Alabama ESSA Key Decisions

DRAFT report of the Alabama ESSA Implementation Committee -- November 1, 2016

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Accountability Work Group Alabama Recommendation
1. The minimum number of students (n-size) that the State determines are necessary with respect to the disaggregation of information, including:	*N* Count = 20
1.a How that number is statistically sound;	1.a Data Analysis has been completed for a sampling of different N counts.
1.b How such minimum number of students was determined by the State, including how the State collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents and other stakeholders when determining such minimum number; and	1.b The *N* count of 20 should remain to enable appropriate supports to be provided to students in various sub populations.
1.c How the State ensures that such minimum number is sufficient to not reveal any personally identifiable information"	1.c The *N* count of 20 is above the FERPA regulation requirements and will show transparency in reporting of subgroup.
2. States will have to establish "ambitious long-term goals, which shall include measurements of "interim" progress toward meeting such goals." States must decide what constitutes "ambitious" "long-term" and "interim." These goals include:	2. The work group recommends to wait on the federal regulations/ guidelines, with the stipulation that research and statistical data models be taken into consideration for establishing these goals. (for indicators 2a-2c)
2.a Academic achievement as measured by proficiency on annual state assessments; and	
2.b Graduation rates in which states must decide if they want to use the extended-year rate in addition to the required 4-year cohort graduation rate.	
2. With respect to English learners, increases in the percentage of students making progress achieving English language proficiency, within a timeline which must be determined by the State.	

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Accountability Work Group Alabama Recommendation
3. States will have to annually measure for all students and separately for each subgroup of students the following indicators:	
3.a For all schools and based on the long-term goals, academic achievement as measured by proficiency on annual state assessments and at the discretion of the state, student growth on such assessments for each public high school in the state;	3.a The work group recommends in order to ensure a single system of accountability for all Alabama public schools and LEAs, data from the following indicators will be utilized: Student Achievement and Learning Gains (High School Growth)
3.b For non-high schools, any other measure of growth as determined by the state (not necessarily based on the state assessments), or another valid and reliable indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance;	3.b The work group recommends in order to ensure a single system of accountability for all Alabama public schools and LEAs, data from the following indicators will be utilized: • Learning Gains (Non-High School Growth)
3.c For high schools, graduation rates in which states must decide if they want to use the extended-year rate in addition to the required 4-year cohort graduation rate;	3.c The work groups recommends in order to ensure a single system of accountability for all Alabama public high schools and LEAs, data from the following indicator will be utilized: • Graduation Rate (Utilizing both 4 year cohort and 5 year cohort data)
3.d For all schools, progress of ELs in attaining English language proficiency--states must decide what is meant by "progress." This could be just a continuation of the indicator a state is currently using under the similar NCLB language in Title III;	3.d The work group recommends in order to ensure a single system of accountability for all Alabama public schools and LEAs, data currently collected by Federal Programs utilizing baselines established by the WIDA Consortium from the ACCESS.
3.e For all schools, one additional school quality or student success indicator – states must decide what additional indicator or indicators they will use that allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance.	3.e The work group recommends in order to ensure a single system of accountability for all Alabama public high schools and LEAs, data from the following indicators will be utilized: • College and Career Ready for schools with a grade 12 • Attendance Rate for all public schools

