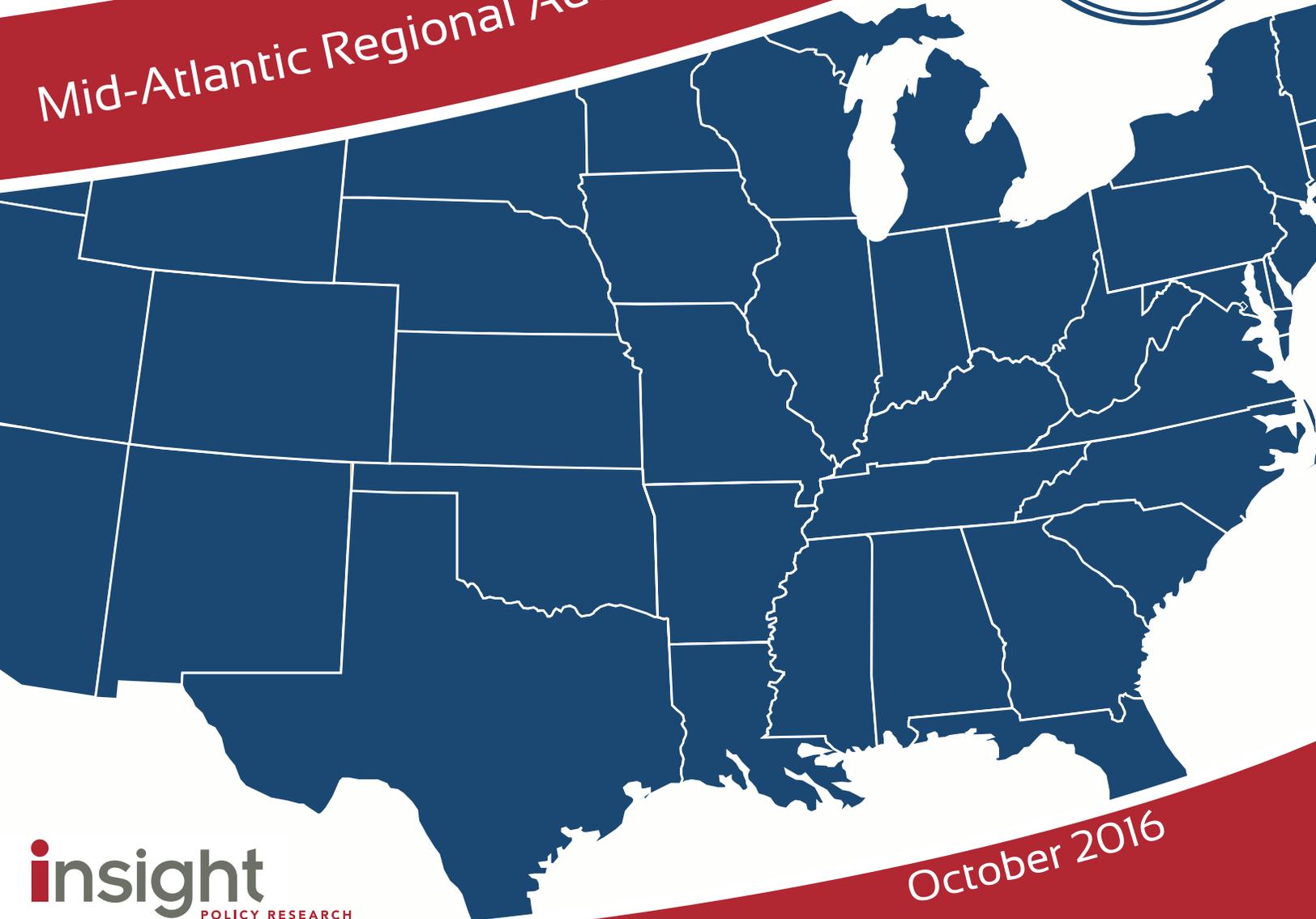


Identifying and Addressing Regional Education Needs

U.S. Department of Education



Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Committee



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The Mid-Atlantic Region:

A Report Identifying and Addressing the Region's Educational Needs

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Authors

Elizabeth Eaton, ICF International
Victoria Honard, ICF International

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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary
Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Project Officer

Kim Okahara

Submitted by

Insight Policy Research, Inc.
1901 North Moore Street
Suite 1100
Arlington, VA 22209

Project Director

Laura Holian

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the activities and results of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), 1 of 10 RACs established under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq.). The RACs were formed to identify the region’s most critical educational needs and develop recommendations for technical assistance to meet those needs. The technical assistance provided to state education agencies (SEAs) aims to build capacity for supporting local education agencies (LEAs or districts) and schools, especially low-performing districts and schools; improving educational outcomes for all students; closing achievement gaps; and improving the quality of instruction. The report represents the work of the Mid-Atlantic RAC, which includes Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia.

Committee members convened three times and reached out to their respective constituencies between July 19, 2016, and August 31, 2016. Members of the Mid-Atlantic RAC represented a variety of stakeholders, including local educational agencies (LEAs), state education agencies (SEA), education associations, and boards of education. The members collaborated, communicated, and shared resources using Communities360^o, an interactive online platform hosted within the larger GRADS360^o system housed within the secure U.S. Department of Education environment. Table A provides a list of committee members and their affiliations. Two additional individuals, one from Maryland and one from New Jersey, were invited to participate but declined due to conflicts of interest. An additional superintendent from Pennsylvania originally accepted the invitation, but later removed herself from the committee.

Table A. Mid-Atlantic RAC members

Member Name	Affiliation	State
Susan Bunting	Indian River School District	DE
Shirley Campbell	Professional Development and Learning Support Services	PA
Janet Clark	American Library Association, New Jersey Association of School Librarians	NJ
John-Paul Hayworth	District of Columbia State Board of Education	DC
Verjeana Jacobs	Prince George’s County Public Schools, Board of Education, District 5	MD
George Shorter	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	MD

Regional Background

Members reviewed a regional profile containing educational statistics and other relevant data to inform their individual assessments of the challenges facing their region. The demographic makeup and characteristics of schools and students in the Mid-Atlantic region is varied. In terms of the racial and ethnic distribution of public school students, every state except for Pennsylvania has student populations that are majority non-White. Pennsylvania is the only state in which the percentage of White students (69 percent) exceeds the national average (50 percent). In the District of Columbia, nearly all public school students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (99 percent); other states in the region have rates below the national average (52 percent). Outside of the District of Columbia, most schools in the Mid-Atlantic region are located in suburban or rural districts. All of the schools in the District of Columbia are located in an urban district.

Teacher preparation varies across states in the Mid-Atlantic region. Most educators in the region receive training through traditional preparation programs; however, the District of Columbia and New Jersey

have higher percentages of teachers completing alternative programs not based in institutions of higher education than the national average. Four states (the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) have teacher preparation programs that address shortages of highly qualified teachers by area of certification or licensure, subject, and specialty.

Student educational attainment also varies across the region. In 2015, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania had higher percentages of students scoring proficient or above on the fourth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment compared to the national average (35 percent); the District of Columbia had a lower percentage of students scoring proficient or above. Ranging from 85 to 89 percent, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania had higher high school graduation rates than the national average (82 percent) in the 2013-14 school year; the District of Columbia had a graduation rate of 61 percent. See Appendix A for detailed tables on the educational characteristics of the region.

Education Needs and Recommendations

Members solicited information on the region's educational needs by engaging stakeholders. They disseminated information, administered an online survey, and conducting semi-structured interviews. Members focused their efforts on distributing the survey to the widest possible group of stakeholders.

As a result of the committee's outreach efforts, a total of 525 individuals responded to the survey and 25 individuals participated in semi-structured interviews. The 550 individuals represented a diverse set of education stakeholders: 28 (5 percent) were from state departments of education or state boards of education; 73 (13 percent) were local schools board members, superintendents, or other LEA representatives; 296 (54 percent) were school-level stakeholders other than teachers (librarians, principals, parents, etc.); and 107 (19 percent) were teachers.

Each committee member prepared a report containing a needs assessment and specific recommendations for future technical assistance based on his or her assessment of the region's unique educational environment, the survey results, and the results of other data collection efforts.

Committee members in the Mid-Atlantic region identified the following six needs. They are listed in ranked average order of priority as listed by RAC members:

- ▶ supporting the lowest-performing schools and closing achievement gaps;
- ▶ preparing students to be college- and career-ready;
- ▶ ensuring equity, including addressing issues of disproportionality;
- ▶ improving assessment and accountability systems;
- ▶ ensuring innovative and effective uses of technology, digital learning, and personalized learning strategies; and
- ▶ promoting community/stakeholder engagement.

Committee members also developed the following five broad recommendations for technical assistance to better address the educational needs:

- ▶ **Identify, compile, and disseminate best practices.** Committee members identified a need for best practices in integrating career and technical learning into the classroom; assisting educators in supporting equity at all levels of the educational system; promoting academic growth for

minority students; implementing staffing models to ensure an equitable distribution of effective educators; supporting vulnerable student populations (e.g., English language learners, students with disabilities, and students eligible for free and reduced lunch); cultivating personalized learning; encouraging cultural diversity; building parents' skills in math, reading, and use of technology; and communicating student achievement data with parents, families, and school communities.

- ▶ **Facilitate collaboration.** Committee members recommended facilitating collaboration between schools and institutions of higher education, and between schools and other community and educator groups. Collaborations among education leaders and institutions of higher education should focus on strategies for improving college readiness; supporting the recruitment, training, and mentoring of teachers from diverse backgrounds; and supporting low-performing schools. State departments of education could use assistance leveraging partnerships with national community/parent groups, national teacher groups, national school board associations, and private and non-profit organizations to promote parental and community engagement in schools.
- ▶ **Create guidelines.** Committee members noted a need for creating guidelines on developing inequity indicators to support administrators in ensuring equity for all students, purchasing effective technology, determining the appropriate use of student assessments, and using federal funding to support education.
- ▶ **Support professional development of educators.** Committee members recommended professional development on effective use of technology in the classroom, the effect of generational/ situational poverty on student learning, encouraging improved parental engagement, and building school-community programs.
- ▶ **Disseminate research.** Committee members noted the need for evidence on the impact of personalized learning strategies on student academic growth, and the impact of universal pre-kindergarten or early learning on academic success.

See Chapter 2 for a detailed summary of the recommendations by major need, and Appendix B for each committee member's individual needs assessment and recommendations for addressing those needs.

Chapter 1. Introduction

This report represents the regional needs assessment of the RAC for the Mid-Atlantic region, which includes Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. The RAC members used statistical data from the Mid-Atlantic regional profile (Appendix A); conducted data collection and outreach activities to obtain input from various constituencies; and met three times between July 16, 2016, and August 31, 2016, to assess regional needs and how to address the needs identified.

A. Legislative Background

The RACs are authorized by the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq.). Section 203 of Title II of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (P.L. 107–279) directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to establish not less than 20 comprehensive centers to provide technical assistance to state, local, and regional educational agencies and to schools. The technical assistance is to be directed toward implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and to achieving goals through the use of evidence-based teaching methods and assessment tools for use by teachers and administrators in the following areas:

- ▶ core academic subjects of mathematics, science, and reading or language arts;
- ▶ English language acquisition;
- ▶ education technology;
- ▶ communication among education experts, school officials, teachers, parents, and librarians;
- ▶ information that can be used to improve academic achievement; closing achievement gaps; and encouraging and sustaining improvement to schools, educators, parents, and policymakers within the region in which the center is located; and
- ▶ teacher and school leader in-service and preservice training models that illustrate best practices in the use of technology in different content areas.

B. Regional Background Information

A variety of educational data sources informed the development of the Mid-Atlantic regional profile, which provides a descriptive snapshot of the educational landscape in the region. The RAC members used these data to inform their individual assessments of the region's most pressing needs. The regional profiles include sections on demographics; SEA capacity; educational resources; teacher preparation, qualifications, and certification; and student educational attainment. Summaries of the data presented in the profile appear below. See appendix A for the descriptive tables and charts that represent this regional profile.

Regional Demographics

The Mid-Atlantic region has a diverse student population. Of the roughly 4.8 million students in the region, approximately 85 percent attend public schools. The racial and ethnic composition of these students roughly mirrors the national distribution where approximately half of the students are White, 16 percent are Black, and 24 percent are Hispanic. The District of Columbia (74 percent Black) and

Pennsylvania (69 percent White) are the only two states in which one racial/ethnic group makes up the majority of the student population. Four states in the region (Delaware, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) serve a higher percentage of students with disabilities relative to the national average (13 percent). A smaller percentage of students in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania participate in the free or reduced-price lunch program compared to the national average (52 percent), but in the District of Columbia, 99 percent of students participate in the program.

The Mid-Atlantic region is generally less linguistically diverse, more educated, and wealthier relative to the United States as a whole. In four states (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania), the proportion of households that speak English at home is higher than the national average (79 percent). The percentage of the adult population with a bachelor's degree or higher in Delaware (30 percent), the District of Columbia (55 percent), Maryland (38 percent), and New Jersey (37 percent) is equal to or larger than the national average of 30 percent. Ranging from \$59,700 to \$74,000, the median household income is higher in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and New Jersey than the national median (\$53,700). Pennsylvania (\$53,200) is the only state in the region with a median household income lower than the national median.

