

**May 3, 2013**

# **Alabama Plan 2020 ESEA Flexibility Request**

**Alabama State Board of Education**



**PLAN 2020**

June 7, 2012, for Window 3  
U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202  
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Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0581. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 336 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is offering each State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant State and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Department invites interested SEAs to request this flexibility pursuant to the authority in section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which allows the Secretary to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA and requests a waiver. Under this flexibility, the Department would grant waivers through the 2014–2015 school year.

## REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The Department will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate SEA requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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An SEA seeking approval to implement this flexibility must submit a high-quality request that addresses all aspects of the principles and waivers and, in each place where a plan is required, includes a high-quality plan. Consistent with ESEA section 9401(d)(1), the Secretary intends to grant waivers that are included in this flexibility through the end of the 2014–2015 school year for SEAs that request the flexibility in “Window 3” (*i.e.*, the September 2012 submission window for peer review in October 2012). The Department is asking SEAs to submit requests that include plans through the 2014–2015 school year in order to provide a complete picture of the SEA’s reform efforts. The Department will not accept a request that meets only some of the principles of this flexibility.

This *ESEA Flexibility Request for Window 3* is intended for use by SEAs requesting ESEA flexibility in September 2012 for peer review in October 2012. The timelines incorporated into this request reflect the timelines for the waivers, key principles, and action items of ESEA flexibility for an SEA that is requesting flexibility in this third window.

**High-Quality Request:** A high-quality request for this flexibility is one that is comprehensive and coherent in its approach, and that clearly indicates how this flexibility will help an SEA and its LEAs improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

A high-quality request will (1) if an SEA has already met a principle, provide a description of how it has done so, including evidence as required; and (2) if an SEA has not yet met a principle, describe how it will meet the principle on the required timelines, including any progress to date. For example, an SEA that has not adopted minimum guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by the time it submits its request for the flexibility will need to provide a plan demonstrating that it will do so by the end of the 2012–2013 school year. In each such case, an SEA’s plan must include, at a minimum, the following elements for each principle that the SEA has not yet met:

1. **Key milestones and activities:** Significant milestones to be achieved in order to meet a given principle, and essential activities to be accomplished in order to reach the key milestones. The SEA should also include any essential activities that have already been completed or key milestones that have already been reached so that reviewers can understand the context for and fully evaluate the SEA’s plan to meet a given principle.
2. **Detailed timeline:** A specific schedule setting forth the dates on which key activities will begin and be completed and milestones will be achieved so that the SEA can meet the principle by the required date.
3. **Party or parties responsible:** Identification of the SEA staff (*e.g.*, position, title, or office) and, as appropriate, others who will be responsible for ensuring that each key activity is accomplished.
4. **Evidence:** Where required, documentation to support the plan and demonstrate the SEA’s progress in implementing the plan. This *ESEA Flexibility Request for Window 3* indicates the specific evidence that the SEA must either include in its request or provide at a future reporting date.

5. **Resources:** Resources necessary to complete the key activities, including staff time and additional funding.
6. **Significant obstacles:** Any major obstacles that may hinder completion of key milestones and activities (e.g., State laws that need to be changed) and a plan to overcome them.

Included on page 19 of this document is an example of a format for a table that an SEA may use to submit a plan that is required for any principle of this flexibility that the SEA has not already met. An SEA that elects to use this format may also supplement the table with text that provides an overview of the plan.

An SEA should keep in mind the required timelines for meeting each principle and develop credible plans that allow for completion of the activities necessary to meet each principle. Although the plan for each principle will reflect that particular principle, as discussed above, an SEA should look across all plans to make sure that it puts forward a comprehensive and coherent request for this flexibility.

**Preparing the Request:** To prepare a high-quality request, it is extremely important that an SEA refer to all of the provided resources, including the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which includes the principles, definitions, and timelines; the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance for Window 3*, which includes the criteria that will be used by the peer reviewers to determine if the request meets the principles of this flexibility; and the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions*, which provides additional guidance for SEAs in preparing their requests.

As used in this request form, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Each request must include:

- A table of contents and a list of attachments, using the forms on pages 1 and 2.
- The cover sheet (p. 3), waivers requested (p. 4-6), and assurances (p. 7-8).
- A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 9).
- Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 10-18). An SEA will enter narrative text in the text boxes provided, complete the required tables, and provide other required evidence. An SEA may supplement the narrative text in a text box with attachments, which will be included in an appendix. Any supplemental attachments that are included in an appendix must be referenced in the related narrative text.

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

**Process for Submitting the Request:** An SEA must submit a request to the Department to receive the flexibility. This request form and other pertinent documents are available on the Department's Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>.

*Electronic Submission:* The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA’s request for the flexibility electronically. The SEA should submit it to the following address:  
[ESEAflexibility@ed.gov](mailto:ESEAflexibility@ed.gov).

*Paper Submission:* In the alternative, an SEA may submit the original and two copies of its request for the flexibility to the following address:

Patricia McKee, Acting Director  
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320  
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in processing mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

### **REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

The submission due date for Window 3 is September 6, 2012.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SEAS**

The Department has conducted a number of webinars to assist SEAs in preparing their requests and to respond to questions. Please visit the Department’s Web site at:  
<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility> for copies of previously conducted webinars and information on upcoming webinars.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at [ESEAflexibility@ed.gov](mailto:ESEAflexibility@ed.gov).

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Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA’s flexibility request.

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For each attachment included in the *ESEA Flexibility Request for Window 3*, label the attachment with the corresponding number from the list of attachments below and indicate the page number where the attachment is located. If an attachment is not applicable to the SEA’s request, indicate “N/A” instead of a page number. Reference relevant attachments in the narrative portions of the request.

<b>LABEL</b>	<b>LIST OF ATTACHMENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1	Notice to LEAs	Attachment 6
2	Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)	Attachment 4
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request	Attachments 6 & 11
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State’s standards adoption process	Attachments 14 & 15
5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State’s standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	N/A
6	State’s Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	N/A
7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	N/A
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups (if applicable)	N/A
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	Attachment 24
10	A copy of the guidelines that the SEA has developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable)	N/A
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted all of the guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	N/A

**ATTACHMENTS FOR ALABAMA’S FLEXIBILITY WAIVER REQUEST**

1. Plan 2020
2. Assessment and Accountability Task Force
3. Assessment and Accountability Meeting Notes and Recommendations
4. Superintendents’ Responses to New Accountability Plan (SSA Survey Report)
5. Alabama State Department of Education Organizational Chart
6. Plan 2020 Presentations
7. Governor’s Congress on School Leadership
8. Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching
9. Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development
10. Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development
11. Public Notice of Waiver and Public Input/Comments Received
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19. Timeline for Rollout of New Assessments, the Proposed Accountability Model, and Rewards and Intervention Plan
20. Act 2012-402
21. Response to Instruction (RTI) Process
22. State Superintendent of Education Permission for Superintendents to Use Locally Designed Evaluation Systems With Approval from the ALSDE
23. Approval Criteria for Locally Designed Evaluation Systems
24. List of Sample Priority and Focus Schools (REVISED)
25. Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders and Alabama Quality Teaching Standards
26. State Board of Education Meeting Agendas
27. AMO/Graduation Rate Targets
28. Accountability Task Force
29. Capacity Review Participants
30. State Law
31. CCRS Transition Plan
32. CCRS Professional Development Plan
33. Turnaround Differentiated Support
34. A Guide for Professional Development Planning for Implementation of the College- and Career-Ready Standards
35. Professional Development/Transition Planning Template
36. School/District Performance Index

### Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request

Legal Name of Requester: <b>Alabama Department of Education</b>	Requester's Mailing Address: <b>P. O. Box 302101          50 North Ripley Street          Montgomery, AL 36130</b>
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request  Name: <b>Melinda Maddox</b>  Position and Office: <b>Assistant State Superintendent of Education          Research, Information, and Data Services</b>  Contact's Mailing Address: <b>Alabama State Department of Education          P. O. Box 302101          50 North Ripley Street          Montgomery, AL 36130</b>  Telephone: <b>334-242-9716</b>  Fax: <b>334-242-9708</b>  Email address: <b>mmaddox@alsde.edu</b>	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): <b>Thomas R. Bice</b>	Telephone: <b>334-242-9700</b>
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: <b>September 5, 2012</b>
<p><b>The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility as delineated in Alabama's specific response to those principles and assurances. Any further non-statutory requirements, not contained in 20 U.S.C. 7861, will require approval from the Alabama State Board of Education.</b></p>	

## Waivers

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

- 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State’s proficient level of academic achievement on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
- 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or

restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State’s priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State’s reward schools that meet the definition of “reward schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.
8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.
9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.
10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State’s priority schools that meet the definition of “priority schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.
12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA’s State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all

subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools.

13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under ESEA section 1113.

### Assurances

By submitting this request, the SEA assures that:

- 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
- 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
- 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)
- 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

- 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
- 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).
- 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).
- 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.
- 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

**If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:**

- 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012–2013 school year. (Principle 3)

## Consultation

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State’s Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

### **Alabama’s Plan 2020**

This ESEA Waiver Application is not a stand-alone document: it is simply another step in a comprehensive and strategic progression, a progression that will culminate in a system that will use the college- and career-readiness of its graduates as its measure of success. PLAN 2020 (Attachment 1) is the strategic plan for education in Alabama that defines how that system will be developed, how it will be measured, and what will constitute success. As such, it constitutes the core component of Alabama’s application. The goals of the plan are grouped into four principle domains:

1. Alabama’s 2020 Learners.
2. Alabama’s 2020 Support Systems.
3. Alabama’s 2020 Professionals.
4. Alabama’s 2020 Schools/Systems.

Collectively, these four areas, and the indicators and strategies found in each, provide a comprehensive and child-centered approach to educational improvement through the year 2020. Such an important plan is unlikely to succeed if it is developed in a vacuum. Plan 2020 was not.

The goals and objectives found in Plan 2020 are consistent with the recommendations of the Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching and the Governor’s Congress on School Leadership. It condenses the work of over 200 stakeholders including teachers, school and district leaders, parents, heads of professional organizations, and business leaders, into a concise and easy-to-follow plan for improvement. It is important to note that our State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Tommy Bice, who is certified in special education and began his career at the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind, has ensured that the roster of these and other policy development groups has included teachers of special education and English learners (EL) and that their unique needs have been a focus of the work. The plan has been vetted by various individuals and organizations across the state. To date, more than 100 civic organizations, schools, parent-teacher organizations, and professional organizations have reviewed and provided input regarding PLAN 2020. Dr. Tommy Bice has made PLAN 2020 a core component of virtually every presentation he has made since early March of this year. The presentations include:

June 26	Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) Summer Conference
June 27	School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) Summer Conference
July 16	Opening Session–Mega Conference (statewide educator conference)

PLAN 2020 was highlighted in the March 2012 issue of the *Alabama Education News*, the online newsletter that is disseminated to every teacher in the state. PLAN 2020 has also been a primary focus of multiple newsletters distributed by the A+ Education Partnership; *Leaders for Learners*, the Alabama Association of Schools Boards' monthly newsletter; and several videos found on the Alabama Learning Exchange. To date, each of the 11 Inservice Centers housed in universities across the state has provided face-to-face and/or Web-based trainings with the focus being the leading indicators, goals, and strategies contained within the plan.

The response to Plan 2020 has been overwhelmingly positive. However, critical friend input from teachers and leaders has prompted adjustments to the plan resulting in a more cohesive and connected approach. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will continue its ongoing effort to actively solicit input regarding Plan 2020 from the professional organizations (e.g., Alabama Education Association, School Superintendents of Alabama, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools, Alabama Association of School Boards) as well as other organization with which strong partnerships have been built (e.g., A+ Education Partnership, Alabama Best Practices Center, Alabama National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Network).

### **Courses of Study + College- and Career-Ready Standards**

Effective teaching practice being a key component of an educational process that supports the development of students who graduate college- and career-ready is beyond debate. However, it is equally true that to maximize the benefits of effective practice, one must be teaching the appropriate subject matter. In recognition of the importance of content, the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Title 16, Sections 35-1 through 35-5 (<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/codeofalabama/1975/16-35-1>) clearly defines the membership of committees tasked with determining courses of study in Alabama. That said, the process undertaken to ensure maintenance of fidelity while integrating Alabama-specific standards and indicators into the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and thus creating Alabama's College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS), went far beyond anything mandated in code.

The 2010 *Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics* Common Core State Standards Task Force and the 2010 *Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts* Common Core State Standards Task Force made extensive use of the 2010 Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects documents. In addition, the Task Forces reviewed the appropriate courses of studies for additional content not specified by the Common Core State Standards, used each member's academic and experiential knowledge, and discussed issues among themselves and with colleagues. Finally, Task Force members compiled what they believe to be the best possible mathematics and English Language Arts curriculums for Alabama's K-12 students.

As part of that process, the Math task force completed a correlation between the CCSS and the 2009 Alabama course of study and determined there was a 96% match between the scope and sequence of both sets of standards for math. The results of that work can be found at <https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/54/2%20%20Correlation%20of%20Alabama%20Mathematics%20Standards%20and%20CCSS.pdf>.

The English Language Arts task force completed a similar correlation between the CCSS and the 2007 Alabama course of study and determined there was a 92% match between the scope

and sequence of both sets of standards for English language arts. The results of that work can be found at

<https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/54/2%20%20Correlation%20of%20Alabama%20English%20Language%20Arts%20Standards%20and%20CCSS.pdf>

The timeline for the rollout of the College- and Career-Ready Standards is found below:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| June 24, 2010      | Presented draft of CCSS to State Board of Education  |
| July 12-15, 2010   | CCRS Task Forces Convened <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed correlation of CCSS and Alabama Courses of Study (2009 Math and 2007 ELA) using Achieve Common Core Comparison Tool and noted gaps in correlation.</li> <li>• Reviewed Alabama standards not addressed by CCSS and identified initial decisions regarding standards and bullets to be added to CCSS.</li> <li>• Wrote first draft of grade or course standards to be added to CCSS.</li> </ul> |
| August 25-27, 2010 | Task Forces participated in second meetings to revise and make recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received staff and administrative review.</li> <li>• Reviewed and revised July draft.</li> <li>• Finalized draft of standards for placement on ALSDE Web site for public review and for submission to the State Superintendent as a recommendation for revision.</li> </ul>  |

#### Public Review and Recommendations

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| September 23, 2010     | Updated State Board of Education on review process.  |
| Sept. 28-Oct. 21, 2010 | Posted standards on ALSDE Web site for public review.  |
| October 28, 2010       | Presented to State Board of Education with Final Recommendations.  |
| November 18, 2010      | Presented to State Board of Education for Approval (Adoption Resolution at the following link<br><a href="http://www.alsde.edu/Home/Executive/BoardResolutions.aspx?view=1679">http://www.alsde.edu/Home/Executive/BoardResolutions.aspx?view=1679</a> ) |

#### Public Meetings

- |              |                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| September 28 | Davidson High School, Mobile   |
| October 5    | Spain Park High School, Hoover |
| October 12   | Carver High School, Montgomery |
| October 19   | Decatur High School, Decatur   |

In addition to actively soliciting input throughout the development of the CCRS, the state has developed a Web site in support of the College- and Career-Ready Standards. The website can be accessed at <http://www.alsde.edu/home/general/alccs.aspx>. The partnership between the ALSDE and the A+ Education Partnership, Alabama Best Practices Center (ABPC), is reaping benefits in this area as well. ALSDE personnel have been active in the Alabama Best Practices Center's Key Leaders Networks (two groups of stakeholders that meet quarterly to

discuss issues pertinent to Alabama education). These meetings have provided numerous opportunities to solicit input regarding CCRS in the form of suggestions and concerns from highly effective stakeholders statewide.

### **Assessment and Accountability**

In 2011, an Assessment and Accountability Task Force was appointed by Alabama's State Board of Education to make recommendations for a complete redesign of the State's System of Assessment and Accountability. Then-Deputy State Superintendent, Dr. Thomas R. Bice, chaired the Task Force, which included a diverse group of practitioners and stakeholders. A list of the membership of the Task Force is included in Attachment 2. The Task Force was charged with the development of recommendations for a balanced assessment and accountability system.

The Assessment and Accountability Task Force met on September 29, 2011, October 12, 2011, November 2, 2011, and December 14, 2011. Please refer to Attachment 3 for meeting notes and recommendations of the Task Force.