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Accountability Work Group Alabama Recommendation
4. States must develop a system to meaningfully differentiate all public schools in the state.	
4.a States will have to decide how much weight to assign to each indicator, while ensuring that each such indicator has substantial weight.	4.a The work group recommends to wait on the federal regulations/ guidelines, with the stipulation that research and statistical data models be taken into consideration for establishing these goals. (for indicators 4a,4b,4d)
4.b State must also ensure that in the aggregate, the indicators that do not include the additional school quality or student success indicators are assigned a much greater weight. States will need to decide what constitutes "substantial" and "much greater".	4. b The work group recommends to wait on the federal regulations/ guidelines, with the stipulation that research and statistical data models be taken into consideration for establishing these goals. (for indicators 4a,4b,4d)
4.c States will need to decide whether to count former ELs as part of the EL subgroup for up to four years after they exit EL status. States will need to decided guidelines for recently arrived ELs who have been enrolled in an U.S. school for less than one year, ESSA outlines two options: **OPTION 1:** States' school performance calculations may exclude the results from math, ELA, and English language proficiency assessments taken by recently arrived ELs during their first year. States may also exempt these students from taking the ELA assessment entirely during that first year. **OPTION 2:** This options-which is new under ESSA- allows states to phase in recently arrived ELs' assessment results for accountability purposes over three years, as outlined below. ▪ **First year:** Recently arrived ELs take math, ELA and English language proficiency assessments, but the results are not used for any accountability purposes. ▪ **Second year:** ELs take all three assessments; states use the measure of the students' growth on the assessments between the two years for accountability purposes. ▪ **Third year:** beginning in year three, ELs' academic results count toward school performance and are reported the same way al all other students.	4.c This item falls under the **Standards, Assessments and ELL Workgroup**. The recommendation of the workgroup is **Option 2.**

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Accountability Work Group Alabama Recommendation
4.d The indicator measuring progress of ELs in attaining English proficiency does not need to be an annual indicator; states need to decide how often to use this indicator.	4.d The work group recommends to wait on the federal regulations/ guidelines, with the stipulation that research and statistical data models be taken into consideration for establishing these goals. (for indicators 4a,4b,4d)
5 States must decide a methodology for identifying schools for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) and for determining if additional categories of schools, beyond what is required, should be included. This must be "not less than the lowest=performing 5% of all schools receiving funds under this part in the State."	5. The work group recommends utilizing a support model that identifies every school within the state based on multiple performance levels. Factors that will be considered in the identification of schools: • Identification in the bottom 6%* (no less than the bottom %5 as required by ESSA guidelines) of the schools • History of being identified among the bottom 6% for 3 years • Scoring an F in the area of achievement on the state report card *The 6% identifications is in alignment with the state Failing Schools Law (AAA).
6. ESSA requires that high schools that graduate fewer than two-thirds of their students be identified for comprehensive support and improvement (this identification is to be made based on the four-year adjusted cohort rate). Unless the Department regulates on this issue, states will need to decide what rate to use.	6. The workgroup recommends using ESSA requirements for a school with a Graduation Rate of less than 67% to be identified for comprehensive support and improvement.
7. States must decide how the requirement that 95% of all students and students in each subgroup participate in assessments will factor into their state accountability systems.8 a.	7. The work group discussed the proposed options under federal regulations and decided to wait until further guidance/regulations are released.
8. Districts with schools identified by the state for comprehensive support and improvement must develop a plan for each such school.	(Recommendations for section 8 are made by the Schools and District Improvement Work group)
8 a. States must determine the plan approval process and what will be required for approval. They must also develop the process by which the state will provide on-going monitoring and review of the plan.	8 a. The work group recommends to continue the current plan development/ Compliance Monitoring Process developed by the SDE. The components of the plan are as follows: • On-Site Monitoring • Self-Assessment Monitoring • Desk Review Monitoring • Technical Assistance • High-Risk Assessment • Enhanced Self-Monitoring • Corrective Action Plan for LEAs that have citations from on-site monitoring or desk reviews

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Accountability Work Group Alabama Recommendation
8 b. States must decide if they will permit differentiated improvement activities for high schools that predominantly serve students who are either retuning back to school after dropping out or are significantly off track to graduate.	8 b. The work group recommends to continue the current process of plan development that offers differentiation opportunities for schools including improvement activities.
8 c. States must decide if they will permit high schools with a total enrollment of less than 100 students to forego otherwise required improvement activities.	8 c. The work group recommends to continue the current process of plan development that offers differentiation opportunities for schools including improvement activities.
9. States must notify districts if they have any school where any subgroup of students is consistently underperforming. These schools will be identified for Targeted Support and Improvements (TSI).	
9.a States must decide what constitutes "consistently" and "underperforming"	9 a. The work group recommends that Alabama use the following definitions: 1. **Consistently**- the same subgroup of students that are underperforming for 3 consecutive years. 2. **Underperforming**- The workgroup recommends waiting on public feedback and guidance to further direct them with appropriate guidelines.
9.b State must decide how frequently to identify these schools.	9 b. The work group recommends that upon initial identification (2018-2019), targeted support school status will be evaluated after the second year. Thereafter, evaluation of status will occur every 3 years.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Schools and District Improvement Work Group Alabama Recommendation
1. States must decide what the exit criteria will be for schools identified as in need of comprehensive support and improvement.	