The states in the Mid-Atlantic region also vary in size and urbanicity. Pennsylvania is the largest state in both landmass and student population. Although Pennsylvania has two major urban areas (Philadelphia and Pittsburgh), 34 percent of Pennsylvania districts are rural. By contrast, all of the schools in the District of Columbia are located in an urban district, and 76 percent of schools in New Jersey are in suburban districts. In addition, RAC members noted cultural and population differences across geographic regions within individual states in the Mid-Atlantic region, specifically differences in the population makeup of the northern and southern regions of Delaware and in the northern, central, and southern regions of New Jersey.

Teacher Preparation, Qualifications, and Certification

As of fall 2013, there were 309,901 public school teachers and 55,970 private school teachers serving students in the Mid-Atlantic region. Pennsylvania, the most populous state in the region, has the highest number of public and private school teachers (121,330 and 20,510 teachers, respectively). The District of Columbia has the fewest public and private school teachers (5,991 and 2,460 teachers, respectively). The student to teacher ration in each state in the region is lower than the national average of 16 students per teacher.

Teacher preparation varies across states in the Mid-Atlantic region. Most educators in the region receive training through traditional preparation programs; however, the District of Columbia (44 percent) and New Jersey (34 percent) have higher percentages of teachers completing alternative programs not based in institutions of higher education relative to the national average (10 percent). All states in the region except Delaware have teacher preparation programs that address shortages of highly qualified teachers by area of certification or licensure, subject, and specialty. Delaware specifically addresses teacher shortages through alternative programs, and the state's teacher preparation programs encourage elementary education graduates to be dual certified in elementary education and either special education or a middle level content area.

Student Educational Attainment

Student achievement in the Mid-Atlantic region varies across states. In 2015, 27 percent of students in the District of Columbia performed proficient or above on the fourth grade National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment, which is 8 percentage points lower than the national average of 35 percent. However, in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, the percentage of students scoring proficient or higher exceeded the national average, with the proficiency rate ranging from 37 to 43 percent.

In all states in the region, a larger percentage of students took the SAT than the ACT in 2015; however, compared to the rest of the region, a relatively high proportion of students (50 percent) took the ACT in the District of Columbia. New Jersey was the only state with an average SAT score higher than the national average (1,490). The average ACT composite score in the District of Columbia was equal to the national average (21).

Approximately 4 percent of the region's students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses in 2015, which was in line with the national average. Students in three states (Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) scored higher than the national average of 2.82 (on a scale of 1 to 5) on their AP exams; whereas the average scores in Delaware (2.80) and the District of Columbia (2.71) did not meet the national average. High school graduation rates in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania (87, 86, 89, and 85 percent, respectively) were higher than the national average (82 percent) in 2015, while the District of Columbia had a high school graduation rate of 61 percent.

C. Challenges Affecting Regional Needs

RAC members' data collection efforts identified several challenges affecting the Mid-Atlantic region's educational needs. Differences in specific state contexts resulted in varying approaches to addressing the challenges. The challenges affecting the region are briefly summarized below:

- ▶ **Changing political landscape.** Every state in the region has experienced significant changes in leadership since 2014. Three of the five states in the region (the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania) voted new governors into office in 2015. Four states (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania) ushered in new chief state school officers in 2015, while two states (Maryland and Pennsylvania) saw changes in their state higher education officer. All states in the region, except New Jersey, inaugurated new state school board members in 2015. Progress and momentum may slow across the region as states respond and adjust to changing policies and initiatives that reflect the priorities of the incoming administrations and new education leaders.
- ▶ **Diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds.** Socioeconomic indicators vary across and within states in the Mid-Atlantic region. The District of Columbia has the highest percentage of persons living in poverty (15.9 percent) and the most children living in poverty (28.1 percent) in the region. Maryland has the lowest percentage of adults and children living in poverty at 10 percent and 12 percent, respectively. In early 2016, Delaware and Maryland both had unemployment rates lower than the national average of 4.9 percent, while the District of Columbia had the highest unemployment rate in the region (6.1 percent). The diverse socioeconomic make-up of the population within each state and across the region puts heightened focus on ensuring equitable access to educational services, supports, and opportunities for all students.

D. Data Collection and Outreach Strategies

A main priority of each RAC was to solicit input from numerous constituencies, including teachers, principals, SEA and LEA administrators, governors, institutions of higher education/community colleges, postsecondary technical programs, school boards, parents, education professional organizations, teachers unions, local government, youth organizations, community-based organizations, chambers of commerce, and business leaders. RAC members received briefs, PowerPoint presentations, and other RAC-related materials that describe the purpose of the Comprehensive Centers program and how technical assistance builds the capacity of SEAs and LEAs. RAC members disseminated these materials to their educational organizations and their professional networks.

RAC members conducted needs sensing and data collection between July 19, 2016, and August 31, 2016. Methods included disseminating an online survey link through email, posting on social media, and posting on public websites; and semi-structured interviews with targeted stakeholders. The online survey asked respondents to identify their state and affiliation and allowed them to identify needs and make recommendations through open-ended responses in comment boxes.

RAC members had access to a Community of Practice website to help facilitate interactions and align data collection activities. RAC members used the Community of Practice website to share relevant resources via a dedicated online workspace and ask fellow members questions via the online discussion board. The website also included a direct link to the online survey to collect stakeholder feedback. RAC members held three meetings internally to review the data collected and discuss the needs and the strategies to address those needs.

A total of 525 individuals completed the online survey. An additional 25 individuals provided feedback through semi-structured interviews. Table 1 provides the number of responses received through the survey and other data collection efforts in each of the states. Table 2 shows the number of responses received from each major education stakeholder group.

Table 1. Members of the public submitting comments by state

State	Number of individuals providing feedback	Percent
Delaware	134	24
Maryland	62	11
New Jersey	107	19
Pennsylvania	229	42
District of Columbia	18	3
Total Mid-Atlantic region	550	100

Note: Some percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Table 2. Members of the public submitting comments by stakeholder group

Role	Number of individuals providing feedback	Percent
State level	27	5
SEA staff	10	2
Other, state level	17	3
Local district or regional level	73	13
Superintendent or director of schools	22	4
School board member	37	7
LEA or central office	11	2
Other, local or regional level	3	1
School level	296	54
Principal or other school administrator	32	6
Librarian	182	33
Parent/grandparent/guardian	54	10
Other, school level	28	5
Classroom level	107	19
Teacher	107	19
Community level	46	8
Higher Education	18	3
Community Member	13	2
Other, community level	15	3
Other	1	< 1
Total	550	100

Note: Some percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Chapter 2. Educational Needs and Recommendations for Addressing the Needs

RAC members used information from the regional profile, input from constituencies, and committee members' individual expertise to identify the region's most pressing educational need areas and to make recommendations accordingly. Each committee member chose up to five priority needs and recommended one or more potential strategy to address those needs (see appendix B). Overall, individual members of the Mid-Atlantic RAC identified the following six needs:

- ▶ **Supporting the lowest-performing schools and closing achievement gaps.** Teachers across the Mid-Atlantic region identified support for the lowest-performing schools and closing achievement gaps as the most pressing educational need facing the region. This need includes improved support for vulnerable student populations, and creating partnerships to help support the lowest performing schools.
- ▶ **Preparing students to be college and career ready.** Many states in the Mid-Atlantic region have woven college- and career-readiness into their accountability systems and cadres of high school educators are now certified to teach college-credit bearing courses. Approximately a quarter of respondents to the needs sensing survey identified college- and career-readiness as the highest-priority educational need for the region. Specifically, the region would benefit from resources and training on strategies for expanding career and technical education opportunities, and defining common college and career ready standards.
- ▶ **Ensuring equity, including addressing issues of disproportionality.** One of the most frequently cited educational needs facing the Mid-Atlantic region, by stakeholders and individual RAC members alike, is ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities. Elements of this need include the identification of strategies for determining inequities, ensuring equitable access to resources and equity in student outcomes, and improving the diversity of the educator workforce.
- ▶ **Improving assessment and accountability systems.** The passage of ESSA requires the design of statewide accountability systems that include the use of multiple measures. Stakeholders and RAC members cited improving state assessment and accountability systems as a priority need. Specifically, committee members accentuated the need for research on the emphasis states and districts should place on assessment; the identification of strategies for improving the efficiency of current assessment systems; and best practices and training on strategies for communicating curriculum standards and assessment results with stakeholders.
- ▶ **Ensuring innovative and effective uses of technology, digital learning, and personalized learning strategies.** Technology is an important tool for providing instruction, and Mid-Atlantic RAC members identified its acquisition and use as a priority need. Specifically, committee members cited the need for training on effective procurement strategies, as well as the use of technology in supplementing classroom instruction and creating personalized learning environments.

- ▶ **Promoting community/stakeholder engagement.** Effectively engaging, partnering, and communicating with multiple stakeholders is critical for creating strong school communities because partnerships build momentum for educational success. Members of the community and school board members in the Mid-Atlantic region prioritized the development of partnerships with national and local organizations, and the identification of strategies and professional development for supporting parental engagement and developing school-community programs.

The committee members made recommendations in five broad categories to help address the identified needs:

- ▶ identify, compile, and disseminate best practices;
- ▶ facilitate collaboration;
- ▶ create guidelines;
- ▶ support professional development of educators; and
- ▶ disseminate research.

Table 3 provides a high-level summary of the recommendations expressed by each RAC member related to the priority need areas.

Table 3. Summary of needs and recommendations by committee member

Member name	Recommendation
<i>Supporting the lowest performing schools and closing achievement gaps</i>	
John-Paul Hayworth Janet Clark	Support SEAs efforts to help vulnerable student populations by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying strategies for supporting English language learners, students with disabilities, students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, and other vulnerable student populations • developing resources on expanding school-based services for students at-risk of academic failure (e.g., community schools) • assisting efforts to provide professional development on generational and situational poverty • compiling resources and guidance on policies and practices that support cultural diversity
Janet Clark	Coach states in establishing partnerships with institutions of higher education to support low-performing schools
<i>Preparing students to be college- and career-ready</i>	
Susan Bunting Janet Clark Verjeana Jacobs	Support the expansion of career and technical education at the state and local levels by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying best practices for integrating career and technical learning into the classroom • coaching states and districts on working with the business community to establish career and technical education pathways
Susan Bunting Shirley Campbell John-Paul Hayworth	Assist SEAs and LEAs with establishing common standards for college and career readiness by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitating collaborative sessions among SEAs and institutions of higher education to discuss strategies for improving college readiness • supporting discussions with the business community on the skills and competencies students' must possess to succeed in the workplace

Member name	Recommendation
<i>Ensuring equity, including issues of disproportionality</i>	
Susan Bunting Janet Clark Verjeana Jacobs	Create equity guidelines or inequity indicators that SEAs can use to help identify and address inequities in resources and student outcomes
Shirley Campbell John-Paul Hayworth	Create an online resource for SEAs, districts, and educators that provides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promising practices for supporting equity at all levels of the educational system • strategies for promoting academic growth for minority students • evidence of the impact of universal pre-kindergarten and early learning programs on students' academic success
Susan Bunting	Assist SEAs with hosting regional forums and training opportunities for state, district, and community leaders to develop and share strategies for fostering equitable access to resources, funding, and school programs
Susan Bunting	Support SEAs efforts to improving diversity in the educator workforce by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitating partnerships with colleges and universities to support recruiting, training, and mentoring of teachers from diverse backgrounds • evaluating the effectiveness of different staffing models for hiring a diverse and highly-effective teacher workforce
<i>Improving assessment and accountability systems</i>	
John-Paul Hayworth	Conduct or review research on class time usage to inform assessments and testing policies
Susan Bunting	Support SEAs efforts to communicate curriculum standards and assessment results by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying strategies and best practices for communicating student achievement data with parents, families, and school communities • developing easily understood overview materials on state standards and accountability systems for districts, principals, and teachers
John-Paul Hayworth	Improve the efficiency of assessment systems by Identifying strategies for streamlining progress reporting
<i>Ensuring innovative and effective uses of technology, digital learning, and personalized learning strategies</i>	
Susan Bunting Shirley Campbell John-Paul Hayworth	Facilitate the adoption of personalized learning through technology by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a guide/database of promising practices on implementing personalized learning • facilitating meetings and work groups with educators to share strategies and emerging effective practices related to the use of technology to promote personalized learning • showcasing exemplars of individualized, differentiated instruction through in-person regional field trips and videos • conducting a review of the available research around the impact of personalized learning on academic growth
Susan Bunting Shirley Campbell	Support SEAs, districts, and educators efforts to use technology as a learning tool by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying online learning resources that complement onsite instruction • providing strategies for aligning problem-based learning, project-based learning, and team-work designed to standards • offering professional development on the effective use of technology in the classroom
Shirley Campbell	Identify strategies for purchasing effective technologies

Member name	Recommendation
<i>Promoting community/stakeholder engagement</i>	
Verjeana Jacobs	Support states in creating and leveraging partnerships with national community/parent groups, national teacher groups, national school board associations, and private and non-profit organizations
Verjeana Jacobs	Conduct professional development trainings for SEAs on school-community based programs
Shirley Campbell	Help SEAs engage parents by identifying strategies for building parents' skills in math, reading, and the use of technology