Many outreach activities solicited and received input into the development of Alabama's new assessment and accountability system and subsequently the waiver. Monthly updates were provided to the State Board of Education by the State Superintendent of Education, the Director of Assessment, the Assistant State Superintendent, and the Deputy Superintendent of Education. On April 26, 2012, the recommendations of the task force were presented to the State Board of Education at its Elementary/Secondary Education Work Session. The Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report was made to the State Board of Education at the May 24 Elementary/Secondary Education Work Session. The status of the AMO Freeze Request and the ESEA Flexibility Request were reported to the State Board of Education on June 28, 2012. On July 10, 2012, at the State Board of Education Elementary/Secondary Education Work Session, an updated Accountability Plan was presented for consideration after incorporating recommendations received from various groups (see State Board meeting agendas in Attachment 26). Additional input was solicited and received at the Alabama Educational Technology Conference (AETC) on June 12 in Session 131. In an interactive session participants had an opportunity to share their vision for the new accountability system.

Additionally, State Superintendent Bice provided an overview of the proposed accountability system, proposed new assessment system, and the NCLB Waiver to the attendees of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) Summer Conference (June 26, 2012) and the School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) Summer Conference on June 27, 2012. Response from the superintendents regarding the new accountability plan was 93.9% positive (see Attachment 4).

At the Alabama State Department of Education's statewide educator conference, MEGA Conference, on July 16, Dr. Bice provided to over 3,000 participants from local schools and districts an overview of the new assessment and accountability systems. At this same event, an additional session was provided for attendees to hear about and provide input into the future of Alabama's Accountability System and Alabama Data Warehouse.

Additional input into the development of Alabama's Accountability System has been, and will continue to be, provided by the new 2013 Accountability Task Force. This task force, whose first meeting took place on November 1, consists of parents, classroom teachers, principals, superintendents, local board members, and leadership of the professional organizations (See

Attachment 28). The group has an extremely multi-faceted skill set. For example, Dr. Gay Barnes, who holds a Ph.D. in Reading/Literacy in Education, has worked extensively with EL students and is a staunch advocate for EL issues. Since 1999, Hope Zeanah has worked with the Special Education Section of the ALSDE in the development of special education policy and school improvement initiatives. This group was brought together to spur the development of the A-F school grading system mandated by Legislative Act 2012-402 but it has quickly expanded the scope of its work to include providing feedback and suggestions for improvement of the entire accountability system found in this waiver application. The leaders of the professional organizations have further canvassed their organizations' membership in an effort to gather more comprehensive input. The task force, which has committed to meeting regularly through the completion of the A-F school grading system and on an as-needed basis thereafter, is quickly becoming a valuable conduit for input from the entire educational community.

Shortly after Dr. Bice took office as the newly appointed State Superintendent of Education in January 2012, he presented to the State Board of Education his eight-year strategic plan for education in Alabama, Plan 2020. The vision is for every child to be a graduate and prepared for college/work/adulthood in the 2<sup>1st</sup> century. A prepared graduate was clearly defined as (1) one who possesses the knowledge and skills needed to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school without the need for remediation and (2) one who possesses the ability to apply core academic skills to real-world situations through collaboration with peers in problem solving, precision, and punctuality in delivery of a product, and has a desire to be a life-long learner. The objectives for students focus on (1) achievement/growth—all students performing at or above proficiency and showing continuous improvement; (2) gap closure—all students succeeding; (3) graduation rate—every student graduating from high school; and (4) college- and career-readiness—every student graduating from high school prepared.

Specific strategies were described for accomplishing these objectives. The first was to develop and implement a unified PreK through college- and career-readiness plan. Second was the development and adoption of college- and career-ready aligned standards in all core subject areas. Third, and of critical importance, was the creation and implementation of a balanced and meaningful assessment and accountability system. The fourth strategy was the alignment of available programmatic and fiscal resources to support local school needs in the area of instruction.

Superintendent Bice's first strategy in preparing to accomplish the goals of Plan 2020 was to totally restructure the Alabama State Department of Education. The new organizational chart may be found in Attachment 5. Critical in the restructuring was the grouping of personnel into teams charged with providing data-driven, jointly determined differentiated support to Alabama's districts and schools. The focus has clearly shifted from compliance to assistance and support.

Beginning on January 5, 2012, Plan 2020 has been shared with teachers, their representatives, and many diverse groups in order to obtain stakeholder input and to make adjustments/revisions accordingly. A sampling of these presentations and opportunities for public input may be found on Attachment 6. Additionally, twice-monthly newsletters are shared with all educators in the state. Through these communications, regular updates on Plan 2020 were provided and input was solicited. Copies of these newsletters are archived on the Alabama State Department of Education's Web site for ongoing access.

Additional impetus for the shift to assistance and support as well as greater emphasis on the tenets of Plan 2020 and, by extension, the contents of this application was received in February

2012 when the U.S. Education Delivery Institute conducted a *Capacity Review* of the ALSDE with multiple stakeholders from around the state. Once again, Dr. Bice ensured that the stakeholders included teachers of students with disabilities and teachers of English learners. He further ensured that principals included in this Capacity Review had experience with those subgroups. Parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and business leaders (See Attachment 29) were brought in to provide open and honest assessments of the department and its goals. Though the input received indicated that there are things that the ALSDE can improve upon, one example is the communication plan written into this application, the overwhelming majority of responses clearly support the objectives of Plan 2020 and, as such, this application.

Significant changes/modifications have been made to Plan 2020 as a result of public input. For example, the metric for school and district success was changed from a percentage number to a total number of points to be earned. Additionally, a five-year graduation rate has been included as a measure of school success in addition to the four-year graduation rate. The timeline for implementation of end-of-course tests replacing the *Alabama High School Graduation Exam* was accelerated to begin in the spring of 2013.

### **Effective Teachers and Leaders**

Over the course of the last five years Alabama has looked inward to create significant impetus for innovative and collaborative planning. That self-evaluation has created an environment where the needs of children now trump the desires of adults. Though this move towards a child-centered approach is critical to our future success, it cannot dull our understanding of the importance of quality teachers and leaders. The recommendations of the Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching and the Governor's Congress on School Leadership, and the goals contained in Plan 2020, will most certainly ensure that quality teachers and leaders remain a key focus of our efforts.

The Governor's Congress on School Leadership (GCSL) was convened by Governor Bob Riley in November 2004 and was followed by the Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching (GCQT), which was convened in January 2006. Collectively, the GCSL and the GCQT regularly brought together more than 200 educators, politicians, and business leaders who were tasked with making recommendations that would increase the effectiveness of teachers and leaders across the state (For GCQT and GCSL Rosters see Attachments 7 and 8). This work constitutes the foundation of the teacher and leader effectiveness work highlighted in this waiver application.

The first products of the GCSL and GCQT were the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders and the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (Attachment 25). Both sets of standards were vetted by membership of the professional organizations in the state and both went through multiple revisions based on that input.

While the standards did an admirable job of defining the parameters of the profession, they did not define what professional practice should look like within those parameters. Nor did the standards define what professional growth could and should look like. As a result, the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development and the Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development (Attachments 9 and 10) were created. Teams of teachers and leaders provided critical input in the development of both documents, which is both fortunate and appropriate since both documents have become the basis of the state's two formative assessments systems, EDUCATEAlabama (EA) for teachers and LEADAlabama (LA) for instructional leaders.

EA and LA are processes that are the products of intense stakeholder scrutiny extending over more than a year for each process. Approximately 25 teachers and leaders met semi-monthly to develop EA and further acted as conduits to a larger population of evaluators when the state was soliciting additional input regarding the process. Their collective input prompted the decision to move EA away from a paper-and-pencil assessment system to an online model. Input from a similarly sized group of stakeholders resulted in the addition of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* (VAL-ED) to the LA assessment process.

A well-communicated maxim within the ALSDE is that the key to maximizing outcomes is clarifying expectations. The Alabama Quality Teaching Standards and the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development along with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders and the Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development clearly define expectations for teaching professionals in Alabama. In addition, largely because input from higher education was valued and utilized during the development of the standards and continua, those documents also constitute the foundation of teacher preparation in Alabama. Consequently, the standards and continua guide teacher development from preparation through retirement.

The A+ Education Partnership and its division, the Alabama Best Practices Center (ABPC), have partnered with the ALSDE to pilot the Instructional Partners Pilot. Now in its second year, the pilot's purpose is to maximize the effectiveness of the state-funded reading coaches by shifting their role to an instructional coach who supports adult learning in their school and connects with district and regional content specialists (Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative) when needed. Focused on a partnership approach, instructional partners support the development of effective teaching practice through the use of tools such as the Alabama's teacher and leader standards, professional development standards, and best practices. They are also positioned to support effective implementation of the new College-and-Career-Ready Standards.

The Instructional Partners project is also informing the ALSDE's shift from primarily being a regulatory agency to one that partners and supports districts in their continuous improvement. Both projects are utilizing Jim Knight's *Unmistakable Impact: A Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction*. Alabama's 11 regional inservice centers, in partnership with the ALSDE, are bringing Jim Knight to Alabama in November and have reserved a two-hour block for Dr. Knight to meet with ALSDE staff members who are serving on the regional planning teams that support districts. Further information about the Instructional Partners Pilot can be accessed at

<http://www.aplusala.org/blog/?tag=alabama+instructional+partners+initiative>.

Great effort on many fronts has been made to communicate the constituent components of this ESEA Waiver application and gather input from stakeholders for the purpose of improving it. However, those efforts will not yield the extent of change envisioned in this plan if communication regarding its content ceases with the state's submission and the U.S. Department of Education's approval. Consequently, Alabama has committed to developing a comprehensive Communications Delivery Plan with its primary purpose being to ensure that all aspects of this waiver application and, by extension, Plan 2020 are clearly and continually communicated to the state. Alabama is working with the Education Delivery Institute to develop delivery plans for college- and career-readiness, graduation rate, communication, and teacher/principal effectiveness. An inspection of the college- and career-readiness and the supporting increased graduation rates delivery plans (Attachments 12 and 13) reveal the strategic nature of delivery plans and common components contained therein. A key component of all delivery plans, and one of the most important aspects of our Communications

Delivery Plan, will be the development of delivery chains and feedback loops. The chains will ensure that the department is proactive in determining where the strengths and weaknesses of the communications strategy are found, will identify “choke points” in the communications process that can impede or interrupt the flow of communication, and will require the strategic development of more appropriate and effective avenues of communication. Feedback loops will ingrain more comprehensive two-way communication into all processes enabling the ALSDE to more effectively benefit from the expertise found in all levels of the educational community. The development of the Communications Delivery Plan has already begun with a planned completion date of February 2013. Its completion and rollout will undergird the successful implementation of all aspects of this waiver application. That said, the development of a Communications Delivery Plan is only a small part of a continually expanding communications strategy. A representative sample of activities aimed at soliciting continued input regarding this waiver is listed in the table below:

Activity	Timeline	Responsible Party	Outcome, Evidence
2013 Accountability Task Force Meetings	October 2012 through Ongoing	ALSDE, Assistant State Superintendent	A-F school and district level grading system
Assessment and Accountability Task Force	January 2013-March 2013	ALSDE, Coordinator of Assessment	Recommendation for Grades 3-8 Assessments
Alabama Professional Evaluation Design Committee	April 2013-May 2016	ALSDE, Coordinator of Leadership and Evaluation	Teacher and Leader summative assessments guidelines tied to multiple measures including student/school achievement and resulting in effectiveness definitions of practice for teachers and leaders
Special Education Advisory Panel	Ongoing	ALSDE, Coordinator of Special Education	Updating of ESEA Waiver contents to ensure alignment with Special Education laws and policies
Communications Delivery Plan	December 2012-Ongoing	ALSDE, Director Communication and Coordinator of Research and Development	Fully developed and effectively implemented Communications Strategy
Regional Planning Teams	March 2012-Ongoing	ALSDE, Director of Office of Student Learning	Facilitated transition of all districts to College and Career Ready Standards and differentiated support aligned to Plan 2020 and ESEA waiver components

\*The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is required by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the state. The IDEA also dictates the composition of the panel. The duties of the panel, in addition to the one listed above, are to advise the ALSDE of unmet needs with our state in the education of children with disabilities, comment publicly on any rules or regulations being proposed, advise the ALSDE in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618 of the ACT, and advise the ALSDE on corrective action plans to address findings of noncompliance, etc. Currently the

SEAP meets twice a year (June and December).

Further details of the activities listed in the preceding chart are provided within this application and its attachments.

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

In addition to the previously described opportunities for input, the Alabama Flexibility Waiver Request was posted for public review and comment on August 15, 2012, and remained available until August 22, 2012. See Attachment 11 for public notice and comments received.

## Evaluation

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

## Overview of SEA's Request for the ESEA Flexibility

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that::

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement

### ALABAMA'S PLAN 2020: THE FRAMEWORK FOR COMPREHENSIVE REFORM

In the 2011-2012 school year, the state of Alabama had 56,491 children in fourth grade. If the state's current rate of success does not improve, only 10,000 of these children will be college- and career-ready when their class graduates from high school. In February 2012 State Superintendent of Education Thomas R. Bice unveiled a vision for change in Alabama education entitled *Alabama Plan 2020* (Plan 2020). Plan 2020, which has been embraced by the State Board of Education, professional organizations, and teachers and administrators throughout the state, provides a focused but comprehensive framework for a statewide approach to education that concentrates on connecting adult activities to improved student outcomes resulting in a continuously increasing percentage of students who are college- and

career-ready. Plan 2020 provides that focus through the development of strategies found in four domains:

### **Alabama’s 2020 Learners**

Strategies:

- Develop and implement a unified PreK through college and career readiness plan.
- Develop and adopt college- and career-ready aligned standards in all subject areas, K-12.
- Create and implement a balanced and meaningful assessment and accountability system.
- Align available programmatic and fiscal resources to support local school needs in the area of instruction.

### **Alabama’s 2020 Support Systems**

Strategies:

- Implement an early warning system for student absences and build a community-based support and intervention system.
- Implement a Positive Behavior Support or other related student and school culture program to support student ownership of their actions that includes alternatives to traditional disciplinary sanctions.
- Implement Alabama’s Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Plan.
- Develop and implement a Coordinated School Health and Support Program.

### **Alabama’s 2020 Professionals**

Strategies:

- Redesign and reinvest in the Alabama Teacher Recruitment and Incentive Program (ATRIP).
- Review the admission and certification criteria for Alabama’s teacher preparation programs.
- Provide a comprehensive induction and mentoring program for new teachers.
- Develop and implement a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement.
- Provide research-based professional growth opportunities for Alabama’s teachers and leaders based on their individual and collective professional learning plans.

### **Alabama’s 2020 Schools and Systems**

Strategies:

- Analyze the current funding formula for public education.
- Develop a differentiated and customized support and intervention system for local school systems.
- Create a policy environment that promotes and rewards performance, innovation, and creativity.
- Conduct a study of existing capital outlay needs for school systems.

The vision of this strategic plan for educational improvement is not only completely aligned with the principles of this Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waiver request, it is its foundation.

The Alabama State Department of Education’s (ALSDE) delivery plans are an integral part of the ALSDE strategic plan to ensure successful implementation for improved learning outcomes. These plans specifically outline key milestones, activities, timelines, parties responsible, evidence for progress, goal trajectories, resources, and potential obstacles. They further require that entities within the department assess the success, or lack thereof, of their activities

based on the impact of those activities on student learning. The ALSDE's annual strategic planning process will allow the state an opportunity to evaluate and make adjustments according to the state's overall progress in meeting the goals aligned to the principles in this waiver. Specifically, this process will require all stakeholders to reflect on strategies to determine areas of improvement.

For information about Alabama's Plan 2020 and the delivery plans developed to support it, please see Attachments 1, 12, and 13.

Plan 2020 was crafted in a manner that maintains the most promising aspects of No Child Left Behind (NCLB)—the focus on closing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates, and moving students to proficiency—but its primary emphasis is placed on college-/career-ready goals. Such an approach addresses the needs of students in a more global manner with an eye on their futures, not just their present. Plan 2020 also provides a more balanced approach to assessment and offers annual growth expectations at the student, classroom, grade, school, district, and state levels.