1 a. States must decide how many years schools will have to be underperforming in order to meet the criteria for continued support, and decide which "more rigorous" actions must be taken by such schools (which may include addressing school level operations).	1 a. The work group recommends utilizing/developing a continuum that identifies every school in the state
	• Beginning with the 4th year of identification for comprehensive support, school becomes eligible for state intervention.
	• Review the performance of each school to determine the direction of support for the upcoming year. (Gradual release support model)
	• Other factors: Has the school been in the bottom 6% over the past 3 years? Does the school have an F in Achievement?
	• Exit Criteria: Established benchmarks based on reason for identification; Schools must perform above 6% and be sustained for 2 most recent years.
	• Evaluation process that includes reviewing:
	  ○ Annual review of progress
	  ○ Opportunity gaps
	  ○ Parental involvement/engagement
	  ○ Learning Support Framework
	  ○ Feeder pattern trends
	  ○ Root Cause Analysis
	  ○ Financial capacity/priority
	  ○ Formative Assessment process (Year 1 district/school discretion. Year 2 growth=continue, no growth=SDE guides choice)
	  ○ Quality indicators (climate, culture, teacher turnover, etc.)
	  ○ Leadership capacity (school, central office, and Board)
	  ○ Monitoring results- if applicable

1.b For targeted schools, states must determine the number of years after which such schools will instead be identified for comprehensive support and improvement.	1.b The work group recommends that upon initial identification (2018-2019), targeted support school status will be evaluated after the second year. Thereafter, evaluation of status will occur every 3 years.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Schools and District Improvement Work Group Alabama Recommendation
1.c States must develop a process to periodically review resource allocation for supporting school improvement in each district that serves a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement and schools identified for targeted support. The state must also determine how it will provide technical assistance to each such district.	1.c The work group recommends annual evaluation of Districts using the following evaluation process: ○ Annual review of progress ○ Opportunity gaps (tutoring, etc.) ○ Parental involvement/engagement ○ Learning Support Framework ○ Feeder pattern trends ○ Root Cause Analysis ○ Financial capacity/priority ○ Formative Assessment process (Year 1 district/school discretion. Year 2 growth=continue, no growth=SDE guides choice) ○ Quality indicators (climate, culture, teacher turnover, etc.) ○ Leadership capacity (school, central office, and Board) ○ Monitoring results- if applicable
1.d States must decide if they will take actions to initiate additional improvement in districts where a significant number of schools are consistently identified by the state for comprehensive school improvement and are not meeting the state's exit criteria or have a significant number of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.	1.d The work group recommends that Districts should receive comprehensive support when ○ 35% of schools are identified OR ○ Based on the percentage of students (cohorts) district wide with low proficiencies in reading and math Districts that persistently meet the criteria comprehensive support may be considered for closure by the State Board
1.e States must decide if they will establish alternative, evidence-based strategies that can be used by districts to assist a school that is identified for comprehensive school improvement and, if so, what these strategies will be.	1.e The work group recommends that the ALSDE should provide support and/or direction regarding utilization of evidence- based strategies/practices in the support model.
1.f States will need to decide if they want to use state set-aside funds to provide recognition and rewards to LEAs that have significantly improved the achievement and progress of ELs.	1.f The work group recommends to wait on the federal regulations/ guidelines before finalizing a recommendation for this decision.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	English Language Learners (ELL) Work Group Alabama Recommendation

1. States will need to develop and implement uniform statewide criteria and procedures for entrance into and exit out of EL status. The procedures must include assessing all potential ELs for their English proficiency within 30 days of enrollment.	1.The work group recommends to continue with the current ELL entrance and exit process. Alabama participates in the WIDA consortium.
	• Entrance Criteria:
	  ○ Students are screened for eligibility using the W-APT placement test
	  ○ Students are administered the WIDA/MODEL as an on-going assessment for English Language Proficiency
	• Exit Criteria: Students are administered the Access 2.0 assessment and must score 4.8 to exit