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Appendix A. Region Educational Profile

Demographics

Understanding the demographic makeup of the states in each region helps to establish the context for the educational issues that are most pressing. This section presents tables from the *Digest of Education Statistics*, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and *American FactFinder* related to

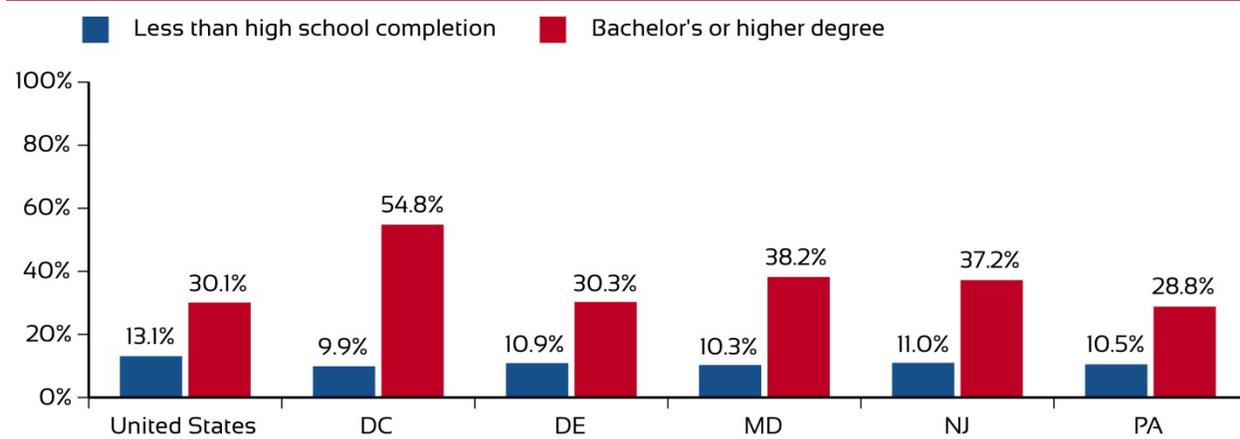
- ▶ the educational attainment of the adult population;
- ▶ the poverty rate, median household income, and unemployment rate;
- ▶ the overall number of students, teachers, and schools, both public and private;
- ▶ the racial/ethnic distribution of students served by public schools;
- ▶ participation in public school services (free or reduced-price lunch program, English language learners, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, state-sponsored prekindergarten); and
- ▶ the percentage of the population who speak a language other than English at home.

A. Educational Attainment

The highest level of education completed by the adult, working-age population (25- to 64-year-olds) is a proxy for human capital—the skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual or population. Higher educational attainment (a bachelor’s degree or higher) is associated with better income and employment. Figure 1 displays the percentage of the adult population with less than a high school diploma in 2014 and the percentage with a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2014.

Additional information about the **educational attainment of young adults** and differences by race/ethnicity can be found in the latest *NCES Condition of Education*.

Figure 1. Educational attainment by state, 2014



Source: 2015 *Digest of Education Statistics*, table 104.80. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_104.80.asp.

B. Economic Indicators

Table 1 displays socioeconomic indicators such as the percentage of persons and percentage of children below the poverty level in 2014. The table also displays the median annual household income in 2014 and the unemployment rate in May 2016.

Table 1. Selected socioeconomic indicators, by state

State	Percent of Persons in Poverty, 2014 ^a	Percent of Children Ages 5 to 17 in Poverty, 2014 ^a	Annual Household Income (Median), 2014 ^b	Unemployment Rate, May 2016 ^c
United States	15.1	20.3	\$53,700	4.9
Delaware	12.6	18.6	\$59,700	4.1
District of Columbia	15.9	28.1	\$71,600	6.1
Maryland	9.7	12.0	\$74,000	4.5
New Jersey	10.9	15.3	\$71,900	4.9
Pennsylvania	13.1	17.6	\$53,200	5.5

Source: ^a 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 102.40. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_102.40.asp?current=yes.

^b 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 102.30. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_102.30.asp?current=yes.

^c Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Unemployment Report, retrieved July 5, 2016, from <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>.

C. Schools and Students

Tables 2 through 5 contain school and student demographics such as the total number of schools, teachers, and students; the racial/ethnic distribution of students in public schools; the percentage of schools by urbanicity; and the percentage of Title I schools.

Number of schools, teachers, and students. Table 2 displays the number of schools, teachers, and students in fall 2013 for public and private schools.

Table 2. Count of schools, teachers, and students, by sector and state, fall 2013

State	Public			Private		
	Schools ^a	Teachers ^b	Students ^c	Schools ^d	Teachers ^d	Students ^d
United States	94,758	3,113,764	50,044,522	33,620	441,500	5,395,740
Delaware	212	9,388	131,687	120	2,070	23,640
District of Columbia	216	5,991	78,153	90	2,460	19,790
Maryland	1,414	58,611	866,169	770	13,490	143,530
New Jersey	2,494	114,581	1,370,295	1,270	17,440	211,150
Pennsylvania	2,991	121,330	1,755,236	2,320	20,510	253,800

Source: ^a 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 216.43. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_216.43.asp?current=yes.

^b 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 208.30. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_208.30.asp?current=yes.

^c 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 208.40. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_208.40.asp?current=yes.

^d 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 205.80. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_205.80.asp?current=yes.

Percentage of public school students by race/ethnicity. Table 3 displays the racial/ethnic background of public school students in fall 2013.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and state, fall 2013

State	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native	Two or More Races
United States	50.3	15.6	24.8	4.8	0.4	1.0	3.0
Delaware	47.7	31.2	14.5	3.5	0.1	0.4	2.5
District of Columbia	8.8	73.6	14.4	1.4	0.1	0.1	1.6
Maryland	40.9	34.9	13.6	6.1	0.1	0.3	4.1
New Jersey	48.9	16.1	24.2	9.3	0.2	0.1	1.2
Pennsylvania	69.1	15.1	9.5	3.4	0.1	0.1	2.7

Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 203.70. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_203.70.asp.

Percentage of school districts by urban-centric locale. Table 4 displays the percentage of school districts classified by the Census locale codes. The large, midsize, and small city codes were summed to create the total number of city districts. The large, midsize, and small suburban codes were summed to create the total number of suburban districts. The fringe, distant, and remote town codes were summed to create the total number of town districts. The fringe, distant, and remote rural codes were summed to create the total number of rural districts. The percentages of districts within each of the four major locale codes are presented.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of public school districts, by urban-centric locale and state, 2013–14

State	City	Suburban	Town	Rural
United States	5.7	22.9	18.4	53.0
Delaware	5.3	47.4	21.1	26.3
District of Columbia	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Maryland	12.5	45.8	16.7	25.0
New Jersey	1.9	76.4	4.1	17.6
Pennsylvania	4.0	47.0	15.2	33.8

Source: *National Center for Education Statistics Rural Education in America*, table A.1.a.-1. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/tables/a.1.a.-1.asp>.

Percentage of Title I schools. Table 5 presents the total number of schools and the percentage of schools that were eligible for Title I in 2010–11. A Title I eligible school is one in which the percentage of children from low-income families is at least as high as the percentage of children from low-income families served by the local education agency (LEA) as a whole, or because 35 percent or more of the children in the school are from low-income families.

Table 5. Number of schools and percentage by Title I status, 2010–11

State	Number of Operating Schools	Percent Title I
United States	98,817	67.4
Delaware	214	79.9
District of Columbia	228	80.7
Maryland	1,449	28.4
New Jersey	2,607	57.1
Pennsylvania	3,233	73.4

Source: *Number and Types of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2010–11*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/pesschools10/tables/table_02.asp.

D. Participation in Public School Services

Tables 6 and 7 provide information about participation in public school services.

Public school services. Table 6 provides the percentage of students in public schools who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, participated in English Language learner programs, were served under the Individuals with Disabilities Act Part B, or participated in programs for gifted and talented students.

Table 6. Percentage of public school students participating in school services

State	Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, 2013–14 ^a	English Language Learners, 2013–14 ^b	Students with Disabilities, 2013–14 ^c	Gifted and Talented, 2006 ^d
United States	52.0	9.3	12.9	6.7
Delaware	39.7	6.6	14.2	5.6
District of Columbia	99.2	10.5	15.1	N/A
Maryland	44.2	6.5	12.0	16.1
New Jersey	38.0	4.5	16.7	7.0
Pennsylvania	43.6	2.8	16.9	4.5

Source: ^a *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 204.10. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.10.asp?current=yes.

^b *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 204.20. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.20.asp?current=yes.

^c *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 204.70. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.70.asp?current=yes.

^d *2014 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 204.90. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_204.90.asp?current=yes.

Prekindergarten participation and per-student spending. The National Institute for Early Education Research publishes a yearly *State of Preschool* report with **profiles of each state**. The state profiles provide detailed information on access to preschool, quality standards, and resources. Table 7 displays the percentage of 3-year-old and the percentage of 4-year-old population enrolled in prekindergarten and state spending per child enrolled in prekindergarten.

Table 7. State-funded prekindergarten programs, 2015

State	State Spending per Enrolled Child	Percent of 4-Year-Old Population Enrolled in State-Funded Program	Percent of 3-Year-Old Population Enrolled in State-Funded Program
United States	\$4,489	29	5
Delaware	\$7,100	8	0
District of Columbia	\$16,431	86	64
Maryland	\$3,572	36	5
New Jersey	\$12,149	29	19
Pennsylvania	\$5,630	12	6

Source: National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved July 2, 2016, from <http://nieer.org/research/state-preschool-2015-state-profiles>.

E. Other

Table 8 contains linguistic indicators such as the percentage of the population who speak English only at home, the percentage who speak Spanish at home, the percentage who speak another Indo-European language at home, and the percentage who speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language at home.

Table 8. Percentage of population 5 years and older by language spoken at home and by state

State	Language Spoken at Home, Percent of Population 5 and Older				
	English Only	Spanish	Other Indo-European Language	Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	Other Languages
United States	79.1	13.0	3.7	3.3	0.9
Delaware	87.3	6.9	3.1	2.0	0.7
District of Columbia	83.5	8.0	4.4	2.0	2.1
Maryland	83.1	7.0	4.4	3.7	1.8
New Jersey	69.7	15.6	8.5	4.7	1.5
Pennsylvania	89.5	4.5	3.6	1.9	0.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *American FactFinder*.

State Education Agency Capacity

State Education Agencies (SEAs) are the primary customers of the Comprehensive Centers. Understanding the capacity in the SEA, the number of districts served, and the governance structure of each state provides context. Data in this section come from the *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, the Education Commission of the States report, *50-State Comparison: K–12 Governance Structures*, and Achieve’s report, *Leadership Turnover: 2015 Year of Significant Change in State Education Leadership*.

Table 9 displays the number of agencies in each state. Table 10 displays the governance model (e.g., who is elected, who is appointed). Table 11 shows changes in education leadership over the past 2 years (2015 and 2016).

Table 9. Number of education agencies in 2013–14, by type and state

State	Total	District/LEA	RESA	State	Independent Charter Schools and Other
United States	18,194	13,491	1,522	255	2,923
Delaware	43	19	1	2	21
District of Columbia	62	1	0	1	60
Maryland	25	24	0	1	0
New Jersey	680	590	0	3	87
Pennsylvania	789	500	99	8	182

Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 214.30. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_214.30.asp?current=yes.

Note: RESA = Regional Education Service Agency

Table 10. State governance

State	Governance Model	Legislature	Local School Boards
Delaware	Appointed board, appointed chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee	16 local boards; members elected
District of Columbia	Mayor appoints superintendent	N/A	N/A
Maryland	Governor appoints board, board appoints chief	The legislature has a house ways and means committee and a senate education, health, and environmental affairs committee	24 local boards; members appointed and elected
New Jersey	Appointed board, appointed chief	The legislature has an assembly education committee, a senate education committee, and a joint committee on public schools	551 local boards; members appointed and elected
Pennsylvania	Appointed board, appointed chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee	501 local boards; members elected

Source: Education Commission of the States. (2013). *50-State Comparison: K–12 Governance Structures*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <http://www.ecs.org/k-12-governance-structures/>.

Table 11. State education leadership changes in 2015 or 2016

State	New Governor	New State Board Members	New Chief State School Officer	New State Higher Education Officer
Delaware	N/A	1/7 voting members	Steven Godowsky, Oct 2015	N/A
District of Columbia	Muriel Bowser-D, Jan 2015	3/9 voting members	Hanseul Kang, Feb 2015	N/A
Maryland	Larry Hogan-R, Jan 2015	3/12 voting members	Jack Smith, Aug 2015	James Fielder, Jan 2016
New Jersey	N/A	None	N/A	N/A
Pennsylvania	Tom Wolf-D, Jan 2015	1/21 voting members	Pedro Rivera, Apr 2015	Wil del Pilar, Aug 2015

Source: Achieve. (2015). *Leadership Turnover: 2015 Year of Significant Change in State Education Leadership*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <http://www.achieve.org/files/LeadershipTurnover2015.pdf>.