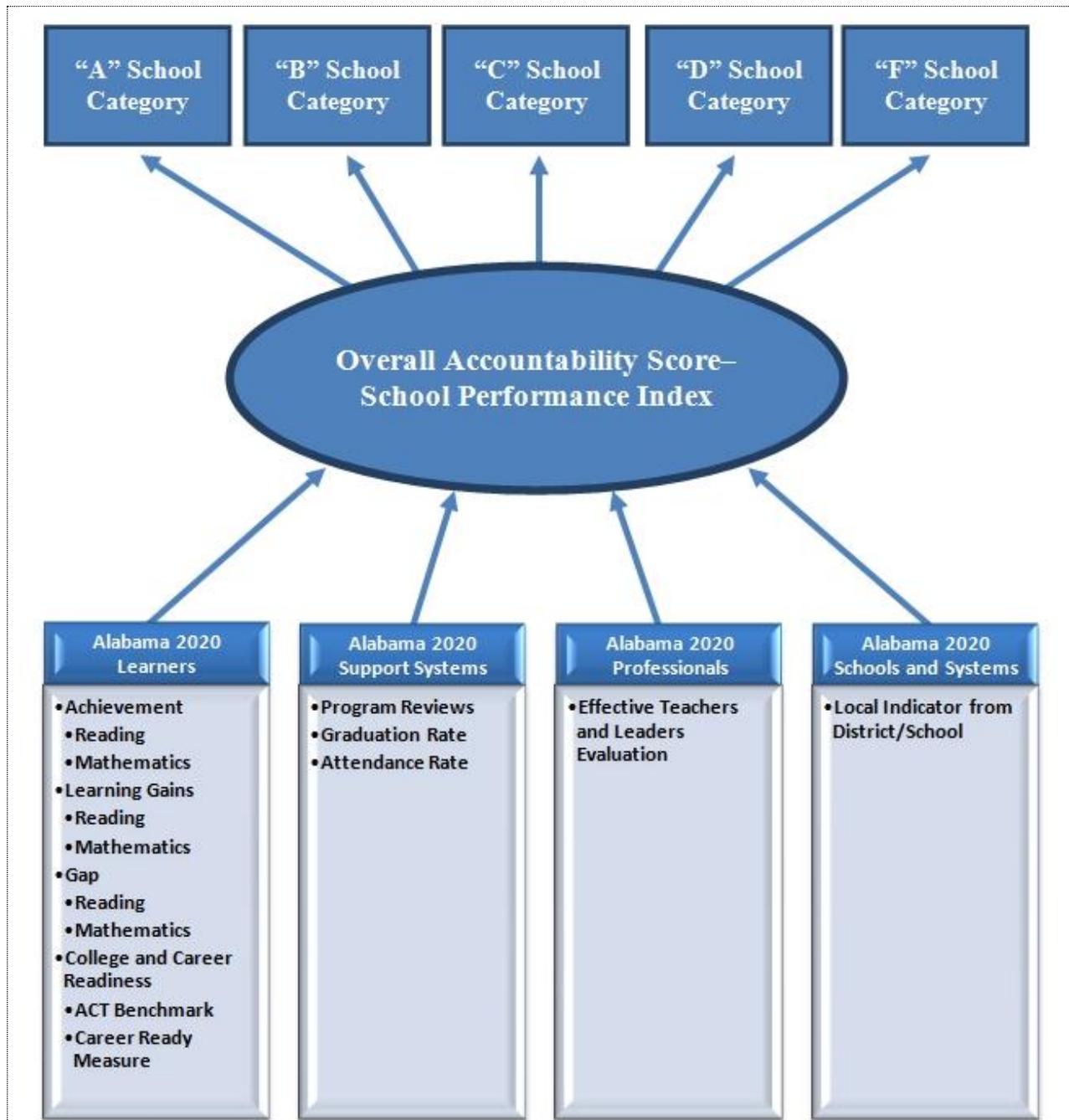
Alabama's Plan 2020 addresses all three principles of the waiver request:

- Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students
- Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support
- Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

Furthermore, this waiver request addresses those principles in a cohesive and focused manner that is completely aligned with Plan 2020, the eight year strategic plan for Alabama education.

### **ESEA Flexibility and Waiver Request/Support**

The ESEA flexibility waiver request provides states an opportunity to augment federal legislation with well-developed and locally contextualized measures allowing them to leverage the positive effects of bold and innovative shifts in policy and practice. Alabama's approach to utilizing that flexibility is woven throughout this request in order to present a coherent approach to implementing the waiver principles. The state has solicited the input of various stakeholder groups, and the most commonly stated need is the development and ability to participate in a fair and balanced, comprehensive, and unified accountability system.



As the Figure above clearly depicts, Alabama’s proposed statewide accountability system has been designed to make annual determinations based on four different categories of components—college- and career-ready students; school- and system-level metrics shown to be leading indicators of students’ success; teacher and leader effectiveness based on multiple measures of student learning; and a local indicator taken from the school’s/system’s improvement plan. The new state accountability system will also incorporate core components found in Act 2012-402, recently passed by the Alabama Legislature, which requires the State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and district performance. The proposed accountability model maintains the focus on proficiency, increasing

the quality of instruction and improved outcomes for diverse populations that was the hallmark of No Child Left Behind, but it increases the acceptable standard of achievement to college- and career-readiness while at the same time allowing schools and systems to address an issue that is specific to their own situations. Each component of the accountability model is further explained in Section 2.A.

The Alabama model uses data from achievement, gap closing, individual student growth, college-/career-readiness, graduation rates, program reviews, and teacher/leader evaluations, all leading indicators found in Plan 2020, to provide a foundation for whole school reform. Equally as important, regional teams have been created to provide the differentiated support necessary to make whole school reform a possibility. College- and career-readiness for all students is the primary goal; however, the state understands the need to close achievement gaps and has in place a plan for doing so. The move towards college- and career-readiness will drive the quality of education provided in our state while the effort to decrease or eliminate achievement gaps will ensure equity of opportunity.

The Alabama approach to accountability moves the focus of accountability off of a single test and towards a more comprehensive set of measures. This move will ensure that all schools are provided an opportunity to adequately and accurately showcase their strengths, as well as identify areas for improvement.

As the state moves towards utilizing a more comprehensive approach to determining strengths and weaknesses of schools and districts, it has developed an equally comprehensive and aligned approach to recognition, accountability, and support. Thomas Jefferson once said, ***“There is nothing more unequal, than the equal treatment of unequal people.”*** Alabama’s focus on a more promising future is mindful of the truth found in that statement from the past. Within the state there are common expectations for all schools and districts; however, when it comes to interventions and supports, one size does not fit all. On-site assessments will help determine specific strategies for improvement and support. These assessments will be based on a wide range of principles, all of which can be found in Plan 2020 and will support the identification of the root causes of challenges our schools are facing rather than issues that may simply be contributing factors. This will ensure that the state utilizes its resources more appropriately and more effectively.

Though the state will differentiate support to all schools in response to Plan 2020, special emphasis will be placed on all Priority and Focus schools. However, like the accountability system as a whole, a much broader spectrum of measures than was formerly the case will be used to determine which schools will be designated. The specific measures are fully explained in Sections 2.D. and 2.E. of this application.

Though the importance of a rigorous curriculum and the presence of mechanisms for gauging the quality of its implementation cannot be overstated, Alabama also recognizes the importance of having effective teachers and leaders in place to guide that implementation. The Governor’s Congress on School Leadership and the Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching made high-quality evaluation of Alabama’s teachers and leaders a primary focus of their work. Out of this work arose EDUCATEAlabama and LEADAlabama, the state’s online formative assessment systems for teachers and leaders respectively. In 2010, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution stating that Alabama will tie teacher and leader effectiveness to “multiple measure of student achievement.” That work is ongoing. Plan 2020 contains similar language regarding linking educator evaluation to student achievement, which increases the push for the work to continue. Components of the EDUCATEAlabama summative evaluation for

teachers will be student growth, student achievement, and could also include professional growth, and professionalism while LEADAlabama will address student growth, student achievement, and could also include teacher growth, professional growth, and professionalism. As is the case with all other assessments contained within Plan 2020, and by extension this waiver application, teacher and leader evaluation will be multifaceted and will provide ample opportunity for a teacher or leader to show his or her effectiveness. This ESEA Waiver Application, and the flexibility that it would afford should it be approved, will provide additional impetus for the state to create a viable, valid, and reliable evaluation system that links that effectiveness to student achievement.

The plan outlined in this overview is comprehensive and focused. The major components in this waiver application were taken from Plan 2020, which is specific to the state of Alabama.

Plan 2020 was put in place to guide education in our state over the next eight years. It was developed based on the identified needs of the children, schools, and school systems of Alabama, and it is a plan for which we have broad support. We are pleased that Plan 2020 aligns well with the expectations within the ESEA waiver.

As we move forward, we would encourage even more state-led, developed, implemented, and measured efforts for advancing education. This would empower states to leverage their unique strengths and resources around rigorous expectations, with a goal of making every child a graduate and ensuring that every graduate is prepared for college, work, and citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

### 1.A Adopt College- and Career-Ready Standards

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p> <p>ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)</p>
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Prior to submitting this request, Alabama teachers, leaders, college and university faculty, and lay citizens reviewed the Alabama standards and the Common Core State Standards and compiled the best of both into the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts, reflective of the aspirations Alabamians hold for all public schools students to be prepared for college, careers, and the workforce. On November 18, 2010, the Alabama State Board of Education formally adopted these college- and career-ready content standards that meet the definition of “college- and career-ready standards” in the document titled ESEA Flexibility, as Alabama has adopted content standards that are common to a significant number of states (see Attachment 14, Evidence of Adoption of Standards) as noted in Alabama’s approved AMO Freeze Request (see Attachment 15 for the letter from Dr. Deborah S. Delisle) and in doing so affirms this as a voluntary decision by our Alabama State Board of Education and further affirms Section 9527 (a) of ESEA.

## 1.B Transition to College- and Career-Ready Standards

Provide the SEA’s plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance for Window 3*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

On November 18, 2010, Alabama joined 40 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). The adoption by the Alabama State Board of Education (SBOE) incorporated selected Alabama standards with those in the Common Core to create a set of internationally benchmarked college- and career-readiness standards that will prepare students for a future in the ever-expanding global environment. These standards are known as the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS).

### **Transition Plan**

Prior to Alabama adopting the CCSS in Mathematics and ELA, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) convened a task force of Alabama teachers, university professors, curriculum coordinators, and business/industry representatives to analyze and evaluate the proposed standards. A detailed review of the correlation between the existing Alabama Courses of Study (COS) for Mathematics and ELA to the CCSS was conducted. The task force used the Common Core Comparison Tool created by [Achieve.org](http://Achieve.org) to assist in determining the relationship between state standards and the CCSS documents. The [Common Core Comparison Tool](#) can be reviewed on the ALSDE Web page. Once the correlation was determined, the task force divided the math high school standards into courses, the ELA standard into grade levels, and added Alabama-specific content standards to the CCSS. After detailed review and revision, a final draft was placed on the ALSDE Web site for public review and later submitted to the State Superintendent of Education for recommendation. Public presentations were held across the state and a public hearing was held on the day of the State Board of Education meeting, ending with a vote to adopt. Implementation of the CCRS for mathematics began early in August 2012, and the CCRS for ELA will be implemented in August 2013.

Alabama is uniquely positioned to transition to the College- and Career-Ready Standards. The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), after a decade of work, has transformed reading and literacy instruction in the state with students making greater gains as evidenced on the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress report than in previous years. The ten-year-old Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) has moved the state to higher expectations in math and science. Results from a landmark randomized controlled study of AMSTI, funded by the United States Department of Education (USDOE), were recently released. The study found that schools that participated in AMSTI showed significant gains in student achievement over matched schools that did not participate. After one year of participating in the initiative, students in AMSTI Schools showed math gains equivalent to almost one and one-half months (28 days) of additional instruction compared to the matched, control schools. After two years, the gains in AMSTI Schools were equivalent to two and one-half months (50 days) of additional instruction compared to the controls. Gains in science were even greater than the math gains; however, scores could not be translated into additional days due to the fact that the state does not test science at every grade studied. Reading gains with AMSTI were equivalent to two months (40 days) of additional instruction after only one year of participating in AMSTI.

Recognizing that adopting standards alone would not increase the rigor of teaching and learning, a committee composed of staff across all sections of the ALSDE including the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and AMSTI was convened to begin planning the professional learning that would be needed to move standards into action. These two initiatives (ARI and AMSTI) have developed a framework for effective professional learning and support that was used as the foundation for developing the College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan. In addition, Alabama has 11 Regional Inservice Centers located at Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) that support professional learning for school systems within their regions. This structure provides a familiar method for delivery as well as capitalizing on the existing relationships with the local education agencies (LEAs) and schools. The initial focus was on math since it will be implemented before ELA. The CCRS Implementation Plan has been organized into four phases: (1) Awareness, (2) Initiation and Implementation (district and school leaders, classroom teachers, and special area teachers), (3) Follow-Up/Support for Implementation (district and school leaders, classroom teachers, and special area teachers), and (4) CCRS Self-Assessment of Implementation. A copy of the College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan can be found in Attachment 12. A copy of the CCRS Transition Plan and the CCRS Professional Development Plan can be found in Attachments 31 and 32.

### Mathematics

College- and Career-Ready Standards for Mathematics will be implemented in Grades K-12 in the 2012-13 school year. Phase I of the CCRS Math delivery plan began in summer 2011 with awareness sessions. The content of these sessions included an opportunity for teachers, principals, and district leaders to review the standards document and begin planning for implementation. Also included in this training were documents detailing the content shifts that would occur with implementation of the CCRS in August 2012. The documents provided guidance for district leaders, school leaders, and classroom teachers to prepare students for the additional rigor demanded by the new standards. Four sessions were held in each of the 11 Regional Inservice Center areas. Also, general sessions were held at the annual summer conference for teachers and administrators. Over 1200 teachers attended the awareness sessions, but this was only about 5% of the total math teachers. As a result, a Web site was developed to hold “on-demand” materials and training Webinars for use by teachers, principals, and district leaders (<http://alex.state.al.us/ccrs/node/41>).

Throughout the following year, materials were developed to support teachers in the transition and were provided via the CCRS Web site. These resources included correlation documents, learning progressions, and videos featuring the writers of the CCSS.

In August 2011 materials were purchased from the Cooperative Educational Service Agency #7 (CESA7) in the state of Wisconsin, ALSDE staff began customizing these materials to prepare Alabama districts and their teachers for the transition to the new standards. *Alabama CCRS Math Explorations' Guides* are a training tool designed to assist teachers with exploring and understanding grade-level standards. Training sessions were developed as a train-the-trainer module using a modeled process that could be duplicated at the local level with teacher teams. The Explorations Guides explore the foundation of the CCRS, grade-level intent, structure of the standards, mathematical understanding, vertical connections and action steps for local implementation. Sessions were developed by grade band that allow teachers to investigate specific standards for a specific grade level. A series of Webinars for LEAs and schools was held in fall 2011. The October 2011 Webinar focused on content shifts, what teachers could do to prepare for implementation in the 2012-2013 school year, correlation of current and new standards, changes in graduation requirements (Algebra II for all), and anticipated changes in the assessment plan. This Webinar also included information to assist teachers of special needs students in making the shift. The CCRS Web site was introduced as a resource for assisting the awareness of and transition to CCRS (<http://alex.state.al.us/ccrs>). The November 2011 Webinar introduced districts to the *Alabama CCRS Math Explorations' Guides* and plans for training. Districts were also introduced to the Alabama Insight tool, a searchable database of unpacked standards that became available in June 2012. This Webinar included an update of resources on the state CCRS Web site as well.

In January and February 2012, the *Alabama CCRS Math Explorations' Guides* training sessions were held in the northern, central, and southern areas of the state. Seventy-seven of the 134 districts sent their Math CCRS Implementation Teams to this training. Districts that did not attend were contacted individually and additional sessions were held in May 2012. Twenty districts attended these sessions. The remaining 37 districts received training in July 2012.

The Alabama Insight tool was shared with districts in June 2012 to assist teachers in implementing the CCRS. Source files for this database were secured from CESA7, and the staff of the Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) reformatted these files and uploaded them to the ALEX Web site for use by curriculum coordinators and classroom teachers. This Web-based tool 'unpacks' the mathematics standards for understanding, skills, knowledge, vocabulary, and evidence of student attainment. Each district was provided a password to access the tool and training on district administration of the database. Included in the database are fields that have been populated by the ALSDE initiatives AMSTI and ALEX. Other ALSDE database fields will be populated with the prerequisite standards provided in the Mathematics Curriculum Guide, which was developed by the ALSDE Special Education Section. Training was provided to district technology coordinators in September 2012 on setting up the district database and local teacher passwords. Districts are now able to populate custom fields with local resources.

Phase II of the CCRS implementation provides a structure for district teams to learn together as they implement the standards.

