into a summative score.¹

Statewide Accountability Systems

ESSA provides states with an opportunity to design accountability systems that match the state’s vision for education. States can determine their own accountability system, which should include at least four different indicators and at least one measure of school quality or student success. State-developed accountability systems also have to include proficiency in reading and math, high school graduation rates, English-language learner proficiency, and test proficiency.³ However, under the law, states are not required to come up with a single or summative rating for each school.

¹ Title I, Part A, Sec. 1005 (b)(2)(A)

² Title I, Part B, §§ 1204 (a)

³ Title I, Part A, Sec. 1005 (c)(4)(A)

School Supports and Interventions

ESSA includes a 7 percent Title-I-set-aside for school improvement up from the 4 percent set-aside included in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).. States must identify schools for “comprehensive support and improvement,” and local education agencies (LEAs) are required to develop comprehensive support and improvement plans. Plans must include “evidence-based” interventions.⁴ Schools with “consistently underperforming” subgroups will be identified by the state and will be required to develop “targeted support and improvement plans” to improve student outcomes based on state accountability indicators.⁵ Annually, ESSA provides more than \$500 million for school improvement activities.

Title II Funding: Teacher and Leader Training and Evaluation, Class Size Reduction

There are multiple opportunities for states to support teachers and leaders and improve training and evaluation under ESSA. States can use Title II funds to implement a statewide teacher evaluation system. Federal funds can also be used to establish principal academies, and the law includes an optional 3 percent set-aside for principal training and development. Additionally, class size reduction “to a level that is evidence-based” is also an acceptable use of Title II funds under the law.⁶

⁴ Title I. Part A. Sec. 1111(d)(1)

⁵ Title I. Part A. Sec. 1111(d)(2)

⁶ Title II. Part A. Sec. 2101(c)(4)

Summary of Opening Panel: ESSA Overview

Panelists from national advocacy organizations discussed the differences between ESSA and NCLB. They defined the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholder groups in advocating for and implementing changes required by ESSA, identified how the implementation of ESSA can be used to address important challenges in Delaware’s public education system, and addressed the opportunities and challenges their stakeholder groups face as a result of the implementation of ESSA. The panelists addressed four questions: (1) How does ESSA differ from NCLB; (2) Are there any specific regulations that Delaware and local constituencies need to be aware of and what are the corresponding opportunities; (3) Are there promising ideas that other states are including in their draft plans; and (4) What can and should professional development look like under ESSA?

National Panelists

- Leslie Finnan, Senior Legislative Analyst, AASA, the School Superintendents Association
- Kelly Pollitt, Chief Strategist, Policy and Alliances, National Association of Elementary School Principals
- Amanda Karhuse, Director of Advocacy, National Association of Secondary School Principals
- Marc Egan, Associate Director of Government Relations, National Education Association
- Kim Richey, Interim Managing Director of the Federal Advocacy and Public Policy Department, National School Boards Association (NSBA)
- Lucy Gettman, Interim Chief Advocacy Officer, NSBA

Key Takeaways

ESSA represents a significant pendulum swing of power from federal back to state and local control. ESSA is more focused on local governance in public schools than NCLB. The federal government’s role in education is no longer “test and punish,” but rather to offer support to states. Additionally, the new law emphasizes meaningful consultation and collaboration between all of the actors in a state’s education system.

States should keep long-term considerations in mind when implementing ESSA and should develop their state plans in a manner that aligns with the future vision and goals developed by a broad base of public education stakeholders. The ESSA

reauthorization is for four years instead of the typical six. However, NCLB was expired for a period of time before ESSA was passed, so states should concentrate on establishing a long-term vision. States have the opportunity to think critically about system shifts, capacity building, and expanding growth measures.

Advocacy organizations are concerned with proposed regulations and non-binding policy guidance. States should become very familiar with proposed regulations and understand the difference between regulations and non-binding policy guidance. Because the current federal administration is about to transition out, the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) is working to ensure that the law is implemented exactly how they want to see it implemented. However, there is concern that some of the proposed regulations are in opposition to the spirit of the law, which is to empower state and local stakeholders.

