



Stakeholder Input for Maryland's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan

General Survey

As MSDE staff worked on developing the first draft of Maryland's Consolidated State Plan, a general survey was posted on the MSDE website as a way to capture feedback from interested parties who were not necessarily involved in any of the focus group meetings or as part of the subcommittees. This survey was posted from September 12, 2016 until December 7, 2016, when it was replaced with a more specific survey designed with the first draft of Maryland's plan.

Seventeen individuals responded to this survey. Respondents could indicate membership in more than one group, of which seven did. Nine respondents (52.94%) indicated they are parents. Five marked other and included a member of higher education, a Department of Social Services Community Resource Advocate, a school technology support technician, a community school partner/nonprofit, and a researcher. Four respondents (23.53%) identified as teachers. Three (17.65%) identified as an English Language Learner Advocate and three (17.65%) as members of a community group. One (5.88%) identified as a member of the business community and another (5.88%) as a member of a nonpublic school. Finally, one respondent (5.88%) indicated membership as a special education advocate. The seventeen respondents came from eight Local Education Agencies (LEAs) within the State including, Anne Arundel County (11.76%), Baltimore City (17.65%), Baltimore County (11.76%), Carrol County (5.88%), Charles County (5.88%), Montgomery County (23.53%), Prince George's County (17.65%), and Queen Anne's County (5.88%).

The first question asked respondents for any comments about Standards and Assessments in Maryland. Thirteen of the seventeen individuals answered this question. The responses were generally supportive of the Standards in Maryland, with one individual even requesting the State provide curricula to the LEAs. Assessments were more controversial. Three respondents specifically state that there is too much time spent on assessment and one individual suggested the use of portfolio based student achievement. A concern was raised about the lack of standards for students pursuing a certificate of program completion. Finally, multiple respondents requested that parents, families, and students all be more involved in the process of creating and developing standards.

The second question asked respondents to identify what indicators they believe should be part of Maryland's new accountability system. Fifteen of the seventeen respondents provided an answer to this question. Graduation rates were the most requested indicator, with three individuals suggesting it. Achievement, school climate and safety, suspension rates, professional development for teachers, access to technology, and statistics for inclusion of students all were mentioned at least twice in respondents answers. Finally, individuals mentioned other things such as teacher happiness, student anxiety, parent rapport with teachers and parental involvement, measures of diversity of the curriculum, the availability of Pre-K, teachers with upper level education, STEM programs, student attendance, CTE completers, and teacher turnover.

Question number three inquired about ideas for how MSDE can ensure children with disabilities and English Learners are appropriately represented in the accountability system. Eleven of the 17 respondents provided an answer to this question. Recommendations include: encouraging bilingualism, providing opportunities for students to speak and value their home languages, hiring more teachers with language skills, and focusing on individual student growth. Respondents also noted that parents and communities should be more engaged in the development of these strategies.

The fourth question asked about recommendations for effectively supporting low performing schools. Fifteen respondents provided a response to this question. The two strategies mentioned most often (four times each) were involving community and parents in results of assessments and creation of the school plans and providing more money to low performing schools. Other suggestions which at least two respondents chose include: using the community school model and supporting high quality out-of-school programs. Some individuals also thought it would be effective to provide multilingual services, support smaller class sizes, support social emotional learning, replace principals, institute vouchers, determine mandatory professional development for teachers, provide more support staff, including more guidance counselors, and more technology. Finally, one respondent noted that needs assessment should be conducted for every low performing school.

The final question focused on suggestions for how MSDE can best support educators and ensure all students have access to an effective teacher. Fourteen respondents provided answers and three skipped the question. The overwhelming suggestion, made by seven of the fourteen individuals, was more professional development for teachers. Four individuals suggested Maryland pay teachers more, three believe that improving teacher education programs will provide more effective educators, and three others suggested that teachers receive more training on the Universal Design of Learning principles. Other suggestions included: using culturally responsive pedagogy, removing the use of student learning objectives, providing more planning time, and engaging community based partners.