Each of the 134 LEAs has appointed a CCRS Implementation Team that includes representatives from the following areas:

- Elementary, middle, and high school administrators.
- Elementary and secondary mathematics and ELA teachers.
- Secondary science, social studies, special education, EL, and career tech teachers.
- Media specialists and central office leadership.

The size of the teams varies from 14 to 20 members. Teams meet quarterly in regional network sessions to develop a CCRS Professional Development/Transition Plan. The training is a “train the trainer” model with the expectation that they train all teachers in their districts. Topics of the professional learning include:

- ELA and Mathematics content and instructional shifts.
- Lesson and unit development.
- Differentiating instruction for all learners (including EL and special needs).
- Job alike networking.
- District team planning for professional learning and implementation.

Each quarterly meeting is structured in basically the same way. The training day begins with an opening session spotlighting districts that are effectively implementing the standards and/or turning around CCRS training to their local staff. After the opening session, participants move to content-specific sessions. Both mathematics and ELA sessions are provided for K-5 and 6-12 general education and special education teachers. Science, social studies, EL, and career technical education teachers, along with media specialists, attend separate sessions that focus on implementing the literacy standards in the content areas. Administrators can opt to attend either the math or ELA sessions where they are engaged in learning activities alongside their teachers. Following content-specific sessions, participants move to job-alike sessions that allow them to network with others in similar positions. Administrators have an extended time in their job-alike session that focuses on leading a successful implementation and troubleshooting common issues. Time is allotted for district teams to develop/review/revise their CCRS professional development/transition plans. District Leadership Teams devoted time during the first CCRS Implementation Teams assessing their districts’ current level of knowledge of the CCRS by using a Self-Assessment Tool that assessed their awareness, implementation, and sustained practice of the CCRS in the contents of math, ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. The second CCRS Implementation Team meeting was spent gaining a deeper understanding of the instructional shifts that the CCRS call for as well as differentiating instruction for all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, reviewing the training that has already occurred in the districts and networking with other District Leadership Teams, and beginning development of a plan to turn around CCRS training in their district and schools.

The ALSDE is committed to providing differentiated support to districts as they transition to the CCRS. In keeping with this pledge, the ALSDE has developed a document titled *A Guide for Professional Development Planning for Implementation of the College- and Career-Ready Standards* (Attachment #34). This document provides a guide for professional development that districts can select to provide training in the phases of Awareness, Implementation,

Follow Up/Support, and Evaluation and Accountability that provides entry points for each district to plan training based on its current level of knowledge and implementation of the CCRS. A Professional Development/Transition Planning Template (Attachment #35) accompanies the guide so districts can begin to develop and implement their plan for their CCRS professional development. District teams will develop/refine their Professional Development/Transition Plans. The plans will address the needs of all students including students with disabilities, English Learners, and low-achieving students. The plans will be submitted to the ALSDE by February 2013. These plans will provide the focus of discussion at the fourth CCRS Implementation Team meetings in late April/early May and will be updated each quarter thereafter.

These plans will be submitted to the ALSDE and used to guide support and provide additional resources. Meetings are planned and delivered by ALSDE state and regional staff with local practitioners. Over 1,800 participants attended the first meeting and over 2,000 attended the second meeting. Feedback is solicited via surveys and through practitioner advisory groups.

These network meetings are intended to build the capacity of each school district as it implements Alabama's CCRS, develops assessment literacy, and works toward ensuring that every student is college- and career-ready.

Much of the professional learning prior to Phase III focused on awareness, understanding, and beginning implementation for classrooms. Phase III will provide deeper support to school and district leaders as they lead this change effort. Phase III will provide support for implementation during the 2012-2013 school year. Regional Planning Teams (RPTs) have been established in each of the 11 Regional Inservice Center (RIC) areas to plan with LEAs and assess the level of readiness for implementation of the CCRS and to assist with developing a CCRS Professional Development/Transition Plan. These RPTs are composed of representatives from ALSDE sections, Regional Inservice Centers, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), and Alabama Department of Children's Affairs' Office of School Readiness (pre-K). These RPTs will plan with the LEA to develop a customized plan for support for each district based on its individual needs and capacity. Regional support staff (RSS) have prepared to facilitate school- or district-based learning communities to deepen understanding of the math and ELA CCRS. This will include shared teaching experiences with classroom teachers. They will assist in organizing to address the individual training and implementation needs of districts and schools. (The College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan is found in Attachment 12).

Phase IV includes an assessment of the effectiveness of the CCRS professional learning and implementation. Feedback opportunities throughout the previous phases include CCRS self-assessments for the districts, surveys, on-site observations and walkthroughs, and a review of benchmark data. In addition to these feedback opportunities, a CCRS Advisory Group composed of district curriculum coordinators has been assembled to provide input on what was successful with the professional development and what needs to be adjusted and/or adapted. Many of the Advisory Group members have numerous responsibilities within their district, including curriculum coordinator and coordinator of instruction for students with disabilities and English Language Learners, and were able to provide specific feedback on how the implementation training was impacting all the students and teachers. The first meeting of the CCRS Advisory Group is scheduled for December 2012. A formal evaluation of the professional development as a whole will be conducted in May/June 2013.

## English Language Arts

College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) will be implemented for Grades K-12 in the 2013-14 school year. The ELA roll out will follow the same four-phase process with adjustments based on the feedback and evaluation received from the math roll out. Phase I awareness sessions began in summer 2011 and will continue through 2012. As part of Phase I, the ELA subcommittee developed and delivered an awareness session for administrators and lead teachers in July 2011 at a statewide conference. This session was followed with live and recorded awareness Webinars for teachers during the 2011-2012 school year—a general overview for K-12 teachers and administrators and two sessions for K-5 teachers and two sessions for 6-12 teachers. These sessions were posted on Alabama's CCRS Web site (<http://alex.state.al.us/ccrs/node/70>) for future use by any teachers who were unable to view these Webinars live.

In March of 2012, a focus group of K-5 ELA teachers and ELA professors from IHEs across Alabama were asked to meet with the ELA subcommittee to brainstorm about what kind of professional development would be most helpful in preparing for implementation. This proved very advantageous in involving higher education in the process as well as getting good suggestions from the focus group.

While the math subcommittee used the *Explorations' Guides* purchased from CESA7 in its entirety, the ELA subcommittee opted to break the activities down into smaller segments for training purposes. Awareness sessions were held in the 11 Alabama RICs in the summer of 2012. Twelve sessions per inservice region were provided for Grade K-6 teachers and twelve sessions per inservice region were provided for Grades 7-12 teachers delivered by ARI field staff and ALSDE staff. These sessions provided a more in-depth look at the new standards, including their nature, emphases, and vertical alignment.

In April 2012, a Webinar was posted to provide an initial awareness session for Grade 6-12 subject-area teachers to introduce them to the Literacy Standards. Before additional sessions were developed and delivered, another focus group was convened to determine what would be most helpful to teachers of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects for teaching the Literacy Standards.

Phase II training will occur through the CCRS Implementation Teams that will meet quarterly as described above.

Phases III and IV will follow the same process as described in the Mathematics section above.

## Instructional Materials and Resources

In addition to adopting standards and providing professional learning opportunities for the educators of Alabama, high-quality instructional materials and resources aligned with the new standards must be developed or acquired.

## Instructional Materials

After the standards were adopted in November 2010, a textbook committee was assembled to evaluate texts and materials as to their correlation to the standards. This committee was composed of educators and curriculum coordinators. After lengthy examination and

evaluation of the texts, a list of recommended mathematics textbooks was provided to the districts.

The special education *Alabama Curriculum Guides* are resources for Alabama's teachers of special needs students that provide prerequisite and enabling skills that lead to learning grade-level academic standards in all subjects. The curriculum guides are used to help low-achieving students learn the content in smaller increments, catch up on content they may have missed in previous years, and/or review content related to grade-level academic standards. The *Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics* is currently available and aligns to the new mathematics standards. The *Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts* that aligns with the new English language arts standards will be available January, 2013 for use in the 2013-14 school year. Although the Alabama Curriculum Guides are developed by the Special Education Section of the ALSDE, general education teachers use these guides to provide differentiated instruction to their students who may need to catch up on content they have missed in earlier grades. The Alabama Curriculum Guides are available on the ALEX Web site at <http://alex.state.al.us/specialed/curriculum.html>.

The Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) houses lesson plans that have been developed by educators throughout the state. These lesson plans were aligned to Alabama's CCRS in June 2011 at the Math Summit, which was held at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This alignment was conducted by Alabama educators under the guidance of Dr. Shannon Parks, ALSDE.

The Tri-State Collaborative (comprised of educational leaders from Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island and facilitated by Achieve) has developed the Tri-State Rubric, criterion-based rubrics and review processes, to evaluate the quality of lessons and units intended to address the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and ELA/Literacy. These rubrics provide clear, descriptive criteria for lessons/units and guide educators in identifying exemplary lessons/units that serve as models of CCSS instruction. In addition, these rubrics provide meaningful, constructive feedback to developers of lessons/units. These rubrics will be utilized during the CCRS Teaching Academies in Summer, 2013, which will focus on developing additional K-8 lessons and units of study for each subject area and grade level.

It is anticipated that over 300 teachers will participate in the K-8 academies. High school lessons and units of study will be developed using the Quality Core resources and Tri-State Rubric in January 2013 and in CCRS Teaching Academies in Summer 2013. Around 300 teachers are expected to participate in this training and development.

The ALSDE has a responsibility to assist districts with evaluating instructional materials as to their alignment with the standards. Representatives from the ALSDE attended the CCSSO meeting on *Selecting & Recommending CCRS Aligned Instructional Materials* in November 2012. Plans are underway to develop a process with tools to assist districts with selection of appropriate instructional materials. A research and design team is being assembled to study the Basal Alignment Project, CCSSO materials, National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) materials, and other resources. This team will then design a process for evaluating instructional materials and develop training on how to use that process. District training is slated for late spring and summer of 2013. Currently, direction is given in *A Guide for Professional Development Planning for Implementation of the College- and Career-Ready*

**Standards.** Phase 3 provides links to resources to assist districts that are ready to review their current textbooks and instructional materials. (See Attachment #34).

### Resources

CCRS resources provided to the districts by the ALSDE assist with consistent implementation while differentiating for low- and high-achieving students. These resources are described below:

- **Alabama Insight Tool**—This web-based tool ‘unpacks’ the mathematics and ELA standards for understanding, skills, knowledge, vocabulary, and evidence of student attainment. Included in the database are fields that have been pre-populated to include resources, lesson plans, podcasts, videos, etc., that are aligned to the standards. Additional fields will include the Special Education Mathematics Curriculum Guide. Each district may customize four additional fields with local materials, resources, etc. Training began in September 2012 and on-site support continues.
- **GlobalScholar**—This formative assessment system has been provided to every school and district. GlobalScholar offers a Student Assessment Management and Delivery System (SAMDS) that provides computer adaptive assessments (CAT) as well as formative, interim, and benchmark assessments for Mathematics, Reading, Language Arts, and Science. This resource is aligned to specific skills as defined by the Alabama CCRS, the CCSS, and ACT College-and Career-Ready measures and the assessment results are delivered immediately.
- **ACT’s Quality Core (QC)**—QC provides ACT course objectives, course descriptions, syllabi, course outlines, end-of-course test blueprints, sample units, and a formative assessment test builder. During the 2012-2013 school year, secondary teachers are using these resources to plan instruction for Algebra I, Geometry, English 9, and English 10. As additional end of course tests are added, more course resources will be provided.

### Partnering Organizations

This work is being augmented by the “education family” in Alabama. The School Superintendents of Alabama organization devoted its summer conference to the CCRS. A+ Education Partnership, a nonprofit education advocacy and capacity-building organization—much like the Prichard Committee in Kentucky—and its divisions, the Alabama Best Practices Center (ABPC) and A+ College Ready, are supporting implementation by developing an “Expect More, Achieve More” public engagement initiative to support the CCRS and by focusing on implementation of the CCRS in the ABPC Teacher Leader Networks. Additionally, a unique partnership between the ALSDE and the ABPC is piloting an initiative to strengthen in-school instructional coaching so that teachers gain the just-in-time support needed as they implement Alabama’s new CCRS.

Alabama recognizes the important role that leadership plays in improving schools. Districts and school leaders are imperative to the successful transition to the CCRS. The Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS), a professional organization for principals and other school leaders, has aligned its professional learning to ensure school and district leaders are prepared to lead this transition. Among the professional learning opportunities offered by CLAS is a Common Core for Principals Conference designed specifically with consideration for what principals need to know about CCRS and guidance for implementation at their

schools. Facilitators of these sessions are staff members from the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

A long-term partnership with the Alabama Education Association (further referred to as “the Association”) has yielded many benefits in the quest to provide quality education for each student in Alabama’s public schools. With the distinction of being one of the first statewide professional or educational support agencies to register support of the Common Core Standards Initiative, a position paper/white paper on Common Core Standards was developed by the Education Policy and Professional Practice Division of “the Association.” The position paper/white paper was later scheduled as an agenda topic presented at all major conferences that the Alabama Education Association scheduled throughout the state. Representing more than 100,000 certified administrators, teachers, and support personnel who are committed to effective teaching and learning, “the Association” has developed robust program partnerships with the Alabama State Department of Education to close learning gaps with limited-English proficiency students and special populations. Initiatives have included awareness training for practicing educators and well as the development of instructional guides. *Models of Collaboration* is one of the publications developed by the department and “the Association” as a framework for implementing effective teaching between certified and learning support educators of special populations. *JumpStart into Spanish* training modules have been used to increase the capacity of language proficiency and cultural awareness of educators when teaching students of Hispanic heritage.

Additional collaborative initiatives to increase teaching performance have been developed as a result of the partnership between the department and “the Association.” The initiatives include, but are not limited to, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards awareness sessions and scholarships to increase the number of educators pursuing the national board certification, the development of a Substitute Teachers’ Manual to increase the capacity of persons responsible for maintaining teaching-learning efficiency during the absence of the assigned teacher, and awareness trainings in best practices in teaching and learning for pre-service teachers matriculating in the state’s institutions of higher education.

### **Students With Disabilities**

Educators working with students with disabilities have been formally engaged in the process of analyzing, reviewing, and developing transition documents for CCRS implementation. Special education is an intentional focus in that representatives from the ALSDE Special Education Services (SES) Section serve on each of the 11 RPTs.

The special education *Alabama Curriculum Guides* (<http://alex.state.al.us/specialed/curriculum.html>) are resources for Alabama's general and special education teachers that provide prerequisite and enabling skills that lead to learning grade-level academic standards. The curriculum guides are used to help low-achieving students learn the content in smaller increments, catch up on content they may have missed in previous years, and/or review content related to grade-level academic standards. The *Alabama Curriculum Guides* are effective for all students not performing at grade level and not just for students with disabilities. The *Alabama Curriculum Guides* are not the same as the *Explorations Guides*. The *Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics* is currently available and aligns to the new mathematics standards. The *Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts* that aligns with the new English language arts standards will be available January 2013 for use in the 2013-14 school year.

The CCRS quarterly meetings are organized around the 11 inservice regions. A State Department of Education special education specialist is assigned to each regional team. In addition, each LEA was asked to appoint a special education representative to its CCRS Implementation Team. LEA special education representatives (including special education directors, other special education central office staff, and special education teachers) are attending the CCRS Implementation Team Meetings. Special education specialists from the ALSDE co-developed the content for the first two quarterly meetings and in some cases co-presented and/or co-facilitated with content specialists. These network meetings are designed as a train-the-trainer model with each LEA special education designee responsible for conveying the information to others in his or her school system. The first two quarterly meetings focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the new standards. The third meeting will focus on differentiated instruction for all students and supports for students with disabilities (e.g., instructional supports, instructional accommodations, assistive technology devices). Job-alike sessions are part of the quarterly meetings where special educators problem-solve issues related to the implementation of the new standards. This has been a unique opportunity for special educators and general educators to learn from each other as they shared questions, concerns, and ideas across districts.

Currently, the focus has been on implementing the new standards with students with disabilities who are working toward general education standards. The Alabama Extended Standards for students taking the *Alabama Alternate Assessment* are currently under revision to align with the new general education standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts. Teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities will receive regional training on the new Alabama Extended Standards once they are released.

In addition, the ALSDE Special Education Services Section staff serve on the Mathematics and ELA professional development teams that were developed to help LEAs transition from the old courses of study to the new CCRS. This transition includes providing training, resources, and support to assist LEAs in meeting the requirement of providing access to the general curriculum to students with disabilities.

