

# Participating in State-Level Implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act in Mississippi

Prepared in partnership with Citizens for a Better Greenville,  
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Southern Echo, Inc., and the Mississippi Delta Catalyst  
Roundtable

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# Roadmap of Discussion



**Part 1:** Historical context and brief overview of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

**Part 2:** Review of what ESSA requires states to do and consider responses to the Mississippi Department of Education's (MDE) public feedback questions

**Part 3:** Discussion of next steps

# Historical Context

- **1776:** Constitutional Convention decides that public education is a "State Right" not to be decided by the federal government.
- **1817 & 1832:** Slaves codes of the MS Constitution make it illegal for Blacks to read and write.
- **1865-1877 (Reconstruction Era):** Southern states rewrite their Constitutions; Reconstructionist politicians build systems for the first public schools, hospitals, roads and the first national health care system for freed slaves.
- **1868:** Thomas Cardoza becomes the first Black state supt. of education in MS.

# Historical Context

- **1869:** MS Constitution establishes the first free system of public schools in the state.
- **1890-1900:** Southern legislative "redeemers" rewrite their state Constitutions to undo the racial, economic, and educational gains made during reconstruction.
- **1890:** MS rewrites its Constitution.
- **1954:** Brown v. Board of Education declares state laws requiring segregated schools to be unconstitutional.
- **1955:** MS legislature passes the "Minimum Education Funding Act" (MEFA).



# The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)

- A civil rights law signed by President Lyndon Johnson, as part of his “War on Poverty” agenda.
- “It represent[ed] a major new commitment of the federal government to quality and equality in the schooling that we offer our young people.”
- Title I of ESEA provided funding support to schools with a high percentage of low-income students.
- ESEA has been changed and approved by Congress numerous times over the years.



# ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)

- Signed into law by President Barack Obama on December 10, 2015.
- Replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, which expired in 2007.
- Purpose of ESSA is ***“to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.”***

# State Plans and Accountability Systems under ESSA

- Requires states that apply for funding under Title I to develop plans, *in consultation with parents and other stakeholders*, indicating that the state has:
  - adopted challenging academic and achievement standards; and
  - Developed accountability systems that are
    - based on several indicators, such as academic achievement, and
    - identifies schools and subgroups of students in need of support and improvement.



# ESSA Implementation Timeline



- **August 1, 2016** - State waivers under No Child Left Behind expired.
- **2016-17 School Year** – State plan development.
- **May 31 – August 1, 2016** – Public comment period for Education Department’s proposed regulations on state plans and accountability.
- **March 6 or July 5, 2017** – Proposed deadline for state plans.
- **2017 -18 School Year** – New accountability systems take effect.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions:

- What does a successful student, school, and district look like?

## Teacher & Leader Quality:

- What does an effective teacher look like?
- What does an effective school leader look like?
- Is experience a measure of effectiveness?
- Is licensure a measure of effectiveness?

## School & District Report Cards:

- What information **currently** helps you know if your student, school, and district is successful?
- What **other** information would help you know if your student, school, and district is successful?



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## School Supports:

- What other resources or supports do families need to help students succeed in school (i.e., homework tips, school/family communication suggestions, websites)?
- In what ways would you like to see low-performing schools supported by MDE?

## Accountability:

- Other than state test scores, which of the following indicators of school quality should be considered in school ratings (i.e. teacher absenteeism, student absenteeism, and the learning environment)



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## ESSA and Accountability

- ESSA requires states to determine the success of students, schools, and districts, using at least 4 indicators:
  - Performance on annual tests;
  - Four-year high school graduation rates;
  - Progress in achieving English language proficiency; and
  - **School quality or student success** - one or more of the following:
    - Student engagement;
    - Educator engagement;
    - Student access to and completion of advanced coursework
    - **School climate and safety**; and
    - Any other indicator the state chooses.



# School Climate and Discipline Problems in Mississippi

- During the 2011-12 school year, 51,030 students in MS experienced one or more out-of-school suspensions. Black students made up only 49.9 percent of the state's student population, but comprised 74.3 percent of the students who received out-of-school suspensions.
- School administrators referred 2,363 students to law enforcement; 72.6 percent were Black students.
- Many students have landed in youth court for minor misbehavior, such as disorderly conduct.



