ESSA and Early Childhood
Exploring What’s Possible
District Planning Overview

- What is a district plan?
- What is the timeline for development and submission of plans? What is the process?
- How should stakeholders be included?
- How can we work together to create a new strategic plan for use of resources and community supports?
- Who are the partners in this work?
Why Birth to Eight?

The most rapid period of development in human life happens from birth to eight.

End of third grade outcomes predict academic achievement and career success.
North Carolina Prioritizes Birth to Third Grade

- North Carolina’s leaders recognize that the years from birth through age eight are a unique developmental continuum and that an aligned system is needed to ensure children’s optimal development and school success.
  - Every Student Succeeds Act
  - Session Law 2016-94, Section 12B.5.(a) and (b), titled State Agency Collaboration on Early Childhood Education/Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
  - Birth-3 Interagency Council
  - State Board of Education Strategic Plan
  - NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading
  - My Future NC
ESSA Overview

- The biggest shift in ESSA is that it moves more authority regarding the design of state education systems from the federal level back toward states and districts to build on and go beyond state flexibility reflected in ESEA waivers.

- The precise meaning and impact of ESSA will continue to play out through regulations, guidance, and implementation over the coming months and years – presenting both opportunities and risks on the federal, state, and local levels for improving education systems and outcomes for all students in the nation.

- This new structure provides opportunities and challenges for the early childhood community, both inside and outside of state and local education agencies.

- References to early education programs, teachers, and students appear throughout the legislation, with a focus on improving transitions, enhancing quality, and improving coordination between local education agencies, schools and existing early childhood programs and reflect the overall transition in ESSA to a flexible approach to interventions and programming.
ESSA and Equity

- Children who are homeless
- Children from language minority households
- Children in protective services
- Children living in communities with schools in improvement status
WHAT ARE THE EARLY LEARNING REQUIREMENTS IN ESSA?
## What Are the Early Learning Requirements in ESSA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Section</th>
<th>Instance</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Allowable/Possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title I, Part A Sec. 1111(a)(1)(B)</strong></td>
<td>SEA Plan</td>
<td>SEAs must coordinate with other programs that provide services for young children, including the IDEA, CCDBG, and Head Start, among other programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title I, Part A Sec. 1111(c)</strong></td>
<td>SEA Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>In its State plan, an SEA must describe a Statewide accountability system that includes not less than one indicator of school quality or student success, which State may be of the State’s choosing. This indicator must allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance and is valid, reliable, comparable, and Statewide (e.g., an early learning measure).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title I, Part A Sec. 1111(g)(1)(A)</strong></td>
<td>SEA Plan</td>
<td>SEAs must describe in their State Title I plans how the State will provide assistance to LEAs and schools choosing to use Title I funds to support early childhood education programs.</td>
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Allowable Uses of Title I Funds

• Classroom-based instructional programs.
• Salaries and benefits for teachers and other staff.
• Home visiting programs.
• Extended day programs in Head Start or community-based child care programs.
• Professional development for early childhood professionals who serve Title I eligible children, including providers in non-school settings.
• Support services, such as nutrition, vision, dental, and counseling services.
• Screening and diagnostic assessment.
• Summer enrichment programs for young children and their families.
• Transition programs.
ESSA and Early Learning: Coordination Requirements

- **LEAs are required to coordinate with Head Start programs.** The new law holds LEAs responsible for developing agreements to role work with Head Start programs to coordinate services, which could include data reporting and sharing, alignment of standards and curriculum, and transition plans for children moving from Head Start and into the public school programs for pre-kindergarten or kindergarten.

- The requirement to coordinate also applies to local schools who opt to provide early childhood programming as part of their schoolwide model under Title I.
ESSA and Early Learning: Coordination Requirements

- **Opportunity:** Transition activities are not defined within the legislation, providing an opportunity for SEAs, LEAs and local early childhood providers to work together to create appropriate and meaningful pathways for children and their parents into schools.

- **Activities:**
  - Convening regular planning committees or joining existing community-level working groups
  - Sharing assessment data
  - Joint professional development
  - Alignment of curriculum and standards
  - Summer learning programs for preschool children moving into school settings
  - Family engagement activities
ESSA and Early Learning: Accountability and Data Reporting

- **SEAs and LEAs are now required to report on the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool programs.**

- SEAs and LEAs will create report cards with a set of indicators and measures that provide stakeholders with information about children’s progress.

- **Opportunity:** Indicators and measures can highlight demographic shifts, status of children’s learning, experiences and gaps. Existing data efforts may provide the policy recommendations and data infrastructure for state and local leaders to work together to understand children’s experiences and needs.
Pathways 0-8 Literacy Development Milestones

- Language Skills on Track at 24, 36, and 48 Months
- Developmentally Ready at Kindergarten Entry
- Meeting Expected Growth in Reading (K-3)
- Reading at Grade-Level by the End of Third Grade

All children with disabilities achieve expressive and receptive communication skills commensurate with their developmental ages.

www.buildthefoundation.org/pathways
ESSA and Early Learning: Accountability and Data Reporting

**Activities:**

- Identify sources of information about children in early childhood programs to know where children birth to five are enrolled, whether they are enrolled in multiple settings to create full day and year programs.
- Adopt tracking and reporting mechanisms and targeted school-based interventions tied to suspensions and expulsions from birth through third grade.
- Use Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for all districts using Title I funds for early learning programs.
- Create materials in all required languages for parents to understand information in assessments and develop home based activities to support teaching and learning goals.
ESSA and Early Learning: Professional Development

- Title I, Title II and Title III include language encouraging SEAs and LEAs to expand professional development opportunities to include early childhood providers and to expand the child development knowledge of principals and other school leaders.