Advocacy organizations expressed concern over regulations that require states to establish a single, summative rating for schools. Several panelists commented that the U.S. DOE is attempting to retain its influence over accountability that ESSA sought to balance out and expressed disapproval over the proposed summative rating requirement. Under the proposed regulations, states must develop summative ratings for all schools that combine the measures of school and student success.

States should be aware that not all opportunities come with additional funding. Panelists advised stakeholders to remain aware of Title I funding allocations and expressed concern that the new Title IV block grant consolidated multiple grant programs without necessarily providing funding for all of the opportunities.

ESSA provides opportunities for states to have meaningful and on-going consultation with stakeholder groups. Panelists remarked that several states, including New Jersey and Washington, are prioritizing stakeholder collaboration in developing state plans. However, stakeholder engagement cannot just be a one-time consultation; it must be meaningful and on going. Stakeholder engagement also means engaging students.

The law provides an opportunity for states to broaden and implement more holistic accountability systems. Panelists remarked that states have the opportunity to think critically about their vision for education and design an accountability system accordingly, including non-academic indicators. Additionally, several panelists stressed that states should pay close attention to U.S. DOE's proposed accountability regulations.

The innovative pilot assessment program presents an opportunity for states.

Several panelists commented that the pilot assessment program presents a significant opportunity for states to redesign assessment systems and advised DDOE to put together a strong application if interested in the pilot program.

States should look to implement educator professional development that is job-embedded and on going.

Panelists remarked that states should look to the 3 percent set-aside in Title II devoted to school leadership and pay attention to the definition of professional development included in the law. The importance of implementing job-embedded professional development was stressed rather than single-day, check-the-box professional development sessions.

State Panel: Implementation of ESSA in Delaware

Panelists during this session discussed their thoughts regarding the implementation of ESSA in Delaware with a focus on topics that would directly impact their constituencies. They addressed questions including: (1) What key outcomes do you hope that this legislation will lead to; (2) What are the obligations for LEAs related to the development of a local plan and what is the timeline for its development? What supports would be helpful/will be available to assist LEAs with the development of these plans; (3) What needs to be done to ensure that the state plan is implemented in a manner that will positively impact students during the 2017–2018 school year (both financially and programmatically); (4) How will this legislation impact professional development opportunities for teachers, leaders, and other educators? Will there be statewide opportunities offered in the future?

State Panelists

- Karen Field Rogers, Deputy Secretary, Delaware Department of Education
- Tammy Croce, Executive Director, Delaware Association of School Administrators
- John Marinucci, Executive Director, Delaware School Boards Association
- Deborah Stevens, Director of Instructional Advocacy, Delaware State Education Association
- Terri Hodges, President, Delaware State PTA

Key Takeaways

The key outcome of implementing ESSA in Delaware will be an increased role in policy development and implementation for state and local stakeholders. Engaging all stakeholders and promoting a flexible education system that is guided by local input will allow educators to effectively meet the specific needs of the students in their schools. Each school has unique needs that are best identified by the personnel and stakeholders that interact with those students on a day-to-day basis.

The implementation of ESSA can promote collaboration and increase trust between the Delaware Department of Education and LEAs (districts, charter schools, etc.). The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) can benefit LEAs greatly by supporting the development and implementation of local plans, as opposed to primarily

focusing on enforcing regulations. Utilizing district liaisons to enhance communication between DDOE and school districts was mentioned as a potential strategy.

The state plan must remain focused on improving outcomes for students, and meaningful change will take time to be realized. ESSA requires State Education Agencies (SEAs) and LEAs to have a much more active role in the development of the state's education policy, so time must be provided for planning, implementation, and professional development. The ultimate priority of the plan must be to address student needs and improve their outcomes.

The successful implementation of the state plan is dependent on robust stakeholder engagement and the development of creative policies that can mitigate the effects of funding constraints. Educators and other stakeholders must understand and fulfill their roles and responsibilities under this legislation. The current economic climate of the state will require DDOE and LEAs to develop creative policies that will allow them to improve student-learning outcomes with fewer resources.