2. State may need to review its English language proficiency (ELP) standards to ensure that they are in alignment with the new requirement under ESSA that ELP standards address different proficiency levels, which was not a requirement under NCLB. States must determine if their ELP standards meet this requirement and revise them if they do not.	2. The work group recommends keeping the current ELP standards as they are in alignment with the new requirement under ESSA.
Key Decision Point in ESSA	**Standards and Assessment Work Group Alabama Recommendation**
1. Alabama must include an assurance that the state has adopted "challenging academic content standards and aligned academic achievement standards."	
1 a. States must decide if they will create new standards or revised current standards to meet ESSA requirements.	1 a. The work group recommends that Alabama keep the current College & Career Ready Standards as they are reviewed annually. It is also recommended that the ALSDE modify its review process to include additional stakeholder feedback and public input.
1 b. States must demonstrate that their content standards are aligned with "non-remedial, credit-bearing" coursework at state 4-year institutions and relevant State career and technical education standards. .	1 b. Current content standards are in alignment with "non-remedial, credit-bearing" coursework at state 4-year institutions and relevant State career and technical education standards.
1 c. State must determine if they want to adopt alternative standards for student with disabilities or whether any changes are necessary to these standards if a state has previously adopted them.	1 c. The work group recommends keeping the current standards for students with disabilities as they are reviewed annually.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Standards and Assessment Work Group Alabama Recommendation
2. States must demonstrate that the SEA, in consultations with LEAs, has implemented a set of high-quality academic assessments in mathematics, reading, or language arts, and science.	
2 a. State may decide if they will implement assessments in any other subjects.	2 a. The work group recommends the continuation of administering the same subjects as in Alabama's current assessment plan. No subjects will be added.
2 b. States may also decide to have assessments delivered, at least partially, in the form of portfolios, projects, or extended performance tasks.	2 b. The work group recommends, in the future, Alabama's assessment platform should include the option of having portfolios, projects, or extended performance tasks.
2 c. States may decide if assessments will be administered through a single summative assessment or "through 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."	2 c. The work group recommends that Alabama explore the use of multiple statewide interim assessments rather than one single summative assessment.
States will need to determine if their ELP assessments align with their ELP standards, and revise those assessments if they do not.	Alabama's ELP assessments align with ELP standards due to Alabama's participation in the WIDA consortium.
2 d. States may decide if they will exempt 8th graders who take advanced mathematics in middle school from the regular state assessment	2 d. The work group recommends flexibility in testing for 8th grade by allowing a local school system to select the state assessment or an alternate assessment. However the flexibility must be consistent system wide and cannot be decided at the school level
2 e. States will have to determine whether they will adopt alternative assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities or modify such assessments if a State already has them in place.	2 e. The work group recommends the continuation of administering the Alabama Alternate Assessment at this time.
States are also required to determine how they will do additional oversight over local educational agencies which administer these assessments should they be assessing more than 1% of their total student population via these assessments.	The work group recommends to continue with the current plan of monitoring.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Standards and Assessment Work Group Alabama Recommendation
2 f. Locally selected assessments – states must determine if they will make nationally recognized high school assessments available for selection. If so, they must carry out additional actions, a process that would likely have to begin this year.	2 f. The work group recommends to allow districts flexibility for choosing nationally recognized high school assessments. The flexibility must be consistent system wide and cannot be decided at the school level.
2 g. In the event any district seeks to use a locally selected assessment, states are required to establish technical criteria to determine if any such assessments meet the requirements	2 g. The SEA will establish the technical criteria to be used when determining a locally selected assessment.
2 h. States may decide if they want to develop and administer computer-adaptive assessments	2 h. The work group recommends to include this option in Alabama's state plan.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Title Programs Work Group Alabama Recommendation
1. States will need to decide if they want to set aside up to 3% of their Title I funds to establish a program of direct student services, and, if so, how much (beginning with the FY2017 funding). If the answer is yes, states will need to:	1. The work group recommends not to set aside monies for a program of direct student services; this recommendation is made in an effort to ensure the greatest amount of flexibility for LEAs. The workgroup recommends that efforts be focused on using Title funds to provide teachers the support, materials, and training needed to be highly skilled and supported in the classroom and on services that directly impact students in order to ensure all students succeed. The workgroup further recommends that a resource guide of examples of uses of Title funds and resulting impacts be developed. Some examples of the practices to be included in the resource guide are as follows: a. Mentoring programs b. Expand learning opportunities for students (extended learning day, accelerated learning, summer programs etc.) c. Additional support for ELLs d. Provide additional support during the school day to meet identified needs e. Hiring of tutors, educational experts, and specialists f. Expand career/tech programs g. Increase exposure to music and art h. Increase summer programs i. Increase parental involvement programs j. Additional healthcare services to meet students' needs k. Middle and High School increased support l. Adequate funding for school materials and training for instruction (Science and Math manipulatives and materials for all teachers) m. Increase support for STEM programs n. Increase support for technology o. Increase support for Early Childhood programs p. Increase support for advanced courses and acceleration courses (AP and IB Testing) q. Increase support for tutoring r. Increase Gifted Education opportunities s. Increase stakeholder engagement (Parental Outreach) t. Provide quality Physical Education support u. Increase Library Media resources and support v. Increase support for Guidance Counselors