Educational Resources

Indicators of educational resources include school finance information such as revenues and expenditures, access to fiber and broadband connectivity, and pupil-to-teacher ratios. Data for the tables presented in this section come from the *2015 Digest of Education Statistics, American FactFinder*, and *Education Superhighway's 2015 State of the States* report on broadband connectivity in public schools.

Table 12 provides the total revenue for each state by source of funds.

Table 12. Revenues for public elementary and secondary schools, by source, 2012–13

State	Total Revenue (in Thousands)	Percent Revenue From Federal	Percent Revenue From State	Percent Revenue From Local
United States	\$603,686,987	9.3	45.2	45.5
Delaware	\$1,909,503	10.1	58.8	31.1
District of Columbia	\$2,094,445	9.6	†	90.4
Maryland	\$13,800,320	6.0	44.2	49.8
New Jersey	\$27,087,144	4.4	40.8	54.8
Pennsylvania	\$27,446,614	8.0	35.9	56.2

Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 235.20. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_235.20.asp?current=yes.
Note: † District of Columbia is not a state; all nonfederal revenue is from local sources.

Table 13 provides the per-pupil expenditures and the percentage of expenditures on instruction, support services (student support, instructional staff, general administration, operations and maintenance, student transportation, and other support services), and other (food services, capital outlay, interest on debt).

Additional data on total current expenditures for elementary and secondary education by function, subfunction, and state is available through NCES. See http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015301/tables/table_03.asp.

Table 13. Per-pupil expenditures, 2012–13, by function

State	Per-Pupil Expenditures	Percent Instruction	Percent Support	Percent Other
United States	\$12,020	54.4	31.3	14.3
Delaware	\$15,090	56.2	31.2	12.6
District of Columbia	\$26,670	42.1	30.4	27.5
Maryland	\$15,423	56.8	32.0	11.2
New Jersey	\$19,639	56.6	34.8	8.7
Pennsylvania	\$14,934	55.4	31.2	13.4

Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 236.75. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_236.75.asp?current=yes.

Table 14 provides another look at education expenditures. The last column provides an index of state and local education expenditures (excluding capital outlay) to total expenditures (excluding capital outlay, utilities, and intergovernmental expenditures).

Table 14. State expenditures on education, fall 2013

State	Total Enrollment ^a	Total Direct State and Local Expenditures ^{b,c}	State and Local Education Expenditures ^{b,d}	Percent Education to Total Expenditures
United States	50,044,052	\$2,366,783,591	\$796,049,064	33.6
Delaware	131,687	\$8,337,231	\$3,134,847	37.6
District of Columbia	78,153	\$9,845,001	\$2,145,514	21.8
Maryland	866,169	\$48,768,655	\$16,846,968	34.5
New Jersey	1,370,295	\$77,467,863	\$30,397,775	39.2
Pennsylvania	1,755,236	\$98,551,006	\$34,892,080	35.4

Source: ^a 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 203.20. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_203.20.asp?current=yes.

^b American FactFinder, United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/govs/local/>.

^c Total direct expenditures do not include capital outlay, utilities, and intergovernmental expenditures.

^d Total education expenditures do not include capital outlay.

Table 15 displays school district broadband connectivity for each state. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) set a minimum Internet access goal of 100 Kbps per student. The table provides the percentage of school districts in each state meeting that goal. Districts with access to fiber connections are more likely to meet the minimum connectivity goal. The second column of table 15 presents the percentage of school districts in the state with access to fiber connections. The FCC funds upgrades to fiber networks. The FCC also subsidizes the deployment of wired and wireless networks in schools. Accessing the E-rate budget for Wi-Fi networks is an indicator of whether districts are aware their E-rate budget can be used to upgrade Wi-Fi networks. Lastly, \$3/Mbps is a price target that will enable school districts to meet Internet access goals.

Additional information and maps of district fiber connectivity are available through the Federal Communications Commission website (<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/e-rate-fiber-map/>).

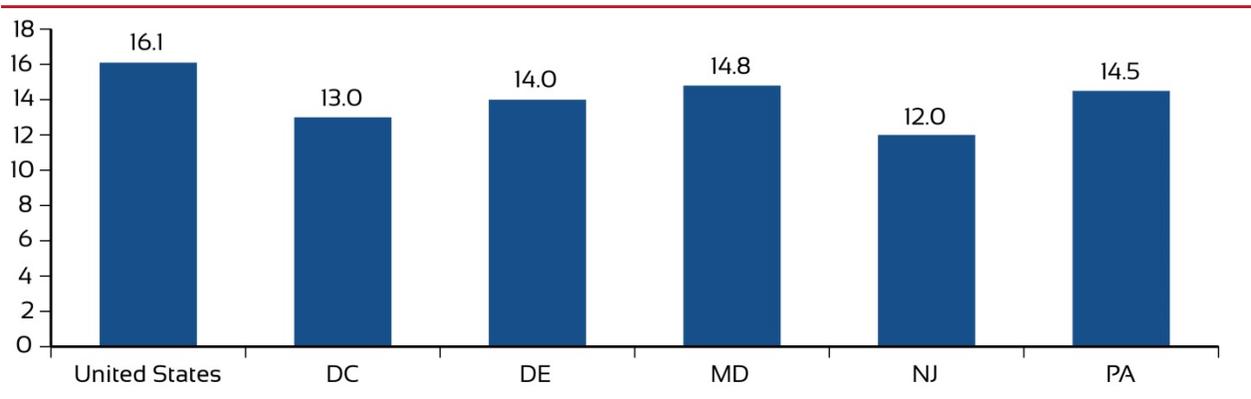
Table 15. School district broadband connectivity, 2015

State	Percent of School Districts			
	Meeting the Minimum 100 Kbps per Student Goal	That Have Fiber Connections To Meet Bandwidth Goals	That Accessed Their E-Rate Budget for Wi-Fi Networks	Meeting the \$3/Mbps Internet Access Affordability Target
Delaware	52	100	50	2
District of Columbia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maryland	38	88	63	44
New Jersey	80	81	38	27
Pennsylvania	76	81	45	29

Source: Education Superhighway. (2015.) 2015 State of the States. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from http://stateofthestates.educationsuperhighway.org/assets/sos/full_report-55ba0a64dcae0611b15ba9960429d323e2eadbac5a67a0b369bedbb8cf15dddb.pdf.

Another educational resource is teachers. Figure 2 presents the pupil-to-teacher ratio.

Figure 2. Pupil-to-teacher ratio, fall 2013



Source: 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 208.40. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_208.40.asp?current=yes.

Teacher Preparation, Qualifications, and Certification

Tables 16 through 20 display data on teacher preparation programs, the percentage of teachers who completed their training in a different state from where they are teaching, and ways teacher preparation programs are addressing shortages of highly qualified teachers.

All the data come from the Title II Reports National Teacher Preparation Data file.

Table 16. Number of completers of teacher preparation programs in 2013–14, by program type and state

State	Total Enrollment	Total Completers	Completers by Program Type		
			Traditional	Alternative, IHE-Based	Alternative, not IHE-Based
United States	465,540	180,745	149,369	13,011	18,365
Delaware	2,068	681	615	N/A	66
District of Columbia	1,199	593	311	19	263
Maryland	6,436	2,687	2,349	N/A	338
New Jersey	13,458	6,169	3,819	241	2,109
Pennsylvania	18,630	8,555	8,241	301	13

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Home/2015/aspx>.

Note: IHE = Institute of Higher Education

Table 17. Percentage of completers of teacher preparation programs in 2013–14, by program type and state

State	Total Completers	Program Type		
		Percent Traditional	Percent Alternative, IHE-Based	Percent Alternative, not IHE-Based
United States	180,745	82.6	7.2	10.2
Delaware	681	90.3	0.0	9.7
District of Columbia	593	52.4	3.2	44.4
Maryland	2,687	87.4	0.0	12.6
New Jersey	6,169	61.9	3.9	34.2
Pennsylvania	8,555	96.3	3.5	0.2

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/DataTools/2015/AllStates.xls>.

Table 18. Number and percentage of newly licensed teachers who received their credential from a teacher preparation program in a different state

State	Total Number Receiving Initial Credential in the State in 2013-14	Total Number Who Completed Their Teacher Preparation Program in Another State	Percent Who Trained Out of State
United States	254,272	56,718	22
Delaware	1,146	627	55
District of Columbia	1,147	356	31
Maryland	3,652	2,548	70
New Jersey	10,439	0	0
Pennsylvania	12,064	909	8

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/DataFiles/DataFiles.aspx?p=5_01.

Table 19. Do teacher preparation programs address shortages of highly qualified teachers by area of certification or licensure, subject, or specialty

State	Area of Certification or Licensure	Subject	Specialty
Delaware	No	No	No
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/DataFiles/DataFiles.aspx?p=5_01.

Table 20. Description of ways teacher preparation programs are addressing shortages of highly qualified teachers

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
Delaware	Delaware is addressing the shortages via alternative routes programs. All institutions of higher education are advising elementary education graduates to be dual certified for either special education or a middle level content area.
District of Columbia	The District of Columbia (DC) has identified the following subject disciplines as its high-need core subject areas with the highest number of non-highly qualified teachers: Military Science; Science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth, or Environmental Science; Foreign Languages; Physics; Mathematics; Elementary Education; English Language Arts and Reading; Career and Technical Education: Engineering, Health, Business, IT; Trades; Social Studies: History, Geography, Government, Political Science; Art: Dance, General Art, Music, Performing Arts, Visual Art; Health and Physical Education; Special Education; Early Childhood Education; Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language; Home Economics. While there is no specific State mandate for state-accredited educator preparation providers in DC to seek approval for or target their enrollment efforts toward the aforementioned program disciplines, many units have undertaken efforts to either develop new programs for state approval, reinvigorate existing programs aimed at producing new educators in the DC's high-need areas, or adjusting their list of approved programs to focus more resources on core subject areas and those that represent shortages of DC teachers. The state-only postbaccalaureate educator preparation accreditation and program approval pathway has provided a valuable vehicle for institutions, organizations, and agencies interested

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
	<p>in addressing shortages of highly qualified teachers. Since 2009, when the new accreditation system was first implemented, eight new educator preparation units have been granted accreditation and program approval and have begun admitting educator candidates for DC licensure. Of those eight units, seven prepare candidates for initial licensure, and one prepares only candidates for state licensure as administrators. Of the seven units that produce candidates for initial licensure, all have been granted state approval to offer programs in at least one of the high-need areas, and most have programs approved in multiple high-need areas. Specifically, new accredited units account for one new state-approved program in Art Education, four new state-approved programs in English/Language Arts, four new state-approved programs in Secondary Mathematics, three new state-approved programs in Middle-Level Mathematics, one new program in Modern Foreign Language, two new state-approved programs in the Secondary Sciences, and four new programs in Elementary Education. Combined, these new programs have enrolled more than 1,700 teacher candidates since the first cadre began operating in fall 2009.</p>
Maryland	<p>Maryland began focusing on teacher shortages in 1984 by conducting an annual survey of colleges and universities representing the supply side of teacher preparation, along with a survey from LEA departments of human resources, representing the demand side. The result was the Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, with data collected annually and published biennially, to provide valuable information in determining statewide critical shortage areas. These areas are used in a variety of ways, such as to award state and federal scholarships in the critical shortage areas and for hiring retired teachers in critical shortage areas in a program called Retire/Rehire. The report can be found at MarylandPublicSchools.org. The dashboards that display the data can also be found at the same web address.</p> <p>Maryland has other strategies in place to support teacher quality and teacher retention. In an effort to find principals and teachers in shortage areas, the strategies have grown over the years. Some are state efforts and others are national efforts. There are also strategies in place to recruit and retain teachers in Title I schools and for teachers or schools that have not met current standards. In the early 1990s, colleges and universities began to offer alternative routes to teacher certification (e.g., Master of Arts in Teaching programs) to further address teacher shortages. To expand alternative pathways, a regulation guiding an alternative route not associated with a college or university degree program was implemented in 1991 with the introduction of the Resident Teacher Certificate (known as RTC) to be used by program participants as they became employed in LEAs. To broaden these opportunities for career changers and recent college graduates to enter the Maryland teaching force and to ensure programs of integrity, Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (known as MAAPP) were developed. New regulations and policies increased flexibility for programs and candidates seeking to enter programs.</p> <p>Through the state's Race to the Top Grant, UTeach was implemented to enhance quality and quantity of math and science teachers, the Maryland Teaching Consortium developed a manual for use by teacher education programs in training teachers to be effective in challenged schools, and a STEM certification endorsement was initiated with approved programs to enhance the quality of elementary STEM performance.</p>
New Jersey	<p>The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) creates an annual teacher shortage area proposal for designation by the U.S. Department of Education, which allows qualified teachers to participate in federal loan forgiveness programs and grants. The department works with its traditional preparatory institutions providing this information and working with university-based programs to ensure the creation of high-quality programs that address shortage areas for teachers. NJDOE has also created targeted alternate routes in high-need areas, including special education, English as a second language (ESL)/bilingual, science, math, and foreign language. These routes provide a flexible and efficient manner for teachers to gain certification and highly qualified status. The new licensure regulations establish an alternate route for the</p>