The Delaware Department of Education can support LEAs by providing guidance on research-based strategies and interventions, promoting a collaborative environment, and assisting with the assessment of needs. It is crucial that LEAs have the capacity to conduct thorough needs assessments so that they can implement research-based interventions and best practices that address the specific needs of their students and organization. It was also mentioned that DDOE could serve as a clearinghouse for information on best practices.

The accountability system should be developed in consultation with a broad base of stakeholders to ensure that there is transparency with regard to the expectations of the education system. The system should not focus on punitive measures and labeling schools, but should instead provide educators and public servants with the information they need to identify and implement appropriate research-based interventions and strategies.

Professional development must be job embedded, sustained, ongoing, and aligned with the state and local plans. Professional development that meets these standards has enhanced overall effectiveness and ensures that educators are adequately trained in the skills they will need to implement plans developed through ESSA.

Concerns were raised that setting the deadline for the final draft of the state plan in March 2017 was too soon. Some states have opted to use the July 2017 deadline instead. Using this deadline would provide the Department of Education with additional time to engage stakeholders and draft a plan. However, it would also postpone the implementation of the plan by a year.

Breakout Session: Teacher and Leader Training and Evaluation

Laura Glass, Director of the Delaware Center for Teacher Education, and Jackie Wilson, Director of the Professional Development Center for Educators/Delaware Academy for School Leadership, facilitated the Teacher and Leader Training and Evaluation breakout session. The session focused on methods that could be used by state education agencies and local education agencies with Title II, Part A funds to support the development of teachers and school leaders. Two important themes discussed included 1) Induction and Mentorship and 2) Transformative School Leadership.

(1) How could Title II, Part A funds be used to improve teacher induction and mentoring programs, such as connecting these programs with educator preparation programs?

SEAs and LEAs should use Title II, Part A funds to establish high-quality induction and mentoring programs that are designed to increase the retention of teachers.

Working group participants engaged in small group discussions on possible teacher induction and mentorship ideas to be implemented using Title II, Part A funds. These ideas included:

- Providing mentoring for teachers new to a district where the mentee could observe the mentor.
- Allowing new teachers to teach directly with mentors in the form of an extended student teaching program.
- Conducting performance assessments for first-year teachers and reducing the schedule and workload of first-year teachers to provide them with more time for training.
- Partnering with institutions of higher education for assistance.
- Establishing a site coordinator position to provide assistance and guidance for new teachers.
- Hiring coaches to provide support, walk-throughs, and professional development for new teachers.

New teachers need support to adjust to and manage their workloads in order to improve classroom instruction and student learning. Creating a work environment that provides them with ample support and time for training and induction is crucial to their long-term success.

(2) How could Title II, Part A funds be used to improve leader induction and coaching programs, such as connecting these programs with leader preparation programs and residency experiences? How can state education agencies and local education agencies guarantee the supportive districts that provide well-trained principal supervisors?

SEAs and LEAs should use Title II, Part A funds to support principals by providing leadership training and opportunities to prepare and develop principals and other school leaders to be effective and strong. Working group participants discussed many ideas to improve and support effective school-leader induction and coaching programs. These ideas included:

- Providing residencies for potential school leaders.
- Creating succession plans to recruit and retain talented staff.
- Offering professional development for first-year principals.
- Providing assistant principals with sufficient professional development so that they are prepared to transition to principals.
- Utilizing principal supervisors/mentors/coaches to evaluate principal professional growth.
- Implementing a “stepping up” model where teachers are given leadership roles to capitalize on their ability to positively impact students due to their day-to-day interactions with them.

Effective principals are important for schools to be successful, as strong principals attract high-quality teachers, support continuing professional development of teachers, and positively impact the retention of successful teachers.

Breakout Session: Statewide Accountability

The Statewide Accountability session was facilitated by Robin Taylor, Accountability Consultant, R² Educational Consulting. During this session working group participants discussed the infrastructure, data, and supports necessary to develop comprehensive plans. They also discussed how to begin the development of these plans and identified some measures for performance and success that could be integrated into this accountability framework.