Dr

Key Decision Point in ESSA	**Title Programs Work Group Alabama Recommendation**
1 a. Begin the process of designing such a program;	n/a
1 b. Engage in required consultation with LEAs;	n/a
1 c. Develop grant applications;	n/a
1 d. Develop and implement processes for compiling and maintaining a list of approved "academic tutoring providers" (note: providers of other services do not require state approval); and,	n/a
1 e. Develop a process for monitoring the quality of all providers.	n/a
Key Decision Point in ESSA	**Data Collection and Reporting Work Group Alabama Recommendation**
1. States will have to determine what additional information they must collect to meet ESSA requirements (new subgroups, school quality and climate data, preschool data, school-level expenditure data, etc.)	1. Additional data collection has been determined for all data points except preschool. The Early Learning work group recommends that Alabama's State Report Card conform to ESSA requirement that: "State Report Cards must include: (II) the number and percentage of students enrolled in: (aa) preschool programs;"
2. States will have to report on professional qualifications of teachers. As a part of this reporting, states will have to determine what constitutes "inexperienced" teachers.	2. The Educator Effectiveness work group recommends the following definition for Alabama's plan: An inexperienced teacher is a teacher who has fewer than three (3) years of teaching experience.
3. States must decide if they will include any additional information regarding school progress, beyond what is requires under ESSA.	3. The workgroup recommends to not include any additional information other than that required by ESSA.
4. State will need to meet the requirement that they publicly provide a cross-tabulated (by racial and ethnic group, gender, English proficiency status, and disability status) data on student achievement, high school graduation, the "other academic indicator", and assessment/non-assessment rates.	4. The ALSDE has developed a platform for reporting the data as prescribed by the USDOE and discussed by the workgroup. The platform will become public by fall of 2017.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Educator Effectiveness Work Group Alabama Recommendation
1. States must decide if they will reserve up to 3% of their state-held funds under Title II in order to carry out state-level activities for principals or other school leaders and, if so, how to use those funds. States must also decide if they wish to use other state reservations for other activities, including teacher/leader evaluations and not more than 2% of the state allotment for teacher/leader preparation academies.	1. The work group recommends reserving up to 3% of state-held funds under Title II and to provide transparency regarding its expenditures. The work group also recommends using not more than 2% of the state allotment for teacher/leader preparation academies focusing on recruiting and retaining qualified teachers into rural, inner-city and other hard-to-staff schools as well as the impending teacher shortage in critical areas. The work group recommends that Title II funds be used for recruitment of high quality teachers, retaining and supporting those teachers, and providing professional pathways for teacher growth and career advancement. (Report from the *Governor's Commission 2008*)
2. States must decide if they will continue teacher evaluation systems developed under waivers.	2. The work group strongly recommends to continue use of Alabama's teacher evaluation system and that the ALSDE follow recommendations in the Alabama Educator Effectiveness SREB Report of July 2015.
3. States must decide how to determine whether, and ensure that, low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.	3. The work group recommends the following definitions for Alabama's plan: **Ineffective Teacher:** An ineffective teacher may be properly certified to teach in his/her content area but is not able to demonstrate strong instructional practices, significant growth in student learning, and professionalism and dedication to the field of teaching. **Out-of-field Teacher:** An out-of-field teacher is a teacher who holds a valid Alabama certificate that is not in the area(s) he/she is assigned to teach during the school day and who has limited content knowledge. **Inexperienced Teacher:** An inexperienced teacher is a teacher who has fewer than three (3) years of teaching experience.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Educator Effectiveness Work Group Alabama Recommendation