# How School Climate and Discipline Impacts Black Boys

- Black boys are more likely to experience punitive discipline practices than any other racial or ethnic group.
- In MS, Black boys made up only 25.3 percent of the population, but comprised 47.9 percent of students who received out-of-school suspensions and 49.4 percent of students who receive referrals to law enforcement.



# How School Climate and Discipline Impacts Black Girls

- Girls of color are the fastest growing population in the juvenile justice system, and national data indicate that Black girls are six times more likely to be suspended or expelled than white girls, and more likely to be suspended than most every racial and ethnic group of boys, except for Black boys.
- In MS, Black girls made up 24.6 percent of the population, but comprised 26.4 percent of the students who received out-of-school suspensions and 23.2 percent of the students who received referrals to law enforcement.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Accountability

- **Other than state test scores, which of the following indicators of school quality should be considered in school ratings**
  - School climate and safety, measured by student surveys and data on suspensions, expulsions, school-based arrests, and referrals to law enforcement
  - Student attendance



# Responding to the MS Department of Education's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions

- **What does a successful student look like?**
  - Has mastered grade-level standards in all relevant subject areas.
  - Is creative, innovative, and competent.
  - Is healthy, happy, and nurtured.
  - Is confident, has the discipline to focus, and is a critical thinker.
  - Has opportunities to question, push back, and challenge.
  - Is a cooperative learner that supports the success of their peers.
  - Is part of the decision-making process at all levels.
  - Is a community builder and peer mediator that is knowledgeable of restorative justice and other alternative discipline practices.



# Responding to the MS Department of Education's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions

- **What does a successful school look like?**
  - Has the resources needed to provide a high-quality learning experience for all students (i.e. high quality curriculum, technology, etc.).
  - Promotes and supports the academic success of all students by fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.
  - Advances fair and effective disciplinary practices and provides supports that teach positive behaviors (e.g. PBIS, restorative justice and trauma-informed practices).
  - Has strong, caring and respectful relationships between school staff, students, and parents, including mutual respect for differences (race, ethnicity, LGBTQ identity, and disabilities) that is fostered through professional development on culturally responsive teaching and discipline practices.



# Responding to the MS Department of Education's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions

- **What does a successful school look like? (Continued)**
  - Supports, and nurtures the whole child and provides opportunities for students to engage in the arts (e.g. dance, drama, music, and visual arts).
  - Supports students' transition back into school after incarceration.
  - Has an effective plan for assisting students with transitioning to the next step in their education (i.e. middle school, high school, college) or to careers.
  - Provides supports for families and has an effective family and community engagement plan.
  - Physical appearance reflects an institution of learning and not incarceration (e.g. free from bars on the windows).



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions

- **What does a successful district look like?**
  - Has policies and practices that reflect high expectations for all students and that prioritize students' needs.
  - Ensures that all schools have the human and financial resources needed to create a high-quality learning environment and a positive school climate that supports the academic and socio-emotional needs of all students, including adequate support staff (counselors, social workers, etc.) and comprehensive professional development for teachers and administrators, including PD in positive school discipline practices, trauma-informed learning environments, and human development.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions

- **What does a successful district look like? (Continued)**
  - Promotes transformative, non-punitive discipline practices developed with community input that are rooted in cultural competency and address the root causes of misbehavior.
  - Provides trainings and other resources for parents to strengthen and support the connection between home and school.
  - Provides clear codes of conduct for schools that limit suspensions and the role of School Resource Officers (including prohibiting suspensions, arrests or tickets for minor misbehavior); requires training for SROs; prioritizes positive behavior interventions (such as PBIS, restorative justice and trauma-informed practices); and avoids relying on SROs to address student needs.
  - Addresses critical teacher shortages through effective teacher recruitment and retention strategies (e.g. higher salaries for teachers in high-needs schools), as well as alternative methods of teacher licensure.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions

- **What does a successful district look like? (Continued)**
  - Recruits and retains effective school leaders by building leadership pipelines in the school community; receives community input on hiring decisions; and removes ineffective leaders.
  - Has a clear code of ethics for school leaders and teachers and ensures that school staff and leadership are held accountable for violations of the law.
  - Makes budgetary decisions based on data that reveals effective and ineffective practices.
  - Has an effective plan for providing schools with the supports needed to address the needs of students with mental health issues and other disabilities.
  - Implements policies that help students transition back into school after incarceration.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Guiding Questions

- **What does a successful district look like? (Continued)**
  - Provides schools with the supports they need to address the root causes of racial discrimination and poverty.
  - Has an effective P-16 model that provides a bridge from early childhood education through college.
  - Has adequate district-wide resources, including adequate transportation services.
  - Provides resources such as housing to provide incentives to teachers to live in the communities where they work.

# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## ESSA and Teacher & Leader Quality

- Under ESSA, states have a lot of flexibility to decide how to evaluate teachers and school leaders; student test scores are no longer required to be a significant part of how they are evaluated.
- NCLB required teachers of core classes to be "highly qualified" (i.e. hold a bachelor's degree, have state certification, and have demonstrated content knowledge); under ESSA, teachers only need to fulfill their state's licensing requirements.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Teacher & Leader Quality

- **What does an effective teacher look like?**
  - Highly qualified and certified in the subject they are teaching.
  - Produces positive academic outcomes for students.
  - Has a commitment to continuous improvement and receives professional development on a regular basis.
  - Supported by veteran teachers who offer guidance when needed.
  - Receives training to implement effective classroom management strategies and discipline practices that keep students in the classroom.
  - Has an attitude that reflects love and compassion and high expectations for all students.

# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Teacher & Leader Quality

- **What does an effective teacher look like? (Continued)**
  - Is an effective teacher of human development skills and provides a caring and nurturing environment for all students.
  - Has a deep understanding of and a commitment to the community served.
  - Embraces practices that reflect cultural competency and a sensitivity to and understanding of issues of race, class, gender, and LGBTQ identity.
  - Ensures that each student has an individualized instructional plan that addresses their specific needs.
  - Has consistent attendance.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Teacher & Leader Quality

- **What does an effective school leader look like?**
  - Ensures that each student has an individualized instructional plan that addresses their specific needs.
  - Supports teachers in implementing effective classroom management strategies and discipline practices that keep students in the classroom by providing professional development and other supports.
  - Implements effective and innovative teacher recruitment and retention strategies that address teacher turnover.
  - Effectively evaluates teachers and identifies those in need of additional supports and provides the training and other resources needed for improvement, with a particular focus on teachers with four years of experience or less.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Teacher & Leader Quality

- **What does an effective school leader look like? (Continued)**
  - Is an effective instructional leader with a significant and successful track record of teaching experience and a commitment to continuous professional and leadership development.
  - Has an effective parent and community engagement plan, a process from securing buy-in from all community stakeholders, and a commitment to community development.
  - Has an attitude that reflects love and compassion and high expectations for all students.

# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Teacher & Leader Quality

- **Is experience a measure of effectiveness?**
  - Yes, but not the only measure (see previous slide).
- **Is licensure a measure of effectiveness?**
  - Yes, but not the only measure (see previous slide).
  - Alternative licensure methods should be utilized to address teacher shortages.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## School & District Report Cards

- What information **CURRENTLY** helps you know if your student, school, and district is successful?
  - Mississippi school and district report cards currently include:
    - **Growth** in reading and math test scores;
    - **Proficiency** in reading, math, science, and history; and
    - **Graduation rates**

# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## ESSA and School & District Report Cards

- States must annually publish and distribute to the public, ***in a language that is understandable to parents***, a report card that includes data on:
  - Accountability indicators (e.g. state test scores, graduation rates, English language proficiency, and a measure of school quality or student success)
  - School discipline data (e.g. suspensions, expulsions, school-based arrests, and referrals to law enforcement)
  - Educator qualifications
  - Federal, state, and local per-pupil spending
  - The number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities taking alternate assessments



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## School & District Report Cards

- **What other information would help you know if your student/school/district is successful?**
  - Ensure that schools and districts are responsible for the achievement of all students, including racial and ethnic groups and students with disabilities.
    - Currently in MS, a particular student group (for example, African Americans) must contain at least 10 students for that group's success at school to be measured, state officials should maintain this number.
  - Include students who self-identify as LGBTQ as a subgroup of students whose performance is measured.
  - Indicate the number of support staff such as counselors and social workers.
  - Indicate the number of school-based police officers.

# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## School & District Report Cards (Continued)

- **What other information would help you know if your student/school/district is successful?**
  - Indicate the use of alternative discipline practices (e.g. restorative justice).
  - Include data on teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher absenteeism.
  - Indicate which schools have been identified for improvement and support.
  - Indicate the school-level and district-wide poverty rate.
  - Indicate access to extracurricular activities.
  - Indicate how Title I funds are spent.
  - Include data regarding teacher and school leader diversity.
  - Indicate access to rigorous coursework and access to early childhood education.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## ESSA and School Improvement Supports

- Under ESSA, when schools are identified for improvement, the school district is required to collaborate with local stakeholders to develop and implement a plan to improve student outcomes that:
  - Includes evidence-based interventions;
  - Is based on a school needs assessment; and
  - Identifies and addresses resource inequities.

# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## School Improvement Supports

- **What other resources or supports do families need to help students succeed in school (i.e. homework tips, school/family communication suggestions, websites)?**
  - Effective and innovative communication strategies that allow all parents, especially working parents, to be engaged and informed (e.g. text messages about students progress).
  - Information provided in a timely manner.
  - Parent trainings on supporting students' success (e.g. homework tips, etc.) and on advocating for students' rights.
  - Schools that serve as community resource centers, providing a range of resources to parents and families (e.g. libraries, computer labs, etc.) after school hours, with transportation provided.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## School Improvement Supports

- **In what ways would you like to see low-performing schools supported by MDE?**
  - Identify all schools that do not meet the state's accountability goals to be identified for improvement, not just the bottom 5% percent.
  - Support schools and districts in identifying what human and financial resources are lacking and in addressing these inequities—including numbers of support staff (e.g. counselors, social workers, etc.), instructional materials and supplies, building facilities, etc.).
  - Encourage school districts to consider school climate indicators, such as school discipline data, in the needs assessments for schools identified for improvement and include strategies to promote positive school climates in the improvement plans for these schools.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## School Improvement Supports

### **In what ways would you like to see low-performing schools supported by MDE? (Continued)**

- Encourage schools and districts to include requests for funding to implement research-based strategies, such as restorative practices and schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SPBIS), in their improvement plan requests.
- Support schools in addressing teacher shortages by implementing effective teacher recruitment and retention strategies and alternative methods for teacher certification, and encourage schools and districts to include strategies to address any teacher shortages in their improvement plans.
- Develop high-quality assessments that are appropriate for all students with input from experts with an understanding of diverse learning styles.
- Develop an improvement plan for school leaders of low-performing schools.



# Responding to MDE's Public Feedback Survey

## Other Key Issues:

- Ensure students involved in the juvenile justice system receive quality instruction and transition back into the public school system after incarceration.
  - ESSA requires states to assist students who become involved in the juvenile justice system to re-enroll in school, including by providing incarcerated students opportunities to take courses with transferable credits that lead to a regular high school diploma.
  - MDE should implement policies that help students transition back into school by improving the quality of coursework offered in detention facilities and ensure they are aligned with state standards.



# Next Steps

- Participate in the MDE listening tour in Hernando on Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>
- Submit a comment letter to MDE that outlines recommendations for the state's ESSA plan.
- Request a meeting with MDE to discuss recommendations and opportunities to continued to be involved in the development of the state plan (through participation in advisory committees, etc.).
- Ongoing discussion and strategizing within the community.

# Contacts

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# MDE Contact for Stakeholder Engagement in ESSA Implementation

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DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS

**LDF**

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# Resources

***The Every Student Succeeds Act: An ESSA Overview***, Education Week:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/every-student-succeeds-act/index.html?override=web>

***The 12 Dimensions of School Climate***, National School Climate Center:

[http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/documents/dimensions\\_chart\\_pagebars.pdf](http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/documents/dimensions_chart_pagebars.pdf)

***Safe and Supportive Learning: School Climate***:

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/school-climate>



# Resources

***A Model School Code on Education and Dignity, Dignity in Schools***

Campaign: [http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/Model\\_Code\\_2013.pdf](http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/Model_Code_2013.pdf)

***Unlocking Opportunity for African-American Girls***, NAACP Legal Defense Fund:

[http://www.naacpldf.org/files/publications/Unlocking%20Opportunity%20for%20African%20American%20Girls\\_0.pdf](http://www.naacpldf.org/files/publications/Unlocking%20Opportunity%20for%20African%20American%20Girls_0.pdf)

***LGBTQ Youth of Color: Discipline Disparities, School Push-Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline***, Genders and Sexualities Alliance Network:

[https://gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/LGBTQ\\_brief\\_FINAL-web.pdf](https://gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/LGBTQ_brief_FINAL-web.pdf)