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
	<p>special education endorsement, allowing any individual eligible for an instructional certificate to receive a special education certification of eligibility, permitting them to be employed while completing the special education endorsement program. NJDOE also has formal arrangements to recruit international teachers to teach in New Jersey schools.</p> <p>New Jersey's Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL), which is overseen by the New Jersey Education Association, is one program currently addressing the physics shortage. The program trains certified teachers in nonscience areas to gain the content and pedagogical knowledge needed to lead highly effective science classrooms. These teachers from Newark, Paterson, and Jersey City initially (and now all across the state) spend an intensive summer learning physics and then teach physics using the materials developed by NJCTL. They are also part of a virtual network that shares their materials as well as reflections on teaching. The emphasis in this program is not only the quantity of qualified teachers, but also on the quality of the student experience. The program will continue by adding additional teachers and additional science content. The program began with physics and then added chemistry and biology.</p>
Pennsylvania	<p>Pennsylvania's teacher preparation programs were asked to report on the extent to which they were addressing Pennsylvania's highly qualified teacher shortages. In addition to mathematics, science, special education, and limited English proficiency, Pennsylvania has teacher shortage areas in the following subjects that program providers were to include in this section:</p> <p>Foreign languages:</p> <p>During the prior report card period, program providers established numerical goals for the 2013–14 academic year for any teacher subject area they offered as an initial teacher certification preparation program. Using the numerical goals previously established, teacher preparation programs were instructed to report (1) whether they met established goals for the 2013–14 academic year, and (2) how they were going to change their strategies in the event they did not meet their targeted enrollment goals.</p> <p>This section of the 2014 Higher Education Opportunity Act Title II Institutional Report Card continues to present challenges for Pennsylvania's traditional and alternative route program providers. First, many program providers established goals for the 2013–14 academic year that increased the number of candidates slightly (between 0 and 20, for example). Second, declining enrollment in the undergraduate and postbachelor programs affected the number of students accepted to the programs. Third, some program providers established and reported on goals that were not specific and could not be compared to the goals set by other program providers. Fourth, the majority of strategies that were reported related to marketing, advertising, and recruiting. Some program providers noted that several of the subject areas were not shortage areas. More realistic goals are required for program providers to assist Pennsylvania in closing the gap in its highly qualified teacher shortages.</p> <p>An analysis of Pennsylvania's traditional higher education institutions' program responses to the goal shortages reveals the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forty-five out of 91 (49.5 percent) of Pennsylvania's program providers met the goal of increasing enrollment in mathematics; 14 providers (15.4 percent) of program providers do not offer mathematics preparation programs. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 175; 72 of 91 program providers (79.1 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20. 2. Forty-one out of 91 (45.1 percent) of Pennsylvania's program providers met the goal of increasing enrollment in the sciences; 14 out of 91 providers (15.4 percent) do not offer science preparation programs. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 170; 74 of 91 program providers (81.3 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20. 3. Forty-seven out of 91 (or 51.6 percent) of Pennsylvania's program providers met the

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
	<p>goal of increasing enrollment in special education; 26 program providers (28.6 percent) do not offer special education preparation programs. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 150; 39 of 91 program providers (42.8 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20.</p> <p>4. Twenty-five out of 91 (27.5 percent) of Pennsylvania’s program providers met the goal of increasing their ability to meet the needs of limited English-proficient students; 57 of 91 providers (62.6 percent) do not offer English language learners preparation programs. The majority of these providers offer course work to meet the needs of limited English-proficient students. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 335; 19 of 91 program providers (20.9 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20.</p> <p>An analysis of Pennsylvania’s alternative route preparation programs responded to the goal shortages as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Four out of 32 (12.5 percent) of Pennsylvania’s program providers met the goal of increasing enrollment in mathematics; 19 program providers (59.4 percent) do not offer mathematics preparation programs. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 30; 12 of 32 program providers (37.5 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20. 2. Six out of 32 (18.75 percent) of Pennsylvania’s program providers met the goal of increasing enrollment in the sciences; 18 program providers (56.25 percent) do not offer science preparation programs. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 60; 13 of 32 program providers (40.6 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20. 3. Five out of 32 (15.6 percent) of Pennsylvania’s program providers met the goal of increasing enrollment in special education; 21 program providers (65.6 percent) do not offer special education preparation programs. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 30; 10 of 32 program providers (31.3 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20. 4. Two out of 32 (6.25 percent) of Pennsylvania’s program providers met the goal of increasing their ability to meet the needs of limited English-proficient students; 25 of 32 program providers (78 percent) indicated they do not offer preparation programs geared specifically to limited English proficient students even though each of their approved programs must include competencies geared specifically for new teachers to meet the needs of limited English-proficient students. The targeted enrollments ranged from a low of 0 to a high of 30; six of 32 program providers (18.75 percent) had enrollment goals fall within the range of 0 to 20. <p>Pennsylvania’s 2012–2013 Not Highly Qualified Assignment numbers in each teacher shortage area serve as the baseline for determining whether Pennsylvania’s program providers are helping to reduce the number of Not Highly Qualified Teachers (NHQT) in Pennsylvania’s seven teacher shortage areas: special education (elementary and secondary); English/reading/language arts; mathematics; the sciences; social studies; and foreign languages. The number of NHQTs decreased from the 2012–13 to the 2013–14 school year in all the shortage areas. In 2013–14, the number of NHQT assignments decreased in English language arts, mathematics, science, special education, foreign languages, and social studies. However, the number of NHQTs increased from 2012–13 to 2013–14 in art/music and English as a second language. See table 21 in next section.</p> <p>Program providers’ strategies used to reach goals in the 2013–14 academic year revolved around the following common themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Science Foundation or other grants paid part of the cost of tuition for math and/or science candidates.

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdepartmental collaboration was apparent between the schools of education and the subject major. • There were partnerships with professional development schools: Philadelphia Teaching Fellows, Teach for America, and Troops to Teachers. • Developing candidates' competencies related to meeting the needs of diverse student populations in an inclusive classroom, including English language learners. • Earlier and more frequent field experiences for candidates in all types of school settings (urban, rural and suburban) took place. • There were stronger candidate supports (mentoring, coaching, Praxis preparation, and two advisers where one is from education and the other is from the subject area) in an attempt to retain more candidates in these teacher shortage subjects. • Recruitment strategies included improving the university websites; conducting special open houses and career fairs; working with admissions as participants attend recruitment fairs; reaching out to high school students and conducting weekly information sessions for prospective students; and conducting one-on-one interviews with interested undergraduate students. • Additional candidate supports included individual conferencing, careful choice of cooperating teachers, attentive and frequent visits, and conferences with a university supervisor during student teaching. <p>Changes adopted by the State Board of Education in 2007 require new special education teachers to hold multiple certificates. These regulatory changes also changed the scope of Pennsylvania's special education certificate. A brief overview of Pennsylvania's new special education certificates follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prekindergarten–8 Special Education Certificate holder must also hold any of the following certificates in addition to Pennsylvania's special education certificate: Prekindergarten–4, 4–8, or Reading Specialist. 2. Holder of 7–12 Special Education Certificate must also hold one of the following certificates in addition to Pennsylvania's special education certificate: 7–12, 4–8 subject content, or Reading Specialist. <p>It is anticipated that the changes to Pennsylvania's special education certification requirements will ensure newly prepared special education teachers will have demonstrated content mastery in core academic subjects and will therefore be highly qualified as long as school districts assign Pennsylvania's new special education teachers to teach core academic subjects that are within the scope of their certificates. It is anticipated that the number of NHQT in special education will continue to decline.</p>

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/DataFiles/DataFiles.aspx?p=5_01.

Student Educational Attainment

Indicators of student educational attainment include

- ▶ Fourth grade literacy;
- ▶ Advanced Placement participation and performance;
- ▶ performance on college readiness assessments (ACT and SAT);
- ▶ averaged freshman graduation rates; and
- ▶ college completion rates.

A. Fourth Grade Literacy

Research has shown that students who are not reading well by third grade have a higher probability of dropping out of high school. Each state uses different assessments of reading and literacy. Table 21 presents results from the 2015 4th grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment.

Table 21. Percentage at each achievement level on the 2015 4th grade NAEP reading assessment, 2015

State	Achievement Level				
	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	At or Above Proficient
United States	32	33	27	8	35
Delaware	30	33	28	9	37
District of Columbia	44	28	19	8	27
Maryland	32	31	27	10	37
New Jersey	25	33	31	12	43
Pennsylvania	26	32	31	11	41

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. *The Nation's Report Card*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2015/#reading/state/acl?grade=4.

B. Advanced Placement Participation and Performance

Participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and performance on AP exams are predictors of college enrollment and performance. By taking AP courses, students are exposed to college-level course material while in high school. There are currently more than 30 AP courses. At the end of the school year, students in AP courses have the opportunity to take the associated AP exam. The exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Many colleges and universities grant college credit, depending on the score. Each college has discretion for awarding credit based on AP exam performance, but generally a student must earn at least a 3 to receive college-level credit. Table 22 provides the number of students who took an AP course in 2015, the number of exams taken, the average exam score, and the percentage of exams scored 3 or higher. There are more exams taken than students taking AP courses because individual students may take more than one AP course in a given year. The College Board provides detailed reports for each state, available [here](#).

Table 22. AP participation and exam performance, 2015

State	Number of Students Taking AP Course	Total Number of Exams Taken	Average Exam Score (1 to 5 Scale)	Percent of Exams Scored 3 or Higher
United States	2,416,329	4,343,547	2.82	57
Delaware	6,498	11,638	2.80	56
District of Columbia	5,950	10,898	2.71	51
Maryland	65,109	122,971	2.97	62
New Jersey	66,956	129,982	3.22	70
Pennsylvania	68,396	121,013	3.11	67

Source: *College Board State Summary Reports*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap/data/participation/Ap-2015>.

C. Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks

The two primary college readiness assessments in the United States are the ACT® and the SAT. Both tests have historically been taken by high school students planning to attend college. The test taken is largely a function of the state where a student attends high school. Recently, several states began providing all students the opportunity to take college readiness assessments. In 2015, 13 states had 100-percent participation of graduates in the ACT assessment: Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming. Because not all students participate in the ACT® and/or SAT assessments, it is not appropriate to make comparisons between states. When larger percentages of students in a state participate in the assessment, the average score is generally lower because students from all ability levels are tested. In states with lower participation rates, the students tested are often more likely to be higher achieving.

The ACT® consists of four subject area tests (English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science), which are often combined for a composite score. ACT® sets benchmarks for each subject-area test. The ACT® benchmarks are the scores associated with a 50-percent chance of earning a B or higher in corresponding first-year college courses. The ACT® benchmarks are 18 in English, 22 in both Mathematics and Reading, and 23 in Science.

The SAT consists of three subject area tests (Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing). The College Board sets a benchmark for the SAT composite score associated with a 65-percent probability of obtaining a first-year GPA of a B-minus or higher. The SAT college readiness benchmark is a 1550 composite score. The College Board produces detailed program results for each state. The state reports provide additional details and breakdowns by student subgroup. See more at <https://www.collegeboard.org/release/2015-program-results>.

Table 23. ACT® and SAT participation and mean scores, 2015

State	Percent of Graduates Taking ACT® ^a	Average ACT® Composite Score (Benchmark 21.25) ^a	Percent of Graduates Taking SAT ^b	Average SAT Composite Score (Benchmark 1550) ^b
United States	51 to 60	21.0	N/A	1,490
Delaware	21 to 30	23.5	91 to 100	1,368
District of Columbia	41 to 50	21.1	91 to 100	1,313
Maryland	21 to 30	22.7	71 to 80	1,462
New Jersey	21 to 30	23.2	81 to 90	1,520
Pennsylvania	21 to 30	22.9	71 to 80	1,485

^a *The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2015*. Retrieved July 2, 2016, from

<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-career-readiness-report-2015.html?page=0&chapter=9>.

^b *The College Board Program Results, SAT State Profile Reports*. Retrieved July 15, 2016, from

<https://www.collegeboard.org/release/2015-program-results>.

Table 24. Percentage of ACT® and SAT test takers meeting college readiness benchmarks, 2015

State	Seniors Taking ACT® ^a	Met ACT® College Readiness Benchmark				Seniors Taking SAT ^b	Met SAT College Readiness Benchmark ^b
		English ^a	Reading ^a	Mathematics ^a	Science ^a		
United States	59	64	46	42	38	N/A	42
Delaware	21	79	64	59	54	100	28
District of Columbia	42	57	46	44	39	100	29
Maryland	25	73	57	55	50	79	41
New Jersey	29	78	59	63	52	81	46
Pennsylvania	22	76	59	58	51	71	41

^a *The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2015*. Retrieved July 2, 2016, from

<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-career-readiness-report-2015.html?page=0&chapter=9>.

^b *The College Board Program Results, State Reports*. Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <https://www.collegeboard.org/release/2015-program-results>.

D. Public High School Graduation Rates

The adjusted cohort graduation rate (known as ACGR) measures the percentage of public school students who attain a regular high school diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade for the first time.