4. States must also determine the measures the SEA will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the State educational agency with respect to such description, although a teacher/leader evaluation system is not required.	4. The work group recommends the use of appropriate data points including: • Teacher attendance • Student achievement data • Undergraduate degrees • Post graduate degrees • Number of National Board Certification • Degrees from Institutions • Teacher preparations including number of grades, employment, ACT scores, GPA, Clinical experience, Majors • Data points from the Alabama Teacher Evaluation System
Key Decision Point in ESSA	**Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation**
1. States must determine how they will provide assistance to districts and schools using Title I funds for early childhood education.	1. The work group recommends that, consistent with the LEA's needs assessment and plan, Title I funds may be used to improve early learning and develop the knowledge and skills of pre-K – 3rd grade teachers and administrators. The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) will provide Preschool Technical Assistance.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation
2. States must identify a strategy for promoting PreK-3rd grade alignment and supporting district and elementary school capacity building focused on the following early learning areas including:	2. The work group recommends continued alignment and expansion of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) framework for opportunities to coordinate services between state agencies.
2 a. Educator effectiveness; educator effectiveness; ESSA allows state and district Title IIA (PD) and Title III (EL) funds may be used for PD of early childhood providers. (XVIII) where practicable, provide jointly for school staff and other early childhood education program providers, to address the transition to elementary school, including school readiness	2 a. The work group recommends that Title II A and Title III PD funds (state set aside portions of funds) be used for training elementary administrators and teachers on developmentally appropriate practice for early childhood programs, ELLs in early childhood programs, and special education in early childhood programs.
2 b. Instructional tools (standards, curriculum, and assessments);	2 b. The work group recommends that the ALSDE partner with the community college system and higher ed. to explore course and program standards to determine if aligned with NAEYC requirements. Crosswalk NAEYC standards with existing curriculum to identify gaps. The work group recommends implementation of the Alabama First Class Pre K framework as an instructional tool for pre-K programs. (Curriculum content is comprehensively presented and reinforced with intentional teaching strategies for pre-K teachers. Curricula is embedded into the Alabama First Class Pre-K Reflective Coaching Model that includes effective teaching practices, curriculum content, and professional development.)
2 c. Learning environments (culturally inclusive, promoting relationships, and structured to support diverse learners);	2 c. The work group recommends support age-appropriate, evidence-based practices for use in prekindergarten through third grade classrooms.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation
2 d. Data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data);	2 d. The work group recommends that Alabama's plan supports and strengthens data infrastructure to enable transfer of children's information and school reports from early education programs to elementary programs; and coordinates with local early childhood programs and Alabama's First Class Pre-K classrooms. The work group also recommends that the ALSDE expand efforts to utilize the information provided to educators from the Pre-K assessments and KEA to measure progress and provide feedback to early learning educators. It is recommended that schools utilize Pre-K assessment results for School Improvement Planning and for goal-setting for the Pre-K to kindergarten transition component of School Improvement Plans.
2 e. Family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making);	2 e. The work group recommends that families and staff are connected with relevant community partners, such as early childhood mental health consultants, connecting with Family Resource Centers and adopting the Strengthening Families framework as an effective way to engage families. The work group recommends ALSDE Special Education Services continue to use the Alabama Parent Education Center (APEC), the Alabama's Parent Training and Information (PTI), as well as Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to promote parent and family engagement