The ALSDE, Special Education Services Section, in collaboration with the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI), developed Alabama's Transition Standards. These standards were reviewed by national experts in the field of transition and adopted December 6, 2011, by the State Board of Education. These transition standards are utilized to guide the planning and delivery of transition services for high school students with disabilities. The standards address Grades 9-12 and reflect a progressive scope and sequence of transition knowledge and skill development.

The Transition Standards are divided into four strands: Academics /Training, Occupations/Careers, Personal/Social, and Daily Living. These standards provide structure to guide instruction and experiences for equipping students with the necessary skills to be active participants in their transition planning process and to attain their postsecondary and community living goals, which also support the new CCRS.

Professional development is provided by SES and ATLI through live Webinars and the Training in Transition Modules (TNT). The live Webinars are conducted twice annually, and the modules can be accessed through the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute Web site. In addition, SES and ATLI host the annual Transition Conference in Opelika, Alabama, as well as present at the annual Special Education Conference in Mobile, Alabama.

### **English Language Learners**

Alabama participated in an alignment process to analyze the linguistic demands of the CCSS for English learners (ELs). In November 2010, World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) provided member states with the results of an alignment study that examined the relationship between the CCSS and the Model Performance Indicators (MPIs) of the WIDA ELP standards. An analysis was presented in a published report, *Alignment Study Between CCSS in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the WIDA ELP Standards, 2007 Edition*. As a member state since 2004, Alabama has been involved in a process to provide additional feedback on a standards amplification project to review and provide feedback on the amplified 2012 version of the *English Language Development (ELD) Standards* (publication—Fall 2012). Classroom teachers integrate these WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards with the CCRS to enable ELs to both communicate in English and demonstrate their academic, social, and cultural proficiency.

Involvement in this analysis process has allowed Alabama to present the most up-to-date information and create a focused effort on providing professional learning opportunities to all educators, but specifically to EL educators. The SAMUEL (School Assistance Meetings for Understanding English Learners) series was implemented during the 2010-11 school year. These quarterly regional sessions were designed for a broad audience including K-12 EL teachers, general education teachers, administrators, counselors, and anyone who had limited knowledge of EL and who desired to advance their understanding and application of recommended instructional and assessment practices for ELs. The ALSDE develops these topics from statewide needs assessments and a variety of data collection tools from the prior year. SAMUEL sessions are presented by EL Coaches, and topics addressed in these sessions include Sheltered Instruction Strategies, Interaction and Differentiated Instruction for EL, and Continuous Improvement Plan Goals/Action Steps.

Additional professional learning opportunities will be developed around the amplified 2012 WIDA Standards using instructional materials aligned with the standards and using data on multiple measures of student performance (e.g., data from formative, benchmark, and summative assessments) to inform instruction. The Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) provides a multitude of resources to support K-12 educators in supporting our EL students in classrooms across the state (<http://alex.state.al.us>). Materials are developed and uploaded throughout the year to support teachers in providing academic support to EL students.

EL Coaches work with districts not making Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) on data analysis and targeted improvement goals as well as provide monthly support for districts being served. Additionally, during the 2012-2013 year the Virtual Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Institute will be provided for districts in AMAO Improvement. During the transition to the CCRS, Alabama is providing Teacher Compass Suite to AMAO Improvement districts and one to each district statewide. Teacher Compass Suite is designed to increase the academic language and content achievement of ELs and struggling students. The suite is aligned to Alabama's WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards, and research-based instructional strategies to improve academic language and content knowledge of English Learners (ELs).

### **Advanced Placement**

Alabama’s Advanced Placement component of the College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan (Attachment 12) specifies the strategies for increasing the number of students that are college- and career-ready with a strong emphasis on increasing the innovative pathways for students as options for acceleration. This acceleration includes an increased emphasis on Advanced Placement courses and dual-enrollment opportunities. The focus of Advanced Placement in Alabama is on increasing rigor in the classroom, promoting equity among the population of successful AP students, and supporting instruction that encourages every child to graduate high school college- and career-ready.

Currently, Alabama’s Advanced Placement (AP) Initiative partners with A+ College Ready, a division of the A+ Education Partnership, to expand access to the College Board’s trademark AP mathematics, science, and English (MSE) courses across the state and to increase the number of qualifying scores on MSE AP exams. Teachers of pre-AP and AP courses have the opportunity to participate in professional learning that includes vertical alignment, accelerated course options, and curriculum training. More than 2,500 Alabama teachers have been trained in Laying the Foundation® (LTF) workshops held the past four years. These lessons and strategies provide concrete ways to fully implement the CCRS. To maximize LTF implementation, A+ College Ready convened teams of teachers from throughout the state to create curriculum documents that align the CCRS in English 9 and Algebra I, LTF lessons and strategies, as well as formative and summative assessments in order to raise the rigor in classes that will prepare students for not only Advanced Placement classes, but also for college and career pathways. A curriculum document for ninth-grade biology was developed as well. During 2012–2013, courses in English 10, Algebra II, and Chemistry will be similarly developed. In addition to these opportunities for middle and high school teachers, this program provides test fee resources, technical support, and after-school study sessions. Also available are student, teacher, and administrator financial incentives for student qualifying scores on MSE AP exams. The initiative continues to expand statewide.

Alabama also supports the International Baccalaureate (IB) program in Alabama school districts that participate in its high-quality education through its three continuously evolving and globally widely respected programs for students aged 3 to 19. The three “programmes”—Primary Years (aged 3-12), Middle Years (aged 11-16), and Diploma (aged 16-19)—offer an integrated model with four core elements: a curriculum framework, rigorous student assessment, professional development, and “programme” authorization and evaluation. Currently, there are 47 school districts and 86 IB middle and high schools participating in Alabama. Approximately 750 students are enrolled in at least one IB course. The program continues to expand statewide.

### **Communication**

In addition to the extensive professional learning for educators to transition to the CCRS, there is a need for ongoing communication and feedback with the public, professional associations, and IHEs. Alabama’s plan includes a targeted effort on the part of various Public Information Officers (PIOs) across the state to use all resources at their disposal to further explain CCRS. Individual school publications, Web sites, on-hold phone messaging, and other forms of communication will be used to get the message out. The ALSDE will issue a common toolkit for all state PIOs that will serve as a template for explaining the importance of CCRS and for answering frequently asked questions (FAQs). The tool kit will include sample Op-ed submissions for local and statewide newspapers, brochures, and letters written

to various audiences (parents, educators, business community, etc.). In addition to the static FAQs, the ALSDE is implementing an interactive blog accessible on the main ALSDE Web site that will be available to the public. Entries on this blog will get personal responses from an ALSDE official. Social media (Facebook, Twitter) will be used to keep the public informed. Written positive public support from statewide daily newspapers, third-party verifiers such as external education advocates, noted education organizations, and military personnel shows a broad reach in support of CCRS.

The ALSDE also has a speaker's bureau of individuals who can be sent across the state on request to speak at civic and community organizations, PTA meetings, and other gatherings.

To target the corporate and business community, as well as acquire buy-in from major employers, support from established entities that support CCRS will be promoted. The Business Roundtable, a national collaboration of American companies with specific interests in science, technology, engineering, and math, supports CCRS. The philosophy behind why these companies support these standards that are internationally benchmarked will be used to drive the message from a corporate perspective. The Alabama State Advisory Council for Career and Technical Education is composed of representatives from business and industry sectors, Regional Workforce Development Councils, the 16 National Career Cluster sectors, postsecondary institutions, and associations/organizations. The Advisory Council provides another venue for communicating the role that career and technical education plays in preparing students, through rigorous and relevant course offerings, to master the college- and career-ready standards.

### **Alabama's Work With IHEs**

The ALSDE will continue to work with IHEs to better prepare new teachers to teach all students and new administrators to support teachers as they provide instruction aligned to the CCRS. In 2005, the SBOE adopted the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders recommended by the Governor's Congress on School Leadership. Thirteen (13) Alabama IHEs were deemed to meet the new Class A standards for the preparation of Instructional Leaders. Thus, Alabama has successfully navigated the transition from preparing administrators to preparing instructional leaders. Also, individuals who prepare in other states and wish to earn an Alabama certificate must provide a valid and renewable professional educator certificate from another state along with documentation of at least three years of employment as an assistant principal, principal, assistant/associate superintendent, or superintendent in a P-12 school or school district.

The Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS), recommended by the Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching, were adopted by the SBOE in 2007. The AQTS, applicable to all programs, lead to the initial preparation of teachers through IHE-based programs and include components designed to assist in preparing new teachers to teach all students. (Additional IHE information is contained in Attachment 16.)

With regard to the CCRS, the third AQTS standard pertaining to literacy is of particular importance. IHEs are expected to track each prospective teacher's acquisition of knowledge and abilities, across ALL teaching fields, to ensure literacy with regard to oral and written communication, reading, mathematics, and technology. All 27 Alabama IHEs that prepare teachers at the undergraduate level had to document compliance with the AQTS by July 1, 2007. The 17 Alabama IHEs that provide programs leading to initial certification at the master's degree level had to document compliance with the AQTS for those programs by July

1, 2008. (In the format used to assess teacher preparation programs, the AQTs have been added to Attachment 16.)

The State Superintendent of Education will ask Alabama's 27 educator preparation IHEs to use the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development (ACTD) in partial fulfillment of the requirement that IHEs assess the abilities of prospective teachers. The information obtained from the standardized statewide assessment will be used by IHEs to improve their own programs and by the ALSDE to determine which programs must be upgraded in order to continue as state-approved programs. The ACTD is based on the AQTs and is the instrument used by almost all Alabama LEAs for teacher self-assessment and the development of professional learning plans for continued growth in concert with local administrators. The ACTD is applicable across teaching fields. Arrangements will be made for data from the assessment of prospective teachers to populate the EDUCATEAlabama database used to capture assessment data for employed teachers. EDUCATEAlabama data are accessible to LEA administrators for the teachers employed in each LEA. Data for prospective teachers will be made accessible to the administrators of the LEA that employs a new teacher.

The State Superintendent of Education will ask Alabama's 13 instructional leader preparation IHEs to use the Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development (ACILD) in partial fulfillment of the requirement that IHEs assess the abilities of prospective instructional leaders. The information obtained from the standardized statewide assessment will be used by IHEs to improve their own programs and by the ALSDE to determine which programs must be upgraded in order to continue as state-approved programs. The ACILD is the instrument used by almost all Alabama LEAs for instructional leader self-assessment and the development of professional learning plans for continued growth in concert with local superintendents. Arrangements will be made for data from the assessment of prospective instructional leaders to populate the LEADAlabama database used to capture assessment data for employed instructional leaders. Data for prospective instructional leaders will be made accessible to the superintendent of the LEA that employs a new instructional leader.

After adoption of the CCRS by the SBOE in November 2010, information about the standards was shared with deans of education on numerous occasions. Early in 2012, a survey was sent to the deans to determine what activities were underway to ensure that prospective teachers and administrators were made aware of the new standards. A range of activities was reported. Several deans of education reported that members of their faculty had participated in designing CCRS training modules or had attended training sessions with their LEA partners.

On July 16, 2012, the ALSDE mathematics specialist spoke to the deans of education about the CCRS for mathematics and the host of resources available to prospective and employed teachers. A similar presentation will be made for ELA at the appropriate time. All materials accessible to employed teachers will be accessible to teacher educators and prospective teachers.

Faculty and staff from IHEs are included on the RPTs to allow for input from higher education faculty and staff. One of the functions of those teams will be focused on facilitating the transition to the new mathematics standards and making sure that the CCRS are being addressed in teacher preparation programs as well as in Alabama schools.

**Pre-Service Teachers**

Beginning in September 2012, face-to-face meetings in four locations—Mobile, Montgomery, Birmingham, and Athens—provided an opportunity for district leaders and IHE methods teachers to become better prepared for implementing CCRS. The morning meetings were customized for LEA personnel, and an afternoon session was provided at each location for IHE administrators and faculty involved in the preparation of teachers and principals for P-12 schools. The CCRS are the main focus of the meetings.

Resources and instructional materials are posted on the CCRS Website and all of these were made available to IHE. In addition, tools for districts such as the Alabama Insight Tool (unpacking the standards) and the QualityCore were secured for IHE to use with pre-service teachers. Training for these resources was provided at the IHE meetings. Further CCRS training for IHE is being customized for different regions in the state based on their needs and availability. In addition, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and Alabama Math, Science, & Technology Initiative (AMSTI) provide training for preservice teachers twice a year in ELA and math.

In October 2012, IHE representatives attended EQUIP training with ALSDE staff to learn about developing and evaluating lessons and units of study. This training is being infused into the CCRS Implementation Meetings for districts. In addition, IHE will participate in Quality Core training in January 2013 with teachers and ALSDE staff. They will assist in facilitating CCRS Teaching Academies in summer 2013.

The State Superintendent of Education will ask the President of the Alabama Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (ALACTE) to design a survey to determine what steps were taken during 2012 to ensure that prospective teachers and principals are prepared to teach all students to the new CCRS, disseminate the survey to all 27 Alabama IHEs, and report on the results. Institutions that do not provide evidence of steps taken will be warned that failure to move forward immediately could result in loss of program approval.

**1.C Develop and Administer Annual, Statewide, Aligned, High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth**

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.</p> <p>i. Attach the State’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Provide the SEA’s plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.</p>	<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)</p>
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**Timeline for Implementation of Assessments**Alabama College- and Career-Ready Assessment System  
Timeline for Implementation

School Year	Grades K-2	Grades 3-8	Grades 8-12	
			QualityCore End-of-Course Assessments	College- and Career- Ready Assessments
2012-13	Formative/Interim/ Benchmark Assessments (LEA Determined)	ARMT <sup>+</sup> (Grades 3- 8)	English 9 English 10 Algebra I Geometry (AHSGE Grades 11-12)	EXPLORE (Grade 8) PLAN (Grade 10)
2013-14	Formative/Interim/ Benchmark Assessments (LEA Determined)	ACT Aspire (Grades 3- 8) Reading and Math ARMT <sup>+</sup> (Grades 5 and 7) Science	Above assessments plus English 11 Algebra II (AHSGE Grade 12)	EXPLORE (Grade 8) PLAN (Grade 10) ACT Plus Writing (Grade 11)
2014-15	Formative/Interim/ Benchmark Assessments (LEA Determined)	ACT Aspire (Grades 3- 8) Reading and Math  ARMT <sup>+</sup> (Grades 5 and 7) Science	Above assessments plus English 12 Pre-Calculus U. S. History	EXPLORE (Grade 8) PLAN (Grade 10) ACT Plus Writing (Grade 11) WorkKeys (Grade 12)
2015-16	Formative/Interim/ Benchmark Assessments (LEA Determined)	ACT Aspire (Grades 3- 8)  Reading and Math  Grades 5 and 7 Science	Above assessments plus Biology Chemistry Physics	ACT Aspire (Grade 10) ACT Plus Writing (Grade 11) WorkKeys (Grade 12)

NOTES: Revised alternate assessments to be administered in Grades 3-12 in English language arts and mathematics in 2014-15 and in science in 2015-16. State-provided formative/interim/benchmark assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards are available for Grades K-12 at no cost to LEAs.

At the same time that the work on the CCRS was occurring, work on the assessment system began with the goal of increasing rigor and alignment to college- and career-ready standards.

On September 10, 2009, the Alabama State Board of Education (SBOE) began phasing in college- and career-ready assessments with the approval of recommendations for a student assessment plan that had as its goal to measure the essential skills and knowledge students need to be ready to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses in two- and four-year institutions and highly skilled careers. The recommendations were made by the Committee for Accountability and Accelerating Student Learning (CAASL), a broad-based committee of stakeholders. The new state testing system is focused on measuring college- and career readiness from Grade 3 to Grade 12 and uses the ACT test as the capstone assessment to determine college readiness. This plan includes a phase-in of ACT's EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT Plus writing, and WorkKeys assessments. The phase-in began with eighth graders of 2010-2011 who were administered EXPLORE in the fall of 2010. These eighth graders will be administered PLAN as tenth graders in the fall of 2012. The ACT Plus Writing will be administered to this same class as eleventh graders in 2013-2014. WorkKeys will be administered to this same class as twelfth graders in 2014-2015. The recommendations also included a phasing out of the current comprehensive high school graduation exam and a phasing in of end-of-course assessments.

In a State Board of Education (SBOE) resolution dated July 12, 2011, the SBOE approved the appointment of an Assessment and Accountability Task Force to review the current student assessment and accountability systems and to make recommendations for needed changes in the current systems that would assure that Alabama is in compliance with federal law, rules, and regulations and to assure that Alabama's assessment and accountability plans meet the needs of Alabama's students, educators, and citizens. This task force also was a broad-based group of stakeholders that included K-12 educators (superintendents, central office staff, principals, and teachers) as well as postsecondary educators, business partners, parents, and representatives from various state educational organizations.