Table 25. Adjusted cohort graduation rate for public high school students overall and by race/ethnicity, 2013–14

State	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native
United States	82	87	73	76	89	70
Delaware	87	90	83	84	93	89
District of Columbia	61	85	60	65	‡	‡
Maryland	86	92	81	78	95	87
New Jersey	89	94	79	81	96	86
Pennsylvania	85	90	72	71	90	82

Source: 2015 *Digest of Education Statistics*, table 219.46. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_219.46.asp?current=yes.

‡ Too few cases

E. College Completion Rates

One way that secondary schools measure their performance is by the transition of high school graduates into postsecondary education or the labor force. One source of longitudinal data on postsecondary enrollment and completion is the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). Following are data from a new report that shows 6-year outcomes for students aged 20 or younger at time of first entry. A detailed report and data tables are available for download from NSC (see <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport10-statesupplement/>).

Table 26 shows 6-year completion rates for students aged 20 or younger who were first-time degree-seeking students who started their postsecondary studies in fall 2009. The states refer to the state where a student entered an institution of higher education, not the state where a student graduated from high school.

Table 26. Overall 6-year completion rates for students aged 20 or younger who were first-time, degree-seeking students in postsecondary institutions in fall 2009, by institution type

State	4-Year Public	4-Year Private Nonprofit	2-Year Public
United States	64.97	76.02	40.72
Delaware	*	41.02	N/A
District of Columbia	N/A	85.53	N/A
Maryland	74.27	86.21	40.72
New Jersey	75.52	74.91	40.36
Pennsylvania	72.86	81.60	38.38

Source: Shapiro, D., Dunder, A., Wakhungu, P., Yuan, X., and Harrell, A. (2015, February). *Completing College: A State-Level View of Student Attainment Rates* (Signature Report No. 8a). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

* Fewer than three institutions

**Appendix B. Needs and Recommendations from Committee
Members**

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Susan S. Bunting, Ed.D.

Affiliation: Superintendent, Indian River School District

Priority Need 1. College and Career Readiness

In the Mid-Atlantic region twenty-seven percent of small group assigned (principals, PTO/PTA, Parents) deemed College and Career Readiness a Priority Area. In fact, nearly three times as many selected this primary educational need as compared to any other.

Justification: During the past decade, educators have devoted heightened attention to engendering Twenty-first Century skills in students, thus preparing them for post-secondary education and the contemporary “world of work”. Relatedly, many Mid-Atlantic States have woven college and career readiness into their school accountability systems. Efforts range from the fostering of critical thinking skills to enhanced creativity, from the development of technological skills to writing and speaking adeptness, from emphasis upon career pathways to the completion of post-secondary courses while still in high school. In the Mid-Atlantic area cadres of high school educators have been certified by university level personnel to teach college-credit bearing courses to high schoolers. However, this broadened perspective for public school employees begs the need for insightful assistance from agencies such as Regional Comprehensive Center, where educators can not only be introduced to and trained to deliver more demanding materials but also coached in facilitating public understanding of the need for and gaining both community and legislative support for college and career readiness initiatives.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Recommended technical assistance strategies include

- ▶ Sponsoring collaborative sessions during which secondary school leaders and school chiefs can discuss college readiness improvement strategies with university personnel
- ▶ Connecting school leaders with business community and industry leaders to reach consensus on what school can do to better prepare students for the “world of work”
- ▶ Developing resource documents with the assistance of business leaders to inform upper-level classmen of specific skills which are invaluable to their areas of work
- ▶ Arrange for “Principal for a Day” experiences so that business leaders can shadow administrators and experience the experiences their future employees are experiencing, which should generate conversations about how the transition to post-secondary careers can be facilitated

Priority Need 2. Promoting personalized learning

Ten members (13 percent) of the Parent, Principal, PTO/PTA subgroup members in the Mid-Atlantic region rated “Promoting Personalized Learning” as the second primary educational need. Perhaps members of this group realize via observation the potential of technology to enhance individualized, differentiated instruction. Interestingly, no PRO/PTA member considered this need a priority.

Justification: In the Mid-Atlantic region, seven of the thirty principals and three of the forty-four parents who responded identified “Promoting personalized learning” as a primary educational need. Through “on the job” observations by administrators and “at home” observations by parents, the respondents

have witnessed the impact of personalized learning on students' interests and achievement. During the past decade technology's impact on learning has dramatically increased. Devices are no longer "extracurricular" but have become critical to learning success. Principals and parents have witnessed the potential of learning management systems to enable each and every student to learn at his/her own pace, the opportunity for students to explore personal areas of interest and to complete individualized assignments, the impact of allowing students to exhibit mastery of topics, skills, and concepts via self-selected ways, and the power of adaptive computerized testing in determining achievement levels, delivering individualized interventions, and promoting eventual learning success. Even new "textbook" programs have major digital components!

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Recommended technical assistance strategies include

- ▶ Forming multi-state focus groups to share strategies for enhancing student learning through technology
- ▶ Linking members of the business community with educators to brainstorm ways to secure additional funding for technology purchases
- ▶ Arranging and perhaps hosting meetings of district consortia to advance the use of technology in classroom and to facilitate bulk device purchasing
- ▶ Exposing more districts to the potential of learning management systems for both faculty and student benefit
- ▶ Compiling personalized learning best practice guides not only enlightening others regarding programs, activities, and projects but also featuring "demo" schools that are willing host and share with interested visiting district reps
- ▶ Promoting, perhaps actually arranging, Mid-Atlantic area "field trips" to schools that can model the power of individualized, differentiated instruction
- ▶ Videotaping outstanding examples of individualized, differentiated instruction "in action" and subsequently making the tapes available to districts/schools throughout the region
- ▶ Gathering evidence of academic growth via personalized learning that exceeds gains by comparable students in classrooms devoid of technology

Priority Need 3. Assessment and accountability systems

Nine members (12 percent) of the Mid-Atlantic Parent, Principal, PTO/PTA subgroup ranked "Assessment and Accountability Systems" as the third primary educational need. Since such systems greatly impact the ratings and reputation of schools, school leaders and parents have heightened interest in their development and modification.

Justification: Six parents and three principals labeled "Assessment and Accountability Systems" as a priority need. Since the passage of *No Child Left Behind* legislation, states have been required by the federal government to design accountability systems. At the heart of each system lies a reputed achievement measure such as Smarter Balanced. The tests, which reflect updated standards typically, require more critical thinking and application than did basic skills tests of the past. Concerns regarding the amount of time devoted to and the rigor demanded by the required testing are frequently heard. Thus, the selection of "assessment and accountability systems" as a priority need might have been predicted.

Although ESSA has now replaced the former federal law, accountability systems must still be designed by each of the Mid-Atlantic states as well as those across the nation, must still center upon an achievement measure, must be submitted to and approved by the US DOE, and must be annually used to rate the performance of schools in their respective systems. The resulting labels must be publicized via school “report cards.” Such systems frequently involve complicated formulas and multiple criteria, which result in stakeholders’ confusion and related distrust, especially if their school receives a less than favorable rating. I predict respondents were voicing their desire for a more transparent, reasonable, and perhaps broader, “recipe” for determining school success so that factors beyond achievement and graduation rates are acknowledged.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Recommended technical assistance strategies include

- ▶ Providing opportunities for parents to actually take a standards-based assessment
- ▶ Promoting further acquaintance with the Common Core and/or state standards upon which most curricula are currently based through presentations, media, and publications
- ▶ Developing or acquiring a PowerPoint that carefully explains in laymen’s terms each state’s accountability system and that can be circulated upon request for viewing by stakeholders
- ▶ Publicizing data that reveals the skill and achievement levels of students in the Mid-Atlantic vs. those in other states and in other countries, consequently supporting the need for implementation of more demanding standards, curricula, and assessment
- ▶ Collaborating with state officials to create assessment feedback that can be more easily comprehended by parents

Priority Need 4. Ensuring equity

Seven parents, 9 percent of the Mid-Atlantic respondents, selected “Ensuring Equity” as a primary educational need. No other members of the subgroup, neither principals nor PRO/PTA members, did so.

Justification: Seven responding parents in the Mid-Atlantic subgroup deemed equity a priority area. The breakdown of survey completers indicates that 12 parents from Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania responded along with 9 parents from Maryland. No DC parents responded. According to the *Mid-Atlantic Region Education Profile*, about half of the students in Delaware, Maryland and New Jersey are minority students as compared to approximately 30 percent in Pennsylvania. In the responding states, the free/reduced lunch rate ranges from 40 to 44 percent, the ELL percentage spans from 2.8 to 6.6 percent, and the students with disabilities rate varies from 12 to 16.9 percent. No parents from DC participated in the survey, yet DC is the Mid-Atlantic area with the highest (99.2 percent) students participating in the free or reduced priced lunch program, and the highest (10.5 percent) percentage of ELL students. Thus, those who highlighted the need to ensure equity were not from the most diverse area. Perhaps where the percentages of minority, ELL, economically-challenged, and SWD students are lower, equity and equal opportunity are more significant needs.

Recommended Strategy the Technical Assistance: Recommended technical assistance strategies include

- ▶ Providing training and/or materials featuring strategies for enabling minority students to academically prosper

- ▶ Sponsoring forums through which Mid-Atlantic state representatives can share/discuss strategies, curricula and professional learning that have proven to raise subgroup achievement levels
- ▶ Developing a list of typical “inequity initiators” for administrators’ use in safeguarding equity
- ▶ Providing schools with lists of books/stories with an equity theme or focus
- ▶ Connecting districts with IHE’s to facilitate hiring of minority teachers
- ▶ Working with IHE’s to enhance support to minority teacher candidates via mentoring during their college years and scholarship provision

Priority Need 5. Other

In the Mid-Atlantic region, seven or 9 percent of the Parent, Principal, PTO/PTA subgroup respondents selected “Other” as a priority area. Among these were five parents and two principals.

Justification: An analysis of all Mid-Atlantic respondents’ “votes” for the “Other” category reveals that more than half deemed “Funding/resources” a major concern. According to the *Mid-Atlantic Region Educational Profile*, the percentage of the total state and local dollars invested in education is higher than the US average of 33.6 percent in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Moreover, the percent of revenue for elementary and secondary schools provided by the states in the Mid-Atlantic region varies from 35.9 percent in Pennsylvania to 58.8 percent in Delaware. However, Maryland’s (44.2 percent), New Jersey’s (40.8 percent), and Pennsylvania’s (35.9 percent) percent of revenue from the state are lower than the national average of 45.2 percent. Consequently, in these states the local responsibility for educational funding is greater, which amplifies parents’ concerns since their educational tax burden is greater. Predictably, members of the Parent, Principal, PTO/PTA subgroup want more and better learning environments, textbooks, materials, instructors and extracurricular opportunities for their students - all of which depend upon funding. In the past decade the nation’s economic downturn has painted a bleak picture. Relatedly, many states including Delaware are dealing with tight budgets and/or diminished revenues. Thus, it is logical that funding is a widespread educational priority area.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Recommended technical assistance strategies include

- ▶ Serving as a clearinghouse for educational funding sources, assuring that Mid-Atlantic school systems have greater access to grant opportunities
- ▶ Sponsoring webinars or face-to-face forums to generate conversation regarding how systems within the Mid-Atlantic have creatively “stretched” funds
- ▶ Liaising between state business organization leaders and state educational leaders to generate businesses’ interest in funding Career Technical Education pathways/learning opportunities/internships that are associated with their areas of work
- ▶ Connecting school leaders who have successfully passed local referenda with those who hope to do so
- ▶ Developing and subsequently sharing strategies for “selling” local referenda

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Shirley Campbell

Affiliation: Owner and Teacher, Professional Development and Learning Support Services (PDLSS)

Priority Need 1. Equitable Funding Resources across PA Schools, Used to Provide Equitable Access to Resources for Students and Teachers

The results of the survey, as well as discussions with most interviewees associated with this study, reflect a need to address concerns about testing. During interviews with Pennsylvania parents, teachers, employers and students, significant numbers of responses involved discussions concerning focus on tests that take time away from “real learning”, and cause undue stress. Many parents expressed concern that students spend too much time preparing for testing that has no real meaning for them, and educators expressed concern that preparing students to pass tests and follow specific curriculum and methods means changing their teaching styles and following unfamiliar (and they believe, sometimes less effective) formats. Two interviewed educators noted that graduates of their district seem no better educated now than they did before testing became the norm. Educators and parents alike, along with interviewees from business, noted that a focus on testing did not help students learn necessary skills like collaboration, problem solving, and researching. Educators especially are concerned that testing data is often used as a measure of teaching effectiveness without taking student populations specifics into account.