- This language promotes joint professional development that includes school staff and community based providers, and that focuses on transition, "issues related to school readiness," and other content designed to meet the needs of students through age 8.

- If implemented well, these provisions could elevate the quality of professional development available to early learning providers and improve alignment and expectations between community based early learning providers and pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers in schools.
ESSA and Early Learning: Professional Development

- **Opportunity:** This could provide new funding for aligned professional development that incorporates child development and includes professionals along the early learning continuum.

- **Activities:**
  - Identify and promote existing professional learning opportunities and leverage substitutes, CEUs and cohort training models.
  - Joint professional learning that focuses on the full range of development and promotes teaching and learning practices appropriate for all children.
  - Create local Early Childhood Education leadership track to support school and community leaders in effectively implementing early childhood programs.
  - Adopt coaching and mentoring practices, as well as peer-to-peer modeling for early childhood and early elementary classrooms.
  - Promote and evaluate appropriate classroom management strategies and teacher-child interactions.
ESSA and Early Learning: School Improvement

- States are required under the law to identify the lowest performing schools, based on their own indicators and develop evidence based interventions to improve outcomes.

- **LEAs and schools must do a needs assessment.**

- **Opportunities:** The process should reflect the experiences of children before they enter school and community resources.

- **Activities:**
  - Include a “landscape analysis” of the early childhood opportunities available to children in the community. This analysis could focus on a set of key questions designed to identify whether families served by the low-performing school have access to quality.
  - Use the needs assessment to identify partners for evidence based interventions for early learning, before- and after- school, summer learning and wraparound supports and services.
  - Promote use of evidence-based early learning interventions in school improvement plans.
ESSA and Early Learning: Building Early Literacy Skills

- **State accountability systems address reading and math in third grade and beyond.**
- ESSA promotes early literacy through various mechanisms including separate grant programs and recommended uses of funds.
- Early literacy is a priority in professional development, programs serving language minority children

**Opportunity:** Focusing the community around early literacy gains for all children can help to coordinate activities, drive resources to effective professional learning and identify appropriate indicators across the birth to third grade continuum.
ESSA and Early Learning: Building Early Literacy Skills

**Activities:**

- Disseminate research on best practices for formative assessments that cross pre-k to third grade that reflect appropriate development, cultural competency and are valid and reliable for all students.

- Adopt a kindergarten entrance assessment/profile, kindergarten readiness indicators or other measures (including participation in high quality, full day early childhood programs) to identify literacy gaps to be used before third grade assessments as a diagnostic tool to inform instruction and include on state and local report cards.

- Provide professional development and coaching to both school- and community-based teachers that creates high quality, developmentally appropriate (including supports for social-emotional development) teacher-child interactions that build early language and literacy skills.

- Create materials in all required languages for parents to understand information in assessments and develop home based activities to support teaching and learning goals.
What does it look like?

• **Gwinnet County, GA** has used Title I to support a district transition specialist and transition teams in 25 Title I elementary schools.

• **Melrose, MA** used Title I to offer comprehensive screening to all 4-year-olds in the district, to identify at-risk children. One hundred percent of Title I funds were used for early childhood.

• Children from birth to age five attend all-day, early childhood learning centers in **Davenport, Iowa**. Title I supported infant and toddler classrooms. State grants, special education, Head Start funding and tuition supported integrated preschool classrooms in the Children’s Villages.

• **The Chicago-Child Parent Centers** provide comprehensive educational and family support services to low-income children at 13 sites in high-poverty neighborhoods. Title I has supported all program components.
### Accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can the LEA look at metrics that cross birth to 3rd (i.e., chronic absenteeism, suspension/ expulsion)?</td>
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<td>How is data used to improve teaching and learning across birth-3rd grade?</td>
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<td>How are other early childhood priorities included in reporting requirements?</td>
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### School Improvement

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<tr>
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<td>Are there early childhood interventions included as schools are identified?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the interventions for pk-3?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>How does the needs assessment include access to HQ ECE by subgroup?</td>
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### Assessment and Standards

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<tr>
<td>What assessments are valid and reliable across the birth to 3rd grade?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can early learning standards and K-3 standards be more closely aligned and implemented in through a coordinated approach?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can PD be used to support improved alignment across birth to third grade?</td>
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### All Students College and Career Ready

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>How is resource equity applied to early childhood programs/pk-3?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the role of a KEA in shaping teaching and learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can the LEA include early childhood in building a continuum across pk-12?</td>
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Data Available for Districts

- Pathways Data Book
- Fact Sheet on NC’s Efforts to Strengthen Birth-through-Eight Continuum
- Early Learning Requirements and Opportunities in the ESEA and Related Programs
- Policy Levers to Promote Early Literacy in ESSA State and Local Plans
- Planning for the Transition to Kindergarten - Why it Matters and How to Promote Success
- Uses of Title I funds
- Attendance in the Early Grades: Why it Matters for Reading
- AtteNdanCe Counts (includes NC information)
- New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) A Toolkit for State and Local Educational Agencies, Head Start Programs, and the Early Childhood Field
- Directory of Child Care Staff at County Departments of Social Services
- Directory of Child Care Licensing Staff