On April 26, 2012, the recommendations of this task force were presented to the SBOE. The recommendations of the task force supported and complemented the recommendations of CAASL and Alabama's newly adopted PLAN 2020 that was designed to ensure that every child would not only graduate, but that every graduate would be prepared for college, work, and adulthood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The vision of both the task force and Plan 2020 included a balanced assessment system that integrates formative data, benchmark data, and summative data in making instructional decisions. The proposed plan includes universal screeners, summative assessments, a formative/benchmark/interim assessment repository, project-based assessments, and career interest and aptitude assessments (see Attachment 18).

Alabama's accountability plan provides a College or Career Indicator that measures the preparedness of students for college or careers upon exiting the Alabama K-12 school system. Alabama defines a student as college- or career-ready if the student earns benchmark scores on the reading and math sections of the ACT test, earns a qualifying score on an AP or IB exam, earns transcripted college or postsecondary credit while in high school, earns a Silver Level on the ACT WorkKeys, or earns an approved industry credential. These College or Career Indicator measures will be incorporated as the data sets mature.

The Assessment and Accountability Task Force met on February 4, 2013, and again on March 6 to complete its recommendations for the Grades 3-8 component of the new assessment system. The recommendations of the Task Force were presented to the State Board of Education at a work session on March 28, 2013. In its meeting on April 11, 2013, the Task Force recommendations were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education. The Task Force recommendations will ensure that the new testing system is linked from Grade 3 to Grade

12 and focuses on college-readiness standards. Students taking the tests from Grades 3 to 12 will know if they are on the path toward college- and career-readiness. The new assessments in Grades 3-8 will evaluate schools' and individual students' progress toward college- and career-readiness benchmarks. These new assessments will become a part of a cohesive longitudinal assessment system that fully connects student performance from elementary through high school, connecting each grade level to the next as it measures student progress toward college- and career-readiness. The score scales from Grades 3-8 will be linked to the college-readiness benchmark scores used on the ACT, PLAN, and EXPLORE. Alabama's new testing system is explained in the narrative that follows.

### **High School Testing Model**

#### **ACT**

The ACT is the capstone test in the new Alabama assessment system and is administered annually to Alabama high school juniors in the spring. ACT is based on more than 50 years of research and provides a measure that shows the probability of student success in the first year of college. ACT has clearly defined standards and benchmarks for the subjects of reading, English, mathematics, and science. ACT was an important player in the development of the Common Core State Standards, and the ACT standards and test are highly aligned with the Common Core work. Students who make the benchmarks are deemed ready for college courses. Students who do not meet benchmarks will receive intervention and assistance to increase their readiness level.

Alabama recognizes that some students may follow a career readiness path that does not include college; however, Alabama also recognizes that many jobs in the workforce call for strong technical and academic skills. Academic skills are measured by meeting a benchmark on the ACT WorkKeys test. The *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006* mandated that states design an accountability measure that requires students enrolled in career and technical education programs to demonstrate attainment of career and technical skill proficiencies, including student achievement on technical assessments that are aligned with industry-recognized standards if available and appropriate. A unit, course, or program business-industry credential and/or license may be used to assess student skill attainment in a specified course(s) or program. The credential and/or license must be approved by the ALSDE. A list of approved business-industry credentials and/or license is located on the Alabama SDE Program Grid that is revised quarterly. The current Program Grid can be found at [www.alcareerinfo.org](http://www.alcareerinfo.org). The Career and Technical Education Section of the ALSDE is continuously working with local school systems to identify and approve third-party technical assessments that are aligned with the approved Alabama Courses of Study that do not have an appropriate industry-based credential for career and technical education.

#### **ACT, INC. PLAN**

In addition to the ACT, beginning in the fall of 2012 all sophomores in Alabama will take the ACT, Inc. PLAN test. The PLAN test is statistically linked to the ACT and provides an early prediction of how well a student will perform on the ACT test and provides objective strengths and weaknesses of a student. This early warning test can be used to locate students in the fall of the sophomore year who need additional intervention.

## ACT, INC. QUALITY CORE® END-OF-COURSE TESTS

Alabama has embarked on an ambitious end-of-course testing program. The ACT Quality Core® tests in English 9, English 10, Algebra I, and Geometry will be administered in 2012-13 to all high school students completing these courses. In Alabama, all students must have these courses on their transcript to earn a diploma. Over the next three years, 12 end-of-course assessments will be phased in. The ACT Quality Core® testing program is a comprehensive curriculum-based test measuring standards with a high match to the Common Core Standards. The ACT test scores also can be used as part of the student's final grade, thus providing high motivation for a student to do well in the course. But, more importantly, the test scores are linked to predicting how a student will perform on the ACT or PLAN test. The predicted scores create highly rigorous, college-based expectations for high school teachers and students in Alabama.

The Alabama testing program at the high school level has an unbroken chain of links between the ACT capstone test and the ACT PLAN and the ACT Quality Core® tests. The ACT PLAN predicts an ACT score, and the ACT Quality Core® predicts an ACT or PLAN score. These correlations between courses and tests provide Alabama high schools, for the first time, with a common set of definitions and standards for aligning instruction to a rigorous model of college readiness.

All students, including students with disabilities and English learners, will participate in the end-of-course testing program for the courses in which the students are enrolled. Students with disabilities and English learners will participate either with or without accommodations. The only exceptions are for those special education students who are significantly cognitively disabled and whose IEP Team determines that these students will be taught the Alabama Extended Standards and will participate in the *Alabama Alternate Assessment*.

### **The Middle School Testing Program**

#### ACT, INC. EXPLORE

Beginning in the 2010-11 school year, all Alabama public school students in Grade 8 took the ACT EXPLORE test in October. This will continue as an annual assessment. This test, based on a set of curriculum standards with high correlation to the CCSS, provides a predicted score on the ACT PLAN test. The ACT EXPLORE measures achievement in reading, English, mathematics, and science. Eighth-grade students are being held to the same rigorous definition of college and career benchmarks that will apply to them as high school students. ACT EXPLORE also includes a career exploration component that assists students in beginning to identify career options that are based on their personal characteristics.

The Assessment and Accountability Task Force recommended assessments be administered in Grades 6-8 in English, writing, mathematics, science, and reading using an assessment that is aligned with Alabama's College- and Career-Ready standards. Beginning in 2013-14, students in Grades 6-8 will take reading and mathematics. The assessment reports will include an indication as to whether or not students are "on track" for being college- and career-ready. The new system of assessments will address the gap between the skills students are learning in school and the skills they will need to succeed in college and careers in the increasingly competitive global economy. ACT research indicates that assessment and intervention provided earlier in students' academic careers improves their chances of succeeding in school and reaching their college and career goals.

These assessments will offer an integrated, multidimensional approach to college- and career-readiness that focuses on measuring achievements and behavior relative to goals. It will fully connect student performance from early elementary to middle school, helping students know exactly where they are and providing insights on how to build on strengths and address weaknesses, both in and out of the classroom. The timeline for implementation of these assessments can be found on the Timeline for Implementation of Assessments.

### **The Elementary School Testing Program**

The Assessment and Accountability Task Force recommended assessments to be administered in Grades K-5 in reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, and writing that are aligned to college- and career-ready standards. Grades K-2 will administer formative/interim/benchmark assessments. Grades 3-5 will administer new assessments in English, writing, mathematics, science, and reading using an assessment that is aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Beginning in 2013-2014, students in Grades 3-5 will take reading and mathematics. The reports will include an indication as to whether or not students are “on track” for being college- and career-ready. The resulting reports will include benchmarks indicating whether students are on target toward college- and career-readiness. These assessments are addressed in the previous section. The timeline for implementation of these assessments can be found on the Timeline for Implementation of Assessments.

### **Formative Assessment**

As mentioned earlier, the Assessment and Accountability Task Force recommended a more balanced assessment program focused on formative assessment and benchmark assessments. Alabama has contracted with GlobalScholar to provide the formative assessment component of the assessment program through its Achievement Series and Performance Series platforms. GlobalScholar offers a Student Assessment Management and Delivery System (SAMDS) that provides computer-adaptive tests (CAT) covering mathematics and reading, language arts, and science. Math and reading assessments support students in Grade K to 12. Language arts and science assessments support students in Grades 2 through 8. Because it adjusts to a student’s level of performance it can provide an accurate diagnostic of student needs independent of grade level. The research-supported validity and reliability of these assessments provide support of these scores contributing to a “Growth Model” measurement of professional performance.

Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) can also be created and delivered by the SAMDS in any subject. The assessments and items will be aligned to Alabama’s College- and Career-Ready Standards, which incorporate the CCSS. The system contains approximately 35,000 test items owned by GlobalScholar. While these items support CRTs in math, language arts, reading, science, and social studies, tests may be developed with items from locally owned and proprietary sources. This component will allow the ALSDE to develop assessments in subject areas not supported by CRTs. The repository of resources for Grades 3-12 will include a pool of aligned items to each standard at each grade level within each assessment content area that will be used to inform instructional practices and include links to instructional resources aligned to the standards.

One provision of this assessment program is CATs that provide a baseline measurement of a student’s prior achievement and a final measure of student’s growth over the course of an academic year. This diagnostic data is aligned to specific skills as defined by the Alabama CCRS, the CCSS, and ACT College- and Career-Ready measures. These assessments are

custom-tailored to the student's ability level, and the results are delivered immediately with a valid and reliable scaled score that can be used to measure academic growth and evaluate student abilities at or above or below grade level.

The Performance Series provides a pinpoint on a continuum of the learning process. It measures where a student is instead of focusing on where a student is not. Performance Series is more than just a measure of proficiency; it accurately provides educators in the classroom with specific information for targeted intervention. By identifying multiple pinpoints through time, a true measurement of academic growth can be obtained.

The reporting features and capabilities of the Performance Series provide individual student information (in a Student Report) as well as school and district-wide progress (in a Summary Report) and gains over time. The reports can be manipulated to develop custom learning plans for each student immediately after the first assessment. Users can create groups, such as Free/Reduced Lunch, Before-School/After-School Programs, etc., to measure gains by specific groups. In addition, within the reports the user is able to select students according to specified demographics, such as ethnicity, gender, etc. All Alabama school districts will be provided access to this set of assessment resources.

Alabama currently provides a database management system for teachers to use with their students as they begin to make educational and career decisions about their future. This database assists teachers with connecting directly with students as they make informed, real-time educational program decisions. Students use the data management system to plan their future education and prepare for careers by learning about their interests, skills, and work values and exploring their options using a variety of interactive tools.

### **ACCESS for ELS**

Alabama has been a member of World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), a consortium of 28 states, since 2005. The role of WIDA is to advance academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators. WIDA's English language proficiency assessment, *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners* (ACCESS for ELLs), has been administered annually to English language learners (ELs) in the state of Alabama since joining the consortium in 2005. During the 2011-12 school year, over 17,000 students were assessed with ACCESS for ELLs.

ACCESS for ELLs is a standards-based, criterion-referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English language learners' social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English, as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, within the school context, across four language domains, including reading, writing, speaking and listening. In order for students to demonstrate English language proficiency, a composite proficiency level of 4.8 must be attained. Once a student attains this score, he/she is determined to be English language proficient and will no longer be assessed with ACCESS for ELLs.

WIDA is in the final stages of developing its 2012 Edition of the English Language Development Standards, which include a direct connection to the Common Core English language arts and mathematics standards. In addition, *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs* will be administered in Alabama for the first time this school year. This assessment was developed through an Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG) and is administered to the most severely, cognitively

disabled EL students. WIDA is also the recipient of the ASSETS grant that will allow for the development of the next generation, technology-based English language proficiency tests available for all consortium states in 2016. Alabama will be a part of this effort as well.

### **Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA)**

ALSDE staff members from assessment and special education are working to revise the Alabama Extended Standards and the *Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA)*. Plans are to have the Alabama Extended Standards for mathematics and ELA developed by the spring of 2013 for optional implementation during 2013-14 and required implementation of the standards for both mathematics and ELA during 2014-15. Since the general education science standards are currently under revision and due to be adopted in March 2013 with implementation in fall of 2015, extended standards for science will begin revision immediately following the March 2013 adoption of general standards with implementation of extended standards beginning 2015-2016 with optional implementation for 2014-2015, just as the regular standards are scheduled to be implemented.

The *Alabama Alternate Assessment* will be revised to reflect the new Alabama Extended Standards in ELA and mathematics for implementation in the spring of 2015. Science will follow with implementation in the spring of 2016. New assessments will be as follows:

- Since the new assessments in Grades 3-8 will include English, reading, writing, math, and science, alternates will be developed in those grades and subjects.
- Since the ACT assessments given in Grades 8, 10, and 11 will include English, reading, math, and science, alternates will be developed in those grades and subjects. Writing will also be developed for Grade 11 since writing will be a part of the ACT.
- An alternate assessment will be developed in Grade 9 in English, reading, math, and science. This will give consistency across Grades 3-12.
- Since WorkKeys, scheduled to be given in Grade 12, will include Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information, alternates will be developed in reading (to include locating information) and mathematics.

### **PLAN FOR REVISION OF ALABAMA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT**

<b>Milestone or Activity</b>	<b>Detailed Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
Release Invitation To Bid	May 2013	Student Assessment
Written Questions Regarding ITB from Vendors	May 2013	Student Assessment
Answers to Written Questions from Vendors	June 2013	Student Assessment
Written Response and Cost Proposal from Vendors to State Purchasing	June 2013	Student Assessment
Opening of All Proposals	June 2013	Student Assessment
Official Awarding of Bid	July 2013	Student Assessment
Planning Meeting	August 2013	Student Assessment
<b>ELA and Math Timeline</b>		
Development of Testing Materials and Reports for	September 2013	Student Assessment

ELA and Math		
Professional Development for New ELA and Math Extended Standards/Minimum Evidence	October/November 2013	Student Assessment/SPE
Field Testing Evidence for ELA and Math	January/March 2014	Student Assessment
Development of Anchor Papers for Scoring ELA and Math	May/August 2014	Student Assessment/SPE
Revise Minimum Evidence Based on Field Test	September 2014	Student Assessment/SPE
Professional Development for ELA and Math	October/November 2014	Student Assessment/SPE
Refinement of Anchor Papers for Scoring ELA and Math Based on Field Test	January/February 2015	Student Assessment/SPE
Administration of Test for ELA and Math	April/May 2015	Student Assessment
Scoring for ELA and Math	May/June 2015	Student Assessment
Standard Setting for ELA and Math	June 2015	Student Assessment/SPE
Development of Achievement Descriptors for ELA and Math	June 2015	Student Assessment/SPE
Professional Development for ELA and Math	July 2015	Student Assessment/SPE
Reporting for ELA and Math	August 2015	Student Assessment
Technical Manual	September 2015	Student Assessment
Closeout/Planning Meeting	September 2015	Student Assessment
Professional Development for ELA and Math	September/October 2015	Student Assessment/SPE
<b>Science Timeline</b>		
Development of Testing Materials and Reports for Science	September 2014	Student Assessment
Professional Development for New Science Extended Standards/Minimum Evidence	October/November 2014	Student Assessment/SPE
Field Testing Evidence for Science	January/March 2015	Student Assessment
Development of Anchor Papers for Scoring Science	May/August 2015	Student Assessment/SPE
Revise Minimum Evidence	September 2015	Student Assessment/SPE

Based on Field Test		
Professional Development for Science	October/November 2015	Student Assessment/SPE
Refinement of Anchor Papers for Scoring Science Based on Field Test	January/February 2016	Student Assessment/SPE
Administration of Test for ELA, Math, and Science	April/May 2016	Student Assessment
Scoring for ELA, Math, and Science	May/June 2016	Student Assessment
Standard Setting for Science	June 2016	Student Assessment/SPE
Development of Achievement Descriptors for Science	June 2016	Student Assessment/SPE
Professional Development for Science	July 2016	Student Assessment/SPE
Scoring for ELA, Math, and Science	August 2016	Student Assessment
Technical Manual	September 2016	Student Assessment
Closeout/Planning Meeting	September 2016	Student Assessment
Professional Development for ELA, Math, and Science	September/October 2016	Student Assessment/SPE

A timeline for the rollout of new assessments, the proposed accountability model, and the rewards and interventions plan can be found in Attachment 19. The AAA will continue to be used in the accountability model for the applicable grades and subjects.

## Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

### 2.A Develop and Implement a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

- 2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA’s plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2013–2014 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

#### Overview of Alabama’s Plan 2020 Accountability Model

The goal of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is to develop an accountability model that can be easily understood by all stakeholders. Each school and district will receive an annual overall score, referred to as the School/District Performance Index, based on four components:

1. Alabama Learners.
2. Alabama Support Systems.
3. Alabama Professionals.
4. Alabama Schools and Systems.

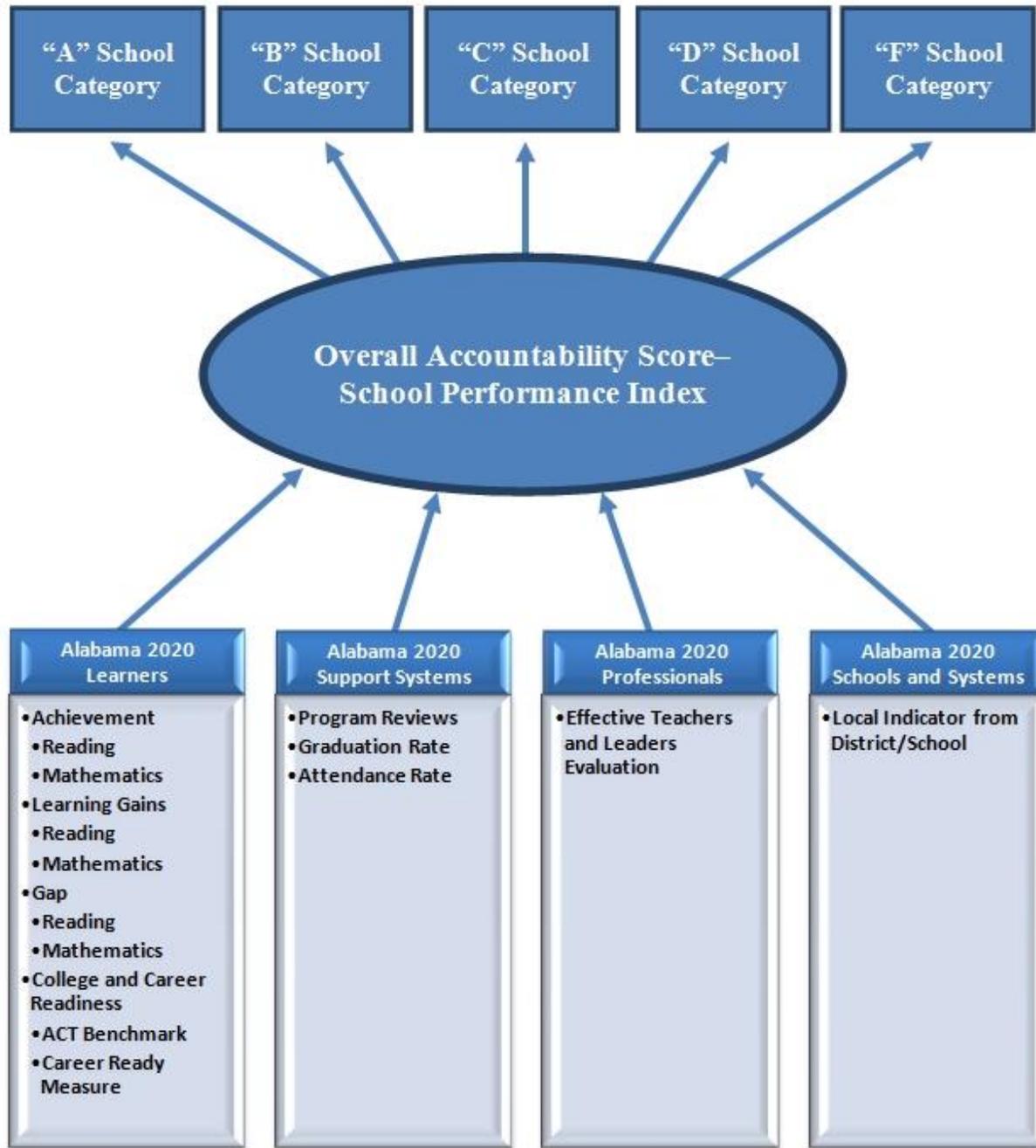
This single School/District Performance Index will be the trigger for recognition and support for schools and districts.

The new state accountability system includes the requirements of Act 2012-402 (Attachment 20) recently passed by the Alabama Legislature so there is one system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support. Act 2012-402 requires the State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and district performance and to create the Legislative School Performance Recognition Program.

This act requires a plan be developed by December 2012. This system will utilize a traditional A–F grading system to give parents, educators, and students an easy-to-understand system for comprehending student performance. At the same time, the grading system will provide an awareness of school performance in local communities throughout the state. The overall numbers found in the A-F grading system incorporate a robust set of success factors but remains strongly focused on the learning gains of individual students.

Each of the performance indicators is weighted differently. These weights reflect Alabama’s Plan 2020 values. Although all of the performance indicators provide evidence of a school’s success in preparing students for college and careers, growth is the leading indicator of progress towards this, and postsecondary and workforce measures most closely reflect actual preparedness.

The figure below illustrates how the model works.



This model will offer a multi-dimensional approach that incorporates all aspects of school and district work organized around the Alabama State Board of Education’s four strategic priorities: Alabama 2020 Learners, Alabama 2020 Support Systems, Alabama 2020 Professionals, and Alabama 2020 Schools and Systems. The following chart identifies the indicators and data sources included in Alabama’s model around each of the Plan 2020 priorities, and outlines the performance measures for each category in Alabama 2020 Learners and two areas of Alabama 2020 Support Systems.

Plan 2020: College- and/or Career-Ready for All					
Alabama 2020 Learners	Alabama 2020 Support Systems	Alabama 2020 Professionals	Alabama 2020 Schools and Systems	=	2020 Schools/Districts
Achievement (Proficiency)	Program Reviews	Percent Effective Teachers	Local Indicator(s)		Overall School Performance Index (using data from each category)
Gap	Graduation Rate	Percent Effective Leaders			Revised Report
Learning Gains (Growth)	Attendance Rate				
College-/Career-Readiness					

The first two priorities of Alabama’s Plan 2020 accountability model, Alabama 2020 Learners and Alabama 2020 Support Systems (graduation/attendance rates), are anchored in college- and career-readiness for all students. Unlike the current model, the 2020 model will provide a more in-depth view of student achievement by calculating learning gains and achievement gaps. This model will continue annual public reporting of disaggregated student outcome measures for all ESEA subgroups in required content areas. In addition, emphasis will be placed on college- and career-readiness and high school graduation rates. Attendance rates will also be a factor for schools without a Grade 12.

Grade Range	Achievement	Gap	Learning Gains	College- and Career-Readiness	Attendance	Graduation Rate
Elementary	Tests: Reading and Mathematics	Tests: Reading and Mathematics	Tests: Reading and Mathematics		Attendance Rate	
Secondary	End-of-Course Tests*	Graduation Rate	Tests: Reading and Mathematics	College- or Career-Ready Indicator		Cohort Model

\* End-of-Course tests in 2013-2014 include Algebra I and English 10.

The School/District Performance Index for school districts and K-12 unit schools will include all factors above. Schools with no tested grades will be linked with the school into which the students feed since the school has no assessment data of its own. Schools with ninth grade only will be linked with the secondary school into which the students feed since the ninth-grade school will not have complete measures such as ACT and Cohort Model. Scores will be banked for students who take the Algebra I End-of-course test prior to Grade 9 and/or 10.

**Achievement**

Achievement incorporates student performance on state-required assessments in two content areas—reading/English and mathematics. Alabama’s new assessment system includes criterion-referenced tests in Grades 3-8; ACT’s Quality Core® program for end-of-course tests in Algebra I and English 10; and Alabama Alternate Assessment for Grades 3-12 (where applicable).

The performance percent for each school and content area is the combined result of all three assessment types (where applicable). This combination will be used to calculate achievement results for all ESEA subgroups. Schools and districts earn full credit for students scoring proficient or above. The lower student performance levels do not receive credit in the accountability model. Achievement will be calculated based upon the percent of proficient (or above) students meeting the Annual Measurable Objectives for reading and mathematics multiplied by the assigned weight in the School/District Performance Index. Disaggregated ESEA subgroups will be reported individually.

## Gap

Gap—Alabama’s goal is 100 percent proficiency for all students. The Gap category of Alabama 2020 Learners focuses specifically on student groups that perform traditionally below the achievement goal. Gap uses the same student test results as those included under achievement for K-8 schools and graduation rate for 9-12 schools.

Step 1—Identify the students for accountability purposes.

Step 2—Calculate the percent proficient/graduation rate for each ESEA subgroup where applicable.

For the subgroups below the state “All Students” subgroup (currently these subgroups are Black, EL, Hispanic, Poverty, SPED, referred to as the Performance Gap subgroups). For each of these subgroups with  $N \geq 20$ .

Step 3—Compare Performance Gap subgroups to school/state “All Students” subgroup (e.g., SPED subgroup minus School “All Students” subgroup).

If the difference is greater than or equal to 0, then the Objective equals 1.0.

If the difference is less than 0, then calculate the difference between the gap for the current year and the gap for the previous year.

If the difference is less than or equal to 0, the Objective equals 0.0.

If the difference is greater than 0, then the Objective equals .1, .2, .3, . . . to .5. See chart below.

Closing the Gap

Improvement Between Y1 and Y2 (Gap Difference)	Improvement Score Applied to Matrix
$. < \text{Improvement} \leq 0$	0.0
$0 < \text{Improvement} \leq 1$	0.1
$1 < \text{Improvement} \leq 2$	0.2
$2 < \text{Improvement} \leq 3$	0.3
$3 < \text{Improvement} \leq 4$	0.4
$4 < \text{Improvement} \leq 5$	0.5

Step 4—Add the Objective Scores.

Divide by total possible Objectives and convert to a percent Objectives Score.

Step 5—For each Measure, multiply percent Objectives Score times Weight.

Step 6—Calculate the Total Score: Add the weighted scores from each measure for a Total Score.

The N-count used will be 20.

<b>Sample K-8 School Gap Calculations</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>English/LA Gap</b>	<b>Math Gap</b>
Black	1	1
Hispanic	1	1
Free/Reduced Meals	0	1
Limited English Proficiency	1	1
Special Education	.5	.2
Total # of Points	3.5	4.2
Total # of Objectives	5	5
Percent of Above	70%	84%
Weight	20.00	20.00
Weighted Points Subtotal	14.00	16.80
Points Toward SPI for Gap		
30.80		

<b>Sample High School Gap Calculations</b>	
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Graduation Rate Gap</b>
Black	1
Hispanic	1
Free/Reduced Meals	1
Limited English Proficiency	.5
Special Education	.2
Total # of Points	3.7
Total # of Objectives	5
Percent of Above	74%
Weight	25.00
Weighted Points Subtotal	18.50
Points Toward SPI for Gap	
18.50	

### **Learning Gains (Growth)**

Learning Gains (Growth)—Based on the percentage of students in each ESEA subgroup demonstrating learning gains in mathematics or reading performance over the previous year. The growth percent for each school and content is the combined result of all assessment types.

Once assessment results from Aspire are available the advisory committee will define what constitutes learning gains as well as the growth method that will be used to make such determinations. Learning gains is a component of the Phase II Performance Index and will be implemented beginning 2015-2016. This will allow time for the advisory team to review the new assessment results and determine what is considered typical or higher levels of gain/growth.

**College- or Career-Readiness**

Alabama’s vision as stated in Plan 2020 is “Every Child a Graduate—Every Graduate Prepared for College/Work/Adulthood in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Alabama defines a prepared graduate as a student who possesses the knowledge and skills needed to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses in a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school without the need for remediation. Alabama further defines a prepared graduate as a student who possesses the ability to apply core academic skills to real-world situations through collaboration with peers in problem solving, utilizing precision and punctuality in delivery of a product, and demonstrating the desire to be a life-long learner.

The College or Career Indicator is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of high school graduates who have successfully met an indicator of readiness for college or career with the total number of graduates. The College or Career Indicator measures the preparedness of students for college or careers upon exiting Alabama’s K-12 school system. Alabama defines a student as college- or career-ready if the student earns at least one of the following:

- Benchmark scores on the reading and math sections of the ACT test.
- Qualifying score on an AP or IB exam.
- Approved transcribed college or postsecondary credit while in high school.
- Benchmark level on the ACT WorkKeys.
- Approved industry credential.

These college or career indicator measures will be incorporated as the data sets mature and agreements are in place. In addition, Alabama is working with the Education Delivery Institute to develop delivery plans for college- and career-readiness, graduation rate, communication, and teacher/principal effectiveness. The College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan and the Graduation Rate Delivery Plan are in Attachments 12 and 13.

# Overview of Proposed Alabama Accountability Model



To be implemented in two phases over the next four years.

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## Overall Reporting for Plan 2020 School Performance Index

The School Performance Index will be implemented in phases.

**Phase-In of Components**—The four components of Alabama Plan 2020 will be implemented over a three-year period. In 2012-13, the mathematics college- and career-readiness standards will be implemented in Grades K-12. Schools will begin administering end-of-course tests. *EXPLORE* and *PLAN* will be administered to Grades 8 and 10 respectively. In 2013-14, the reading/language arts college- and career-readiness standards will be implemented in Grades K-12. The new assessment in Grades 3-8 will be administered. End-of-course tests, *EXPLORE*, and *PLAN* will continue to be administered. The ACT will be administered to eleventh graders.

Therefore, by 2013-14, Phase I of the School Performance Index will be implemented followed by Phase II in 2015-2016. The index score will be implemented in two phases. Phase I will be implemented in 2013-2014 as a means to transition to the new index using 2013-2014 student performance data to first run the index. This phase will include the following components: Achievement, Gap, Attendance (K-8 schools), and Graduation Rate. The performance index score will equal 90 possible points. By 2015-2016 we should have all of the necessary data elements and infrastructure to implement the second phase of the performance index. Phase II components will be added to the Phase I components to create the new performance index. This phase will include the following components: Achievement, Gap, Attendance (K-8 schools), Graduation Rate (schools with a Grade 12), Learning Gains (growth), College- and

Career-Readiness (schools with a Grade 12), Program Reviews, Effective Teachers and Leaders, and Local Indicators. Phase II components will equal 200 possible points (see Attachment #36). These indicator measures will be incorporated as the data sets mature over the two phases. A thorough analysis of the data points, calculations, and results will be conducted as we refine and strengthen our understanding of each measure's impact on the index. The state will provide information to the USDE when it is available in 2014 with regard to how the index differentiates among schools along with any changes made to the index based on running the calculations with the 2013-2014 student performance data.

The School Performance Index will be used to determine the A-F grade of the school/system. The points will be converted into the A–F grades below using a grading scale to be determined after the baseline data are collected. These points will be reported publically. As required in Alabama Act 2012-402, the grading system shall utilize the traditional A, B, C, D, or F framework.

- (1) Schools receiving a grade of “A” are making excellent progress.
- (2) Schools receiving a grade of “B” are making average progress.
- (3) Schools receiving a grade of “C” are making satisfactory progress.
- (4) Schools receiving a grade of “D” are making less than satisfactory progress.
- (5) Schools receiving a grade of “F” are failing to make adequate progress.

Beginning in Fall 2016, School Performance Index results will be used to determine Priority, Focus, and Reward Schools after a thorough analysis of the data points, calculations, and results has been completed and we have refined and strengthened our understanding of each measure's impact on the index.

The results of each measure in each component of the School Performance Index will be part of the public report. These detailed results along with every school's progress towards meeting AMOs will be used by schools, districts, and the Regional Planning Teams (RPT) to analyze areas of concern and bright spots, and for writing Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) as described later in this section. Addressing any AMO not met will be a required component of the CIP. Schools will also have the ability to drill down in the data to individual student reports.

Using the results of the individual measures as well as AMOs in subgroups from the School Performance Index across all areas including accountability calculations, public reports, differentiated support, and continuous improvement planning will result in teachers and principals identifying and addressing the needs of students in their schools, particularly students with disabilities and low-achieving students.