Justification: Testing is a very visible focus at many schools simply because it is required by the state and is a standard of measure of school performance. The importance relegated to testing is often skewed because the testing process exerts external pressure and control over the local school through required scheduling as well as the degree and depth of preparation needed. Testing is scheduled into the school calendar well before the school year begins and on dates chosen to align with state calendars. While school attendance is important every day, there is rarely another time during the school year when attendance is stressed as strongly as testing days. The atmosphere inside schools often becomes tense as testing time approaches. In reality, standardized testing across districts demonstrates school performance in comparison to other schools, districts and students in the areas that are covered by the tests, and allows for policy shifts at broad levels, like states and regions, as well as school level focuses. Unfortunately, the results of testing do not seem to many constituents as equal in value to the pressure they evoke. The results of testing are often not adequately analyzed and applied toward realistic improvement at the local level, often because scores are not released in a timely manner, or because educators may not know how best to interpret them

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: There are two important needs to be addressed regarding testing. First, testing and test results must be understood by all constituents, which could result in a reduced or more balanced focus on testing. Providing training opportunities for administrators and teachers to assure that they can interpret and make use of testing data for the benefit of learners is important. State departments of education should be apprised of the impact that testing has on local schools, and governing bodies could also benefit from some training on appropriate use of test results. For example, use of test results as a measure of teacher effectiveness should be carefully considered and combined with other relevant measures to assure that evaluations are fair. Community members, also, should be provided with information to help them understand how testing impacts individual students, and how they should interact with the process for the most positive results.

The second important area where professional development could make an impact regarding testing involves identifying important areas of educational focus that are not including in the focus of testing. Learning in school should involve hands on learning opportunities, practice in collaborating, working in groups, problem solving, trial and error, and guidance to develop social skills. These areas are difficult to assess in a testing format similar to the standardized tests currently in place, but the content is important. Training for administrators and teachers on incorporating these important areas alongside “test-able” content should be provided. Information and training on assessing these skills should be provided as well. Again, providing information to community members on these areas is also important. If possible, including teacher preparation programs in training programs for teachers and administrators is encouraged.

Priority Need 2. College and Career Readiness through Curriculum Design

Throughout the course of gathering information, the topic of teachers attempting to work with parents of students in low socio-economic status neighborhoods arose repeatedly, even by interviewees from areas with better-funded schools. There are concerns that families are not providing support of their students’ educations at home, or that students come to school with basic needs unmet. For example, students may be living in low-income families, or in homes where violence is a frequent occurrence. These students are not ready to learn when they arrive at school. There is a gap in preparation when compared to students in higher socio-economic areas.

Justification: Gathering information for this report unearthed lots of stories, stories of teachers meeting with parents who are unable to help their early elementary students with reading because the parents don’t understand phonics, or can’t help with multiplication homework because they don’t know math facts. Other stories relate issues of students missing school because parents believe that sleeping until the student wakes naturally is important, or because students just “need a day out of that place sometimes”. Stories demonstrating teacher perception of inadequate parenting abound, and each story relates to a child who is not meeting his or her potential in school.

Students in low socio-economic situations can be trailing their peers in academic areas for a variety of reasons. Parents in low-income families often have little education themselves, may be working more than one part time job, and may not be able to find reasonably priced childcare. Students from these families are also likely to begin their school careers with less education-related experience than their peers from higher income homes, and are trying to catch up from the very beginning.

Lower income families often tend to undervalue education. In their own experiences, education hasn’t provided benefit to them, and they may not believe that education is going to provide benefit for their child. They may even believe that the school is part of the “government” and is looking for reasons to interfere in their family life.

Regardless of socioeconomic status of the students, some teachers are frustrated with parents who don’t choose to support their students. Teachers also tell stories about asking for work to be completed at home, or asking for support for classroom behavior change, and having parents refuse. There are stories of families making unreasonable requests of teachers, and stories of students missing days of school. There were also complaints from school police officers, as well as teachers, about lack of means of options for reprimands to curb unwanted behavior.

Community and family needs impact learning deeply. While most of the situations occur outside of the jurisdiction of the schools, they still have profound impact on the functioning within the school, and the progress of individual students.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Providing support for parents and communities can change the atmosphere for schools, and can improve the chances for progress for the students. There are several different options to address these issues, and certainly research can provide more.

Providing professional development on approaches for dealing with generational and situational poverty, as well as other cultural diversity issues, can help address situations within schools. School administrators could benefit from this type of professional development, providing them with expertise to implement supportive policies in areas where poverty or other culturally diverse issues affect day-to-day school operation.

Professional development on identifying parent needs in content areas and on structuring programs to provide tutoring for parents would help to alleviate some of the issues, and could increase positive communication between school and home. Districts need guidance in providing programs in Math, reading, and other student subjects as well as technology skills to help parents to gain important skills, possibly even leading to better earning power for families in need. Providing assistance to education leaders in designing and creating afterschool care and daycare can help parents relax knowing that children are safe, while school personnel can assure that children attending get extra support for homework and other learning options. Interaction with community members will require careful planning if these efforts are to be successful and many districts are not prepared to locate and share the resources that are needed to support students outside of school so that they can be ready to learn when they arrive in school.

Priority Need 3. Home and Community

As technology changes and the need for college and career ready graduates continues to increase, the need for changes to curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment, and inclusion of technology use in the classroom increase. If the end result of K12 education is expected to change, then the process must change as well. An increase in problem solving, collaboration, research strategies, and learning to use new technologies are needed. A sizable number of respondents to the survey indicated that school librarians, libraries and media centers should be called upon to provide the support needed to meet many of these needs and are currently being underutilized.

Justification: In order to succeed after high school, whether in post secondary education or a career, students need to be experienced in a collection of work force ready skills: collaborating, problem solving, working with a team, seeking and identifying information and resources, and learning to use new technology as it evolves. To be prepared to use these skills after high school, students must learn them within the context of their k12 education. While educating students for the work force, schools should also be ready to prepare students for life skills, like maintaining a bank account and voting.

As students use more technology, teaching strategies and assessment of learning must evolve to fit the new requirements. Teaching with technology requires high quality ongoing professional development so that technology is used successfully, well integrated, and its use is authentically assessed. Likewise, using differentiation, maker spaces, genius hours, programming, and work force ready skills in the classroom requires professional development, planning and support. Differentiation can offer students options to dive deeply into content that excites them, and provides the right amount of rigor for their ability level, but requires that teachers be fully prepared to change their classroom activity dramatically.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Strategies to change the focus and format of teaching, curriculum and assessment require research and planning, and changes in technology require rapid response for schools. Problem based learning, project based learning, and teamwork designs are

already available for implementation in classrooms, but must be aligned to standards, and on-going professional development must be provided to assist in a smooth transition from lecture based classrooms to active learning classrooms. Research to determine most effective formats for the use of differentiation, maker spaces, genius hours and other approaches is required, along with effective means of evaluating success. Technical assistance for school leaders could provide support in repurposing or refocusing on these important areas.

Regional educational support agencies could be supported in efforts to create information banks concerning job skills required in the region, as well as job description and educational requirements. These information banks may help to connect students with ideas for employment after high school, even when college is required. Students are more likely to value their education and make better choices when they are aware of possible options for using their skills in the future. Likewise, identifying needs from employers, and assuring that students are directed toward those needs, requires coordination and research, but will provide success for students in the long term.

Professional development or curricular materials to aid in providing student preparation for post k12 living are day to day living strategies should be provided. Students should be ready to perform life tasks that will be important for their success, like banking, budgeting, finding resources, saving money, handling credit, voting and even planning food choices and exercise. While these topics may be addressed in some homes, other students will not be familiar with these tasks when they graduate, and will benefit from exposure to them while in school.

Priority Need 4. Changing Curriculum, Teaching Strategies and Assessment

In order for schools to meet the technology learning needs of their students, schools need to acquire and integrate technology. Technology changes rapidly, so choosing the right technology is an ongoing process. Yet the processes for determining which technology should be purchase, how students will use it and how teachers learn to use it are different in every school. In order to shorten the timeline and pipeline from digital creation to effective use in the classroom, processes for decision-making, purchase, professional development, curricular creation and integration, and assessment of effectiveness need to be delineated and practiced. Educators, parents and students interviewed and surveyed indicate concerns that technology use in schools is lacking. Students discuss use of their cell phones to research topics of importance to them, but they are not permitted to use cell phones for classroom research. Parents are concerned that students are not using technology in ways that will help them in careers and college. Teachers are concerned that they don't have time and information to make effective technology choices, and may be unable to spend adequate time to learn to use and teach with technology. Teachers also expressed concern that students are unable to use technology effectively for information search and evaluation. Business leaders expressed concern that they have technology options available but are unable to connect with appropriate school decision makers to provide strong technology options for school purchase, or that technology purchases may be made haphazardly.

Justification: School districts, individual schools, grade levels, subject areas and even classrooms are outfitted with varying technology, and the choices are made based on a variety of different factors. When schools choose to use specific curriculum packages, they often choose packages based on the learning goals for the student group, the expected ease of teacher use, and expectations of covering a wide range of learning needs within the student groups. Decisions are made concerning acquisition of component parts of some curriculum packages based on expectations of their impact on student learning. Generally, professional development is provided to assure that all teachers using the new packages will be fully prepared to be successful. Assessment of student learning is ongoing. Decisions to

continue to use the new packages, to add the new packages to additional classes, or even to stop using curriculum packages are usually based on evaluation of teacher experience and student assessment.

Choosing the technology for use in a classroom, school, district, grade level, or content area can be more daunting than choosing a curriculum package because teachers are less likely to be familiar with the purposes of the technology, how to use the technology, its likely impact on learning, or even how to assess their progress. Schools have purchased any number of technology tools and soon found the technology locked away in closets or being used for much simpler tasks than they were originally chosen to perform. To avoid a waste of time, money and energy, schools need to develop processes for choosing tools to meet their needs.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Technical assistance to assure that technology purchases are effective, from decision making to professional development to student learning, requires work in several areas.

School leaders would benefit from professional development on the effectiveness of various types of technology for use in instruction. Understanding of the impacts of technology tools on teaching and learning would help school leaders to make better purchasing decisions. By design, technology changes processes and results, and decision makers should be aware of changes that are likely to occur in the classroom based on their decisions. There is a need to assure that technology use is meeting the curricular needs it is expected to meet, and that unexpected learning outcomes are documented and appreciated. Assessing technology impact in the classroom is also an area where professional development is needed.

Decisions concerning technology purchases should be made based on factors related to teaching, learning and curricular needs. Many schools and districts would benefit from professional development designed to assist in building decision-making teams that can be flexible and adept at quickly making informed decisions about technology use. Decisions should account for technical support and longevity of use of the technology in addition to curricular fit, professional development and assessing impact. Rapid changes in technology require an agile response to changes. Professional development that is ongoing and supportive is required for all new technology.

Technical assistance in the form of reviews of current research on professional development strategy could impact the choices made by district leaders concerning time spent on professional learning as well as formats for professional learning. Reviews of current research that include interpretations for using the research results in the classroom, school or district could go a long way to providing important information for education leaders to make flexible and effective changes in all areas of education.

Technical support for this decision-making effort could also include regular reports of ongoing research and evaluation on technology tools that could be useful in education. Technical assistance in the form of a regular report on the technology market for education, including reviews of new tools with content area, assessment, grade level, and implementation requirements could provide much needed information for regional and local level decision-making. Adequate information and decision making could improve consistency in technology choices across districts and regions, and could impact issues of digital divide by assuring that all schools are using high quality information to spend limited dollars on technology.

Priority Need 5. Technology Purchase and Adoption Process

In PA, funding resources are largely dependent upon the economic level of the community where the school district is located. School districts levy property taxes to fund local schools, and the funding oversight is provided by locally elected school director boards. State and federal funds are distributed in a variety of formats, but are not sufficient to provide equitable resources across districts. Charter and private school funding is also widely varied. A significant portion of survey respondents and interviewees indicated concern that funding across schools in Pennsylvania is unfairly distributed.

Justification: PA includes 500 school districts, and funding resources in districts ranging per student from \$10,629 to \$36,470 (2013-14 data - http://www.openpagov.org/education_revenue_and_expenses.asp).

In addition to vastly differing economics across school communities, needs of districts and their students can vary widely. PA includes two large urban districts covering densely populated areas, a number of rural districts with low population counts over broad areas, and nearly every size of suburban district. Urban districts are better able to fully implement resources, while rural districts may only be able to acquire a small portion of the resource needed to support their students. For example, a reading coach at a city school is likely to be hired full time, and be able to specialize in working with a small population of students, while the rural school district may need to hire a reading coach only part time, to support all reader needs from kindergarten to graduation. A well-funded suburban school may be able to hire several elementary special subject teachers (art, music, physical education, for example), while another suburban district may be able to afford only one. A rural school serving a large geographic area may need to provide thousands of miles of bus service for students while a geographically small suburban district may need few or no buses.

In addition to the economic and geographic diversity of the communities that school districts represent, it is important to address the issues of inequity of funding for schools that serve primarily students of ethnically diverse backgrounds, whether urban, suburban or rural. Traditionally, schools serving populations with greater numbers of racial minority students are also in areas with poorer economies. These are also likely to be areas where community members and families of students may be less likely to be involved in their students' educations. In order for schools in these areas to be successful, it will be important to provide service to increase community and parent involvement.

In communities of PA where the median age of the general population is increasing, and more citizens are retired or are approaching retirement, another funding issue has arisen. Local school board members are elected based on their dedication to keeping taxes lower, thereby reducing school income, and further decreasing the ability of schools to provide adequate education. As the ability of these schools to fund the necessities of student education, families that can afford to leave the district do so, further reducing the tax base of the area, and continuing a cycle of decline that affects the economy of the area, and creates another area of disparate funding.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The differences between the needs of districts dictate that there is no simple solution to creating equitable funding, but technical assistance toward some of the needs is possible. State and federal legislation can be helpful in addressing some of the inequitable issues, including legislation to alter local community abilities to acquire or restrict tax collection. State and federal agencies can also provide funding in more equitable ways, including directly supporting schools and districts that receive less local funding. Additionally, funding that supports specific initiatives can help to level funding differences. Funding can be provided to support specific needs of districts. An

example of supporting specific needs would include funding for buses in geographically diverse districts, which would offset that need, providing increased dollars to focus on instructional needs areas.