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation
2 f. Continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, preK-3 pathway);	2 f. The work group recommends as ALSDE and ADECE develops and implements strategies to ensure that every child, especially those most at risk for school failure, has access to a continuity of services and a clear pathway of high-quality education from pre-K through 3rd grade.
2 g. Cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and,	2 g. The work group recommends establishing and supporting a collaborative (cross-organizational and cross-sector) study to identify decision-making roles and responsibilities among partners to support PreK-3rd efforts.
2 h. Administration/leader effectiveness.	2 h. The work group recommends that ALSDE and ADECE provide training for the building principal where the Pre-K First Class classroom is located, as well as, administrators serving PreK-3 populations.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation
3. States must identify a strategy or strategies for helping districts and elementary schools satisfy the Head Start program's performance standards, including providing technical assistance for district/school leaders, teachers, and other learning professionals.	3. The work group recommends using the Alabama First Class Pre-K Model guidance to meet the Head Start requirements (through the current Preschool Development Grant program design).
4. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools implement curricula aligned to the state's early learning standards.	4. The work group recommends the expansion of the CTE early childhood education program for high school students offering a CDA as a credential. Discuss with Superintendents and CTE Administrators the partnership opportunities available of utilizing the Pre-K First Class classroom as the observation/laboratory setting for the high school program. The work group recommends the implementation the Alabama First Class Pre K framework. (Curriculum content is comprehensively presented and reinforced with intentional teaching strategies for pre-K teachers. Curricula is embedded into the Alabama Reflective Coaching Model that includes effective teaching practices, curriculum content, and professional development.)
5. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and meet the state's quality indicators for early learning, if any.	5. The work group recommends that all Alabama school- based Pre-K programs become Alabama's First Class Pre-K sites and adhere to approved performance standards and guidelines.
6. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and meet the state's k-2 accountability indicators, if any	6. The work group recommends providing guidance to LEAs about how lack of access to early childhood programs and/ or low quality Pre-K could relate to indicators of school at risk of failure.

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation
7. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and use preschool and early elementary assessments that are developmentally appropriate and aligned to state learning standards to assess school readiness, if any.	7. The work group recommends that Alabama determine the Pre-K assessment that will be used as baseline information for determining the progress and growth made by students in kindergarten and in later grades. Extend as a consistent measure and reporting system of readiness that aligns with the Teaching Strategies GOLD used for classroom instruction that provides formative assessment information for teachers, that facilitates longitudinal studies of program results, and that enables evaluation and comparability measures to be consistent in all Alabama First Class Pre-K programs.
8. The Title I state plan must also be coordinated with programs under the Head Start Act and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (Sec 1111(a)(1)(B	8. The work group recommends that technical assistance to school systems be provided from the Department of Early Childhood Education regarding the availability and use of ESSA funds for serving pre-Kindergarten children (e.g., Title I, Title II, and Title II); creating quality preschool programs; Head Start requirements and other related information for high quality preschool education. The work group recommends using the Alabama First Class Pre-K Model guidance to meet the Head Start requirements (through the current Preschool Development Grant program design).

Draft

Key Decision Point in ESSA	**Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation**
9. States must develop a strategic plan for collaboration, coordination, and quality improvements among existing programs and state and local agencies.	9. The work group recommends the inclusion of the following items for Alabama's ESSA plan: • Continue to host summits with ALSDE, DECE, 2-year community college system, and higher education stakeholders to collaborate and align programs that provide educational training, certifications, and degrees, ultimately creating a pipeline of workers for the early learning career pathway. • ALSDE and ADECE should continue the monthly Pre-K Collaboration meetings and extend invitations to participate to additional partner groups. Such groups may include VOICES for Alabama's Children, Alabama School Readiness Alliance, Alabama Department of Human Resources and Alabama Department of Public Health. In addition to monthly meetings, the Pre-K Collaboration group will continue to host summits around topics of interest and importance to the state. The group will also meet regularly with the two-year community college system and higher education stakeholders to collaborate and align programs that provide educational training, certifications and degrees, ultimately creating a pipeline of workers into the early learning career pathway. ALSDE, DECE, partner groups and local education agencies will work with two and four year colleges on streamlining the articulation agreements and coursework leading to an associate's degree and/or a four-year degree. • ALSDE and DECE should coordinate PD, technical assistance and trainings offered to LEAs and schools.

Draft