(1) What infrastructure is needed to begin developing comprehensive plans for consistently underperforming schools and the lowest performing schools?

Key components of the necessary infrastructure include a consistent process that integrates state, district, and school alignment as well as sufficient time for development and implementation. Participant responses included the use of consistent processes and forms over a 3-year period. Further, participants emphasized that all parties and pieces involved need to be connected to the district’s strategic plan (school, state, and district alignment). Realistic timelines for the development, implementation, and revision of plans was also mentioned as an imperative infrastructure need.

The development of a comprehensive plan requires robust and meaningful engagement with the community and key stakeholders. The ability to identify and creatively engage a broad base of key stakeholders and the entire community was noted, keeping in mind that there is often a communication disconnect among parties. To counter this, communication should be targeted for all audiences (i.e., no acronyms only educators know).

Participants spoke to the value of robust needs assessments and asset mapping to identify the key issues facing schools and the resources they have to address them. Participants commented on the need for a robust needs assessment to discover the root causes of key issues facing the district. Asset mapping was identified as a critical step in the process of identifying the resources that districts can use to supplement limited Title I funds.

(2) What data do you have and what do you still need for comprehensive plans?

There needs to be a streamlined, single source of data statewide that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative measures. Participants brainstormed that this could be accomplished through the development and implementation of a “dynamic dashboard” system.

It was also mentioned that a cost-benefit analysis should be conducted on any data system that is developed or used.

(3) What support do you need for comprehensive plans and from whom?

Agencies providing oversight must understand the time demands required to implement these plans, and, in particular, understand how reporting requirements impact the workload of educators. Sufficient time and achievable reporting requirements were identified as key supports. Participants suggested quarterly reporting to DDOE instead of monthly.

Identified critical supports include consistent communication between all involved parties, generating community support, and promoting collaboration with multiple state agencies. Community support was also identified as a necessary item. Schools must work with state agencies that provide supports to students to mitigate the silo effect.

Participants identified that an understanding of best practices and research-based interventions through the creation robust research packets was needed. Additionally, **research on policy and legislative perspectives was mentioned as a key support.** Currently there is conflicting research on what best practices are, so a robust research packet created by a trusted source that identifies them was mentioned as an imperative support. Participants noted that policies that are successful in some states would not necessarily be successful in Delaware.

(4) How or where do you start forming a comprehensive plan?

Participants emphasized that a deep understanding of the content of a comprehensive plan is required; therefore, hiring an outsider to develop the plan can be problematic. Foremost, participants emphasized that the most important step in developing a plan is to ensure that an individual with extensive knowledge of the school conducts the process. Because the work of developing the plan is highly contextual, a deep understanding of the content and unique characteristics of the school is needed.

Consideration of the time commitment for staff required for the development of the plan is needed. Developing a plan is a time-consuming process, and administrators must

ensure that members of the development team are not overwhelmed due to an increased workload.

Conducting a root cause analysis is a critical first step in the development of a comprehensive plan. Conducting a root analysis provides detailed information on the key issues facing a school and allows decision-makers to develop policies that will directly address the unique needs of their school community.

(5) What measures of performance and success should be implemented?

Measure	Rationale	School Levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement and growth for students enrolled in multiple years at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures factors related to achievements Disruption from transiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elementary ✓ Middle ✓ High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff support Access to instructional support School climate Professional development (PD) Professional learning (PL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and individual PD and PL opportunities Support and equitable access is a part of the Opportunity Dashboard Discussion If school climate is not supportive of learning, there wouldn't be successful learning able to occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elementary ✓ Middle ✓ High
Growth during <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PK–K,1,2 K–3 4–8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps data “On track to graduate” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elementary ✓ Middle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance rates School discipline policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time in class (instructional time is needed for academic success) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elementary ✓ Middle ✓ High

Breakout Session: School Supports and Interventions

Breakout Session

Joseph Jones, Director of Assessment and Accountability, New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District, and Amy Grundy, Director of Elementary School, Red Clay Consolidated School District, facilitated the School Supports and Interventions working group. The session was primarily a small-group-based discussion that focused on the critical needs of school communities and how to use ESSA provisions to more effectively and immediately meet those needs. The conversation focused on the need for school communities to have the flexibility to measure and assess success in a school-wide context.