Other strategies could include sharing employees across districts (for example, a primary reading coach across two nearby rural districts), providing online learning resources to complement onsite learning, and providing support in communities where parents and students can benefit from courses for parents on literacy, financial training, technology training, lifelong learning, child development and much more.

Technical assistance in these areas could primarily be provided in the form of professional development that assists education leaders in funding decision making, grant writing, branding and public relations for school districts, and lobbying for fair funding legislation, where permitted. In a state where locally elected school board members are financial decision makers, it may be helpful for education leaders to have training in providing persuasive arguments to support their funding choices to improve education.

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Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Janet Clark

Affiliation: Executive member, New Jersey Association of School Librarians and ALA/AASL.org

Priority Need 1. Preparing Students for College and Career Readiness

Justification: A graph of survey responses illustrates the majority of respondents chose college and career readiness as the primary priority need for schools. College and Career readiness means that students leave high school prepared for lifelong learning, evaluators of information, able to use critical thinking skills and synthesize data to meet their personal and professional needs.

The National Governors Association in October 2015 has come away with this core belief “The education system of the United States is not adequately preparing a large proportion of its students for college, career-training and, ultimately, jobs that provide enough income to support a middle class standard of living.” With that said it is very easy to see why so many educators agree with this statement and see that College and Career Readiness should be a priority for our national educational system.

However, the disconnect occurs when administrators and practitioners desire the same outcome but neither party is utilizing the same methodology to achieve the desired results. Reduction and even the elimination of standardized testing of students included was a written response in 13 of the responses. Developing critical thinking skills and evaluation of knowledge were highly valued in this survey. What can the Regional Comprehensive Centers do to facilitate a common vision between these groups?

One of the recommendations by a respondent was to *“Provide college-prep services to test high school students on their college-readiness based on things like writing ability, information literacy skills, study skills, time management skills and motivation, then provide preparation services for students that do not show evidence of readiness.”* This quote points out the differences of how practitioners and administrators view how students can and should acquire these critical skills. Most administrators responded with that what is needed is to increase state leveling testing to improve teacher accountability to improve student scores.

Lastly, respondents indicated that improving administrator training/development was an educational need. *We need leaders who have actually been in a classroom previously and can deal with students and understand what the needs of teachers and students are. Schools are not a business and we do not need business leaders. We need leaders who can go into a classroom and model what they ask of their teachers.”* One of the goals of the Regional Comprehensive center will be to look at these outcomes and try to find ways to bring these very different visions together.

One of the recommendations was to *“Provide college-prep services to test high school students on their college-readiness based on things like writing ability, information literacy skills, study skills, time management skills and motivation, then provide preparation services for students that do not show evidence of readiness.”* This quote points out the need on the true needs of students that are not adequately addressed according to the respondents.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance:

- ▶ Ensuring equitable access to critical resources for schools and school personnel that include:
 - Technology
 - Information literacy
 - Professional development opportunities (Staff Selected)
 - “Consultants that actually have recent interactions with students”
 - School libraries and certified librarians as instruments of change in school communities
- ▶ Improved access to grant opportunities and especially for impoverished communities
- ▶ Adequate funding for education in at-risk communities of poverty
- ▶ Provide support for vocational programs that lead to certification as viable career choices

Priority Need 2. Because so many respondents chose to use the open ended response rather than the drop down list the responses clearly note that funding is an important issue

Justification: This was an open ended question and it allowed the respondents to respond “In their own words” to what they perceived to be an educational priority in education.

- ▶ Adequate funding for schools. This was a theme that suggested school personnel feel that the allocation of funds from the state to the local levels could be improved to support students. A number of respondents indicated that more resources are necessary and there is not the funding to supply those resources. It is not possible to tell from this survey where each respondent worked in NJ and if they are employed in what NJ refers to as **Abbott districts** that have a long history with state funding for students. However, because the comments were made as to the funding being made equitable for students it will be attributed as a response for concern and possible improvement.

- ▶ Equity and access to a fully funded school library. Musician, Keith Richards is quoted with saying that “When you are growing up there are two institutional places that affect you most powerfully: the church which belongs to God, and the public Library, which belongs to you. The public library is the great equalizer.” However, it has been over 30 years since New Jersey and many other states mandated school personnel to include a certified librarian. At the same time since schools have started to take away this position as a “cost saving” measure. Those districts have also seen a drop in academic achievement and college readiness. Respondents believe schools should be required to provide equal access to print and digital resources for their students along with a certified school librarian to teach them how to access and use them responsibly.”
- ▶ School library impact studies show that students with certified school librarians and school library resources increase reading and perform better in reading comprehension and standardized tests.
- ▶ Respondents indicated that they would like to see equitable funding so that students can have access to similar resources such as databases, small class sizes, full time teachers and technology.
- ▶ Providing educational funding to districts that are in economic distress due to state funding formulas was the next priority. This relates back to the first item on the Priority of Need, Number 2

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance:

- ▶ A USDOE grant initiative that requires schools to include at least one state certified librarian (Latest Study: A Full Time School Librarian Makes a Critical Difference in Boosting Student Achievement, School Library-Cachel and Lance) for school with students in any school of 200 or more students and 2 librarians for school that are over 750 students.
- ▶ A USDOE grant initiative that would include a requirement for a minimum monetary amount per student per school for the school library program in the spending formula for schools in the annual budget
- ▶ Working with the state Educational Resource Center to provide a funding formula that provides:
 - Grants for important long-term investments to improve student performance and address structural inequalities,
 - Smaller class sizes,
 - Increased early childhood education,
 - Educator driven professional development,
 - Arts programming, and
 - After-school activities in schools which are correlated to better student achievement and student outcomes.

Priority Need 3. Closing the achievement Gap & Teacher Training

Justification: When reviewing the survey data the closing of the achievement gap was seen as an attainable goal.

One way to close the gap would be to provide equitable resources. For example, quality public school libraries staffed by full time CTLs (Certified Teacher Librarians). Students who are least likely to have access to a quality library are disproportionately more likely to face poverty and other risk factors known to adversely impact student achievement.

Respondents would also welcome teacher training if it was relevant and timely. Teachers prefer quality training that is not scripted and, if professional consultants are used, they should have personal experience in similar economic districts that they are providing services to. However, it is much preferred if the professional development is facilitated by those professionals already in the community.

Respondents noted that teachers should be listened to and their voices not ignored.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance:

- ▶ “Professional development, partnerships between higher education & public schools”
- ▶ “Development of information and digital literacies curriculum for all school library programs”
- ▶ “Relevant professional development for all staff “

Citations:

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Individual Needs Assessment

Name: John-Paul Hayworth

Affiliation: Executive Director, District of Columbia State Board of Education

Priority Need 1. Students need education that meets their individual needs.

Justification: Students have different learning styles and needs. Schools are often forced to use the least common denominator approach to teaching which can not only dilute the ability of a teacher to reach and inspire, but can also have strongly negative effects on the students that need the most attention. In a series of meetings across the District of Columbia, we heard over and over again the need for schools to target their approach on the needs of the student. In discussions with the Washington Teachers Union, we heard that teachers are receiving curriculum weeks after the start of school and do not receive any information about how their students performed the year before, leaving them unprepared for each school year.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: A best practices database should be established and maintained with information about individualized education and curriculum that can be accessed by teachers and school leaders.

Priority Need 2. Reduce administrative burden.

Justification: In an effort to ensure progress in education, schools, districts, states and the federal government are requesting ever more reports and data. Further, there is a backlash against a perception of over testing students. The anecdotal evidence is that students and teachers are over burdened with an education system that only provides “teaching to the test” rather than a rigorous and complete education experience. The data requests have direct effects on the quality and amount of class time that teachers and students have to focus on successful education. Many respondents noted that federal authority and involvement should be further devolved to local school boards and schools.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Prepare a report that can prioritize and make more efficient data collection so that the burden is reduced.

Priority Need 3. Reduce administrative burden on state level educators.

Justification: In an effort to ensure progress in education, schools, districts, states and the federal government are requesting ever more reports and data. Further, there is a backlash against a perception of over testing students. The anecdotal evidence is that students and teachers are over burdened with an education system that only provides “teaching to the test” rather than a rigorous and complete education experience. The data requests have direct effects on the quality and amount of class time that teachers and students have to focus on successful education. Many respondents noted that federal authority and involvement should be further devolved to local school boards and schools. This information was gathered in direct conversations with teachers, LEA leaders as well as parents.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Prepare a report that can prioritize and make more efficient data collection so that the burden is reduced.

Priority Need 4. Increased support for at-risk, ELL and other vulnerable students.

Justification: Vulnerable students (ELL, at-risk, high poverty, FRL, disabled, multiple barrier, etc.) face inordinate challenges to successful completion of their education. Approximately 20 percent of State-level stakeholders responding to the needs sensing survey identified supporting the most vulnerable students by turning around low-performing schools and closing achievement gaps as the highest priority for education in the Mid-Atlantic region. . Schools often lack the resources, time, personnel and training to meet the needs of these students. Fifteen percent of State-level stakeholders, including SEA staff and school board members, also highlighted the importance of ensuring equity (in terms of funding, resources, and programming) for all students, including addressing issues of disproportionality, when responding to the needs sensing survey.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Prepare a report on various models on expanding school based services, i.e. community schools.

Priority Need 5. Students need substantive gains in proficiency and growth over a sustained period in order to reduce achievement gaps and rebuild trust in the public school system.

Justification: Schools are faced with significant achievement issues across the country. Equity remains a goal in the distance, but should become a priority if we are to seriously improve all schools. Access to quality, rigorous and challenging coursework should not be dependent on zip code or neighborhood.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: A best practices database should be compiled that will assist individuals at all levels on how to think and act equitably. Guidelines on equity should be created that can be used as foundational documents.

Priority Need 6. Students are not being fully prepared for future success.

Justification: The purported joint focus in education on college and career is largely farce. Few states or schools have the same level of interest or commitment to the career sphere. Business leaders are interested in partnering with schools to help in the process, but there is no sustained or comprehensive program to facilitate this interaction.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Prepare a best practices model on how to best integrate career education in schools.

Priority Need 7. Reduce administrative and testing burden on students, teachers and principals.

Justification: Nationwide, there is a backlash against a perception of over testing students. The anecdotal evidence is that students and teachers are over burdened with an education system that only provides “teaching to the test” rather than a rigorous and complete education experience.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Prepare a report based on actual class time usage. Make recommendations based on collected data.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Verjeana M. Jacobs, Esq.

Affiliation: Board Member, Prince George's County Public Schools, Board of Education, District 5

Priority Need 1. College and Career Readiness, Ensuring Equity & Early Learning Opportunities

Justification: Local LEAs - In the Mid-Atlantic regions, School Board Members were among stakeholders with the highest number of responses. College and career readiness, ensuring equity and providing early learning opportunities were among the most critically identified areas of educational need in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

School Board members in particular noted the need to jump start early learning opportunities to young children to level the field while teachers' feedback support the need to improve teacher accountability systems. While continuous improvement is desired, the challenge of closing achievement and opportunity gaps grows exponentially in the nation's most challenging school districts where poverty and inequities abound.

Recommended Strategies: School Boards must lead by setting clear mission, vision and core values that ensure equitable distribution of resources. Professional development for School Board members is critical. All too often professional development focuses only on teachers, administrators and central office personnel. School Boards across the country are generally responsible for hiring the Superintendent and approving the school district budget. These are two of the most important functions that drive school district success. While School Board members come from varying backgrounds with varying levels of experience in the field of education, they are positioned to have meaningful impact on outcomes.

- ▶ Successful preparation for college and career readiness require a comprehensive approach that includes students as active participants in their own success; parents as engaged partners and learners themselves; teachers prepared for 21st century teaching and learning, strong counseling units working with students and families, and broad community partnerships all designed to inform standards and expectations.
- ▶ While some level of testing is required to assess student learning, testing must be balanced with the diverse learning styles of students. Equity demands that teaching is student-centered, rather than test-driven.
- ▶ Board members also cited the need to provide multiple paths for career and college options and appropriating education to each individual learner. Sponsored regional training opportunities to include school district employees and members of the Board focusing on equity, funding allocation, and school-community based programs would provide opportunities to develop and share best practices.
- ▶ U.S. Department of Education - Create and leverage partnerships with private and non-profit organizations to assist with training and development of varied stakeholders in the education arena. Create opportunities where Board of Education members, Teachers, Administrators and Community Leaders all receive same training from leaders in the field to include national school board groups, national teacher groups, and national community/ parent groups.

- ▶ Develop comprehensive research and proposal outlining the benefits of universal pre-k and early learning opportunities for ALL children. Make the case for the global impact on U.S. education system standing in the world and our ability to compete on the world stage; and seek private partnerships for funding.