(1) How do we make better and more informed decisions about supports for schools?

Administrators and instructors do not know enough about ESSA and must familiarize themselves with the new regulations to appreciate the flexibility afforded by the law. In order to be effective, group members felt that more information needed to be available about the goals and accountability system involved in ESSA. Group members highlighted the advantage that “there is freedom within funding,” especially for ELA and math funding. However, more information is needed about how consolidated grants can be distributed. Additionally, schools and districts are able to determine what “success” means on an individual basis (including attendance, suspensions, mental health), and can use new tools such as end-of-program testing to assess these needs. The California dashboard was suggested as a best practice for collecting and communicating real-time data, which can be used to more immediately meet these needs. Accountability systems must also be created that recognize when individual schools meet success in the context of their own unique needs.

The basic needs of students must be met before assessment can be meaningful. Some educators emphasized the importance of “whole child considerations,” including health, access to food, quality of sleep, hygiene, access to resources and supplies, and feeling of safety before meaningful knowledge attainment can occur. These considerations require at least a basic understanding of the community and its needs. Students first require access to the resources and technology they need before they are able to gain knowledge. Several schools have the data to know where those gaps lie, but cannot secure the appropriate funding to fill them. Moreover, some administrators can be hesitant to provide funding that can be revoked or removed after instituting a program. Group members also identified a need for teachers familiar

with these high-need students. Newer, less experienced teachers are often the ones that work in schools with high-concentrations of high-needs student while more experienced, effective teachers require incentives to come to teach at these schools. One major barrier to attracting experienced teachers is that it can be difficult to feel successful in a challenging classroom.

(2) How do you fill in the resource gaps between school outcomes, staff capacity, climate and culture, and the school community?

Professional development must take place throughout the system. Administrators, teachers, and the whole school community must be educated on the needs of instruction.

Community partnerships and an environment that is welcoming to parents can be useful assets to help address resource gaps. Strategic partnerships should be formed and planned to ensure that members outside of the community are contributing to the school as needed, and that school activities align with community needs. Parents must also belong to a safe environment where they feel comfortable asking for help.

Needs must be differentiated so that resources are not wasted. All schools do not face the same issues; therefore, continuously providing resources that address generalized and assumed needs of the student population is not helpful.

Innovation is needed in the use of schools to serve as a resource and partner for the community. Schools that are engaged with outside partners could offer those partners a physical place in the school, especially for healthcare services; some districts are already accomplishing this with wellness centers. Students often receive services from a variety of sources outside of schools, and it is critical that this information is shared with schools so they can ensure that they are not providing duplicative services.

Moving Forward

ESSA provides stakeholders across the state with the opportunity to shape the state's education policy in a way that promotes flexible solutions to address the unique needs of students from a variety of backgrounds. While demanding, it is critical that the state and district plans are developed with robust consultation from a broad base of stakeholders to ensure that the state's education system directly addresses the needs of students as defined by Delawareans, as opposed to the federal government. Implementing these plans with fidelity and ensuring that educators have access to professional development opportunities are critical components to ensuring that the state's educational aspirations are achieved. Ultimately, it is critical that these plans are developed and implemented in a manner that puts improving the outcomes for all students across the state first.

ESSA Resources

AASA, The School Superintendents Association. (2016). Delaware: accountability system fact sheet. Retrieved from http://aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/ESSA_Resource_Library/State_Accountability_Primer/State-Accountability-Primer-DE.pdf

AASA, The School Superintendents Association, produced a Delaware-specific brief on Delaware's accountability system. The brief provides an overview of ESSA accountability requirements and what the organization considers the principles of good accountability systems. Additionally, AASA includes a summary of Delaware's current accountability system and history of standards and accountability in the state. The resource is useful because it places the discussion of ESSA accountability in a Delaware-specific context and includes guiding questions for state actors to ask state leaders about accountability systems.

AASA, The School Superintendents Association. (2016). ESSA resource library. Retrieved from <http://www.aasa.org/AASAESSA.aspx>

AASA's ESSA resources page is designed to support school superintendents in their efforts to understand and implement ESSA. The organization produced briefs on a wide array of ESSA topics. AASA published briefs on ESSA accountability, standards, and assessments. Additionally, the organization created briefs on more focused topics like the impact of ESSA on homeless students. The resources page also includes links to the U.S. DOE's proposed regulations and policy guidance. Finally, AASA includes links to its webinar series, which includes an ESSA overview and a webinar devoted to supplement not supplant regulations.

American Federation of Teachers. (2016). Every Student Succeeds Act. Retrieved from <http://www.aft.org/position/every-student-succeeds-act>

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) created a series of online ESSA resources, including a series of ESSA fact sheets by subtopics such as accountability, career and technical education, early childhood education, and English language learners. The fact sheets provide one-page overviews of opportunities in the law by subject area. For example, the early childhood education one-pager outlines where early childhood is referenced in each section of ESSA and how states can leverage provisions in the law to support the topic area. AFT also published a four-page report on accountability systems under ESSA.

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2016). The Every Student Succeeds Act resources. Retrieved from http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Every_Student_Succeeds_Act.html

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) published an extensive set of ESSA-related resources. The resource warehouse is organized by subtopic, including accountability, ELLs, federal funding streams, school supports and interventions, innovation, standards and assessments, teachers and leaders, stakeholder engagement, and implementation considerations. For each subtopic, CCSSO created a critical area outline, which includes a detailed conversation of ESSA requirements and opportunities for states. The resource page also includes CCSSO webinars in each critical area as well as other supporting documents. This page is an excellent resource for understanding all of the provisions in the law.

The Education Trust. (2016). The Every Student Succeeds Act: what's in it? what does it mean for school equity? Retrieved from <https://edtrust.org/resource/the-every-student-succeeds-act-whats-in-it-what-does-it-mean-for-equity/>

The Education Trust published a series of ESSA resources focused on how education leaders, parents, and community members can use the law to advance equity. The organization produced an overview of the law, including a fourteen-page breakdown of its major provisions by topic area. Additionally, the website includes six deep-dive topic areas: standards, assessments, accountability systems, public reporting, teachers and leaders, and funding. In the deep-dive sections, the organization discusses how each topic area relates to equity issues, ESSA requirements, and key questions that equity-minded advocates should be asking.

National Education Association. (2016). ESSA practice guide resources. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/66977.htm>

NEA published a series of informational flyers to help educators understand how the law impacts students, classrooms, schools, and communities. Flyer topics include teacher and para-educator empowerment, opportunity dashboard, and accountability systems. The resources help provide teachers with an understanding of how the law could impact their classrooms and careers and aims to educate teachers so that they can engage in the decision-making process.

National Education Association. (2015) Every Student Succeeds Act reauthorization of appropriations. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/ESSA-%20Authorization-of-Appropriations.pdf>

This chart outlines the appropriations allocated to each title and program under the new law, the legislative citations for each program, and the programs included under each ESSA title. The document includes the authorization of appropriations per year for fiscal years 2017 through 2020.

National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2016). Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act. Retrieved from <http://www.naesp.org/essa>

National Association of Elementary School Principals produced a “Nuts & Bolts of ESSA” webinar series focused on principals and school leaders. The webinar series includes seven publicly available presentations with downloadable slides. Topics include: creating and sustaining highly effective principals, what every principal should know about the law’s accountability requirements, and what principals need to know to support high-quality early childhood education and leadership.

National Conference of State Legislatures. (2016). Summary of the Every Student Succeeds Act, legislation reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Retrieved from http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/ESSA_summary_NCSL.pdf

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) produced a thirteen-page summary of ESSA, outlining its legislative history and major provisions. The summary provides an overview of each title in the law, noteworthy transition and effective dates, and the prohibitions on federal influence found in ESSA. Under each title, NCSL includes a breakdown of funding allocations and the major program and topic areas. This resource provides a comprehensive overview of the major provisions in the law in accessible language.



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