### **Participation**

As a means of recognizing the importance of ensuring that all students participate in the assessment program, participation rates will continue to be reported for the All Students group and each applicable ESEA subgroup. Schools will be held accountable for participation rates for the “all students” subgroup and all applicable ESEA subgroups. When a school fails to meet its 95% participation rate in the “all students” subgroup or any applicable ESEA subgroups, points will be deducted from the overall achievement category. A scale used to formulate the deduction in points will be developed once school performance index data are calculated. A thorough analysis of the data points, calculations, and results will be conducted as we refine and strengthen our understanding of each measure's impact on the index. In addition, rates will be included in the Continuous Improvement Plan as a data point. Schools with participation rates below 95% in the “all students” subgroup and all applicable ESEA subgroups must include action steps for improvement in their Continuous Improvement Plan. Schools that do not

improve the participation rate to 95% by the second year will be identified and must identify reasons by individual student for non-participation. Schools with less than 95% participation in mathematics or reading/English language arts will fail to qualify as a Reward School. Also, one of the exiting criteria for Priority and Focus Schools is 95% participation in administered assessments.

### **Alabama 2020 Support System**

The Alabama 2020 Support System is composed of program reviews, graduation rate, and attendance rate.

#### **Program Reviews**

Program reviews will be developed in Phase II of the new accountability system. They will cover areas that are typically not covered by standardized tests and could include areas such as the availability of the arts, surveys of stakeholders, etc.

#### **Attendance Rate**

Attendance for each school and district will be reported annually as a category of Alabama support systems. Attendance rates for each school and district will be reported annually for students in Grades K-8. By using Option A to reach an attendance rate using a goal of 95% by 2018, reduce the percentage of absentees by 50% (one-half) in relation to the 95% goal based on the base year.

#### **Graduation Rate**

The graduation rate for each school and district will be reported annually as a category of Alabama support systems. The graduation rate will be calculated using both four-year and five-year cohort graduation rates. Graduation rates will be disaggregated by ESEA subgroups. Targets will be established using the same methodology as used with AMOs. Graduation rate goals will increase in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each ESEA subgroup who are not proficient within six years.

### **Alabama 2020 Professionals**

The third component of Alabama’s proposed new accountability system is Alabama 2020 Professionals. EDUCATEAlabama is Alabama’s new formative teacher assessment system, and LEADAlabama is the formative assessment system for leaders in Alabama. EDUCATEAlabama includes the formative components of self-assessment, collaborative dialogue, professional learning plan, and evidence. LEADAlabama includes the formative components of self-assessment, collaborative dialogue, professional learning plan, evidence, and 360 feedback. It is the intent of the Alabama State Department of Education to meet the goal established in Plan 2020. These goals include the development and implementation of a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement and to provide research-based professional development growth opportunities for Alabama’s teachers and leaders based on their individual and collective professional learning plans. Both teachers’ and leaders’ formative and possible new summative assessments systems are described in detail in Principle 3 to be implemented into the accountability system in Phase II.

Alabama 2020 Professionals reporting will share at an aggregate level the percent of teachers and leaders meeting a benchmark score. Alabama will not report individual teacher or leader evaluation data.

The Alabama Plan 2020 includes four major components: Learners, Support Systems, Professionals, and Schools/School Systems. The Professionals component includes three objectives, namely:

- Every child is taught by a well-prepared, resourced, supported, and effective teacher.
- Every school is led by a well-prepared, resourced, supported, and effective leader.
- Every school system is led by a prepared and supported visionary instructional leader.

### **Teachers**

The Alabama standards that colleges and universities must meet to achieve approved program status and recommend program completers for initial certification in a teaching field include the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS) applicable to all teaching fields. The AQTS specify the knowledge and abilities that prospective teachers must demonstrate prior to program completion and include five major components:

1. **Content knowledge**: “To improve the learning of all students, teachers master the disciplines related to their teaching fields including the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.” Major components of this AQTS include: academic disciplines and curriculum.
2. **Teaching and learning**: “To increase the achievement of every student, teachers draw upon a thorough understanding of learning and development; recognize the role of families in supporting learning; design a student-centered learning environment; and use research-based instructional and assessment strategies that motivate, engage, and maximize the learning of all students.” Major components of this AQTS include: human development, organization and management, learning environment, instructional strategies, and assessment.
3. **Literacy**: “To improve student learning and achievement, teachers at all levels K-12 use knowledge of effective oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology to facilitate and support direct instruction, active inquiry, collaboration, and positive interaction.” Major components of this AQTS include: oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology.
4. **Diversity**: “To improve the learning of all students, teachers differentiate instruction in ways that exhibit a deep understanding of how cultural, ethnic, and social background; second language learning; special needs, exceptionalities, and learning styles affect student motivation, cognitive processing, and academic performance.” Major components of this AQTS include: cultural, ethnic, and social diversity; language diversity; special needs; learning styles; and other learner and family characteristics.
5. **Professionalism**: “To increase the achievement of all students, teachers engage in continuous learning and self-improvement; collaborate with colleagues to create and adopt research-based best practices to achieve ongoing classroom and school improvement; and adhere to the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and federal, state, and local laws and policies.”

Major components of this AQTS include: collaboration; continuous, lifelong professional learning; Alabama-specific improvement initiatives; school improvement; ethics; and local, state, and federal laws and policies.

In addition to being used with teaching field-specific standards to assess the knowledge and abilities of prospective teachers, the AQTS provide the framework for the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development. In turn, that continuum was the basis for the creation of EDUCATEAlabama, the technology-based, annual, formative assessment system implemented in 2011-2012 and available at no cost to all Alabama public school systems.

Of 134 Alabama local education agencies (LEAs), only four have chosen not to use EDUCATEAlabama during 2012-2013, electing instead to use an LEA-developed and State Department of Education (ALSDE)-approved evaluation system. Thus, almost all public school teachers in Alabama will use the same format to rate themselves at one of five levels: pre-service and beginning, emerging, applying, integrating, or innovating. Once the teacher has completed a self-evaluation early during the school year, the teacher will confer with the principal or designee to decide on the standards indicators in which the teacher will engage in professional development activities in order to improve practice to benefit students. Hundreds of professional development modules are accessible to teachers as part of the assessment system and are available at no cost to the teacher.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, each of Alabama's 11 Regional Inservice Centers (RICs) will serve as the base for a team of educators (ALSDE staff, representatives of higher education, agency personnel, and other stakeholders) whose responsibility will be to help each LEA, and/or each school within an LEA, to analyze data as a basis of deciding what type of assistance is needed. The one-size-fits-all delivery model of ALSDE and RIC service delivery will no longer exist. The services provided to LEAs and schools will be based on locally identified needs, although a major effort will be to ensure that Alabama teachers know how to implement Alabama's College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS) for mathematics beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. The CCRS for Language Arts will be a major focus for 2013-2014.

Another advantage of the technology-based EDUCATEAlabama system is that program completer data will be available to Alabama's 27 educator preparation institutions for use in evaluating and revising preparation programs based on novice teachers' identified areas of need for professional development. After Alabama decides how to measure and what weight to give to student achievement as a component of expanded teacher and instructional leader evaluation systems, that information will also be shared with Alabama's educator preparation providers.

When Alabama's standards for the approval of educator preparation programs are updated, a major area of focus will be to ensure the preparation of new teachers to address the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards. Another focus will be the EDUCATEAlabama data on teachers' perceived areas of need.

### **Instructional Leaders**

Current Alabama standards for the initial preparation of instructional leaders include knowledge and abilities spread across eight major components:

1. Planning for continuous improvement
2. Teaching and learning
3. Human resource development
4. Diversity
5. Community and stakeholder relationships
6. Technology
7. Management of the learning organization
8. Ethics

In the same manner that the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development is based on the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards, Alabama's Continuum for Instructional Leader Development is based on Alabama's Standards for Instructional Leaders. That continuum, in turn, served as the basis for the development of LEADAlabama, the technology-based, annual, formative instructional leader assessment system to be implemented in 2012-2013 and available at no cost to all Alabama public school systems. The same procedures will be followed in terms of self-assessment, followed by a conference, the development of a professional learning plan, and the availability of professional development modules. The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) is a component of LEADAlabama. VAL-ED will provide teacher perceptions of principal leadership as part of the full leader evaluation system. Data will be accessible to the 13 institutions that prepare instructional leaders as a basis for program evaluation and improvement.

### **Alabama 2020 Schools and Systems (Local Indicator)**

In Phase II each local district will have the opportunity to declare one local indicator with an AMO that is unique to that district and is part of its Continuous Improvement Plans. The Alabama State Department of Education will review and approve local indicators. Beginning in 2015-2016 each district will be required to report data on its local indicator. The district must use at least one indicator declared for at least three years with yearly AMOs. After three years, the district may change the indicator if its Continuous Improvement Plan indicates a new indicator and target. A district may declare more than one local indicator (examples include an exemplary arts program, a foreign language academy, an increase in AP participation, an increase in National Board for Professional Teaching Standards teachers). Local indicator data will be collected and monitored through the accountability portal.

### **District Reporting**

We propose to classify districts using the same factors as used to classify schools starting in Fall 2016. Alabama believes that the district should be the entry point for the state's accountability and assistance work and not the school. The state's focus should be on building the district's capacity to support and guide improvement efforts in individual schools. A strong accountability system is not enough to ensure continuous improvement. However, when it comes to interventions and supports, one size does not fit all. An accurate and comprehensive on-site assessment/instructional audit of the lowest performing districts will determine precise strategies for improvement and support. Differentiated support will be based on the districts' priorities as determined from a review and analysis of each school's continuous improvement plan and the on-site assessment/instructional audit. Alabama is committed to moving away from the "one-size fits all" method required under NCLB.

	Achievement	Gap	Learning Gains	College- and Career-Readiness	Attendance	Graduation Rate
District	Tests: Reading and Mathematics and End-of-Course Tests*	Tests: Reading and Mathematics and Graduation Rate	Tests: Reading and Mathematics	College- or Career-Ready Indicator	Attendance Rate	Cohort Model

\* End-of-Course tests in 2013-2014 include Algebra I and English 10.

**Public Reporting**

The Alabama State Department of Education will publish each school’s annual measurable objectives (AMOs) and whether they were met on an annual basis. As part of a system of accountability and performance metrics, these targets will help schools, districts, and community stakeholders more fully understand the performance of the schools by identifying both strengths and areas of improvement (see Principle 2.B. for additional information on AMOs).

Alabama is currently partnering with the Alabama Supercomputer Authority to develop a new state accountability reporting data system. This system will build upon the recently implemented statewide student management system and the Alabama State Department of Education data warehouse system. Alabama’s goal is to report all data in a way that makes the information transparent, understandable, accessible, and useful. Through authentication, districts, schools, and teachers will have access to student-level data through a series of reports.

Data that is currently available on [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu) will be enhanced to include all areas of the new accountability system. Users can disaggregate data in myriad ways using data for the past eight years. The inclusion of additional indicators will add even more measures for disaggregation and research. The department’s website, [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu), is also undergoing a reimagining to be more user-friendly so data are easier to find for the user.

All schools, Title I and non-Title I, are eligible to be Reward, Priority, or Focus Schools. All schools will be placed on the same distribution scale; however, the reports will be generated that show Title I and non-Title I Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools.

The new Alabama Plan 2020 uses multiple indicators to measure progress in the areas of Alabama’s Learners, Alabama’s Support Systems, Alabama’s Professionals, and Alabama’s Schools/Systems to determine a single school performance index. This single school performance index will be the trigger for recognition and support for schools and districts. The overall number incorporates a robust set of success factors but remains strongly focused on the learning gains of individual students.

The new state accountability system will be incorporated into the plan required by Act 2012-402 passed by the Alabama Legislature so there is one system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support. Act 2012-402 requires the State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and district performance and to create the Legislative School Performance Recognition Program (see Attachment 20).

This system will utilize a traditional A–F grading system to give parents, educators, and students an easy-to-understand system for comprehending student performance. At the same time, the grading system will provide an awareness of school performance in local communities throughout the state.

The new state accountability system will prompt all stakeholders to ask difficult questions about increasing academic achievement and raising instructional quality within Alabama’s schools. An Accountability Delivery Plan will be developed that focuses on the implementation of the new ESEA Flexibility that will include the following:

1. Recognizing and embracing “collective ownership of the problems/struggles/achievements of public schools” by entire communities.
2. Increasing the transparency of the accountability system so that all stakeholders have access to and an understanding of the metrics utilized to measure system, school, and student success.
3. Creating professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders aligned with and descriptive of the new accountability system.

### **Recognition, Support, and Accountability**

The goal of the ALSDE is to build capacity at the district and school level to engage in continual improvement practices that impact student achievement, close achievement gaps, promote student growth, and increase the number of graduates that are prepared for college and career. All ALSDE efforts to support this goal will be customized for each of the districts based on their current data and capacity. There are common expectations for all districts and schools to plan for continuous improvement. However, when it comes to interventions and supports, one size does not fit all. An accurate and comprehensive on-site assessment/instructional audit of the lowest performing districts will determine precise strategies for improvement and support. This assessment will be based on the eight turnaround principles:

1. **School Leadership:** The principal has the ability to lead the turnaround effort.
2. **School Climate and Culture:** A climate conducive to learning and a culture of high expectations are evident.
3. **Effective Instruction:** Teachers utilize research-based effective instruction to meet the needs of all students.
4. **Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention System:** Teachers have the foundational documents and instructional materials needed to teach to the rigorous college- and career-ready standards that have been adopted.
5. **Effective Staffing Practices:** The district and school have skills to better recruit, retain, and develop effective teachers and school leaders.
6. **Enabling the Effective Use of Data:** There is schoolwide use of data focused on improving teaching and learning, as well as climate and culture.
7. **Effective Use of Time:** Time is designed to better meet student needs and increase teacher collaboration focused on improving teaching and learning.
8. **Effective Family and Community Engagement:** There is a system for increasing academically focused family and community engagement.

Alabama has eleven Regional Inservice Centers (RICs) that have existing relationships with all of the districts within their regions. Regional Planning Teams (RPTs) have been established in each of the RIC areas to plan with LEAs for two purposes: (1) to facilitate transition to the College- and Career-Ready Standards and (2) to provide precise and differentiated support based on district and school needs as determined by data analysis and joint planning. RPTs are composed of representatives from ALSDE sections, Regional Inservice Centers, institutions of higher education, and the Alabama Department of Children’s Affairs’ Office of School Readiness (Pre-K). Other members may be added throughout the year as needed. Differentiated support will be based on the districts’ priorities as determined from a review and analysis of each school’s continuous improvement plan and the on-site assessment/instructional audit mentioned above. The ALSDE has a combined regional support staff (RSS) of over 300 specialists/coaches. These specialists/coaches have individual expertise and experience in specific curriculum content, instruction, data analysis, leadership, engaging parents, and effective school practices. Previously, the RSS worked in initiatives in the ALSDE supporting specific programs. They have reorganized into instructional partners and will support specific schools and/or districts based on the need of the school/district matched to their areas of expertise.

The guiding principle is to work in “partnership” with districts and schools. While Alabama has had a long history of school improvement support, it has primarily been a predetermined set of actions for all school situations. Though there may have been some immediate improvement, once the external assistance was removed, the school often reappeared on the school improvement list. Alabama is seeking to provide the kind of assistance that will result in significant and sustainable improvement. Over the last six months, RPTs have participated in training on Jim Knight’s *Unmistakable Impact*, which outlines the partnership principles that have proven to be effective in working with schools and districts to sustain improvement efforts. Alabama recognizes that transparency of practices and data are imperative for change. Transparency occurs when there is a trusting relationship. This partnership approach to designing, supporting, and monitoring school improvement efforts will foster trust and transparency. The Differentiated Support Component of the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan is found in Attachment 12.

### **Priority Schools**

Priority Schools will be those schools that are the lowest performing schools in the state. The following will be used to identify Priority Schools:

- All SIG Tier 1 and 2 schools
- All schools with a Graduation Rate of less than 60% for the All Students group using 2012 data
- Schools with the lowest ranking achievement that have not shown progress (2010 to 2012)
- Schools will be selected until at least 5% of Title I schools are named.

When a Priority School is identified, the RPT will meet with the LEA to make a plan for gathering the data and information needed to make an informed decision about the appropriate improvement model to be selected. This collaborative effort will include a multi-day, on-site assessment/instructional audit related to the eight turnaround principles, a review of the feeder schools’ data to determine whether a feeder pattern intervention is needed as opposed to a single school intervention, and a more in-depth review of the school’s data. Recent school improvement research from Leithwood and Harris (2010) indicates the importance of recognition of the interdependence between the elementary and secondary schools that serve the same families. Alabama has some experience in working with feeder patterns in which one or more of

the schools were considered low performing. The process to work with Priority Schools will build from that experience and include an assessment of the feeder schools. The RPT will review models of school improvement that reflect the eight turnaround principles with district leadership and feeder pattern leadership. These models will not be one size fits all and will be customized to meet the specific needs and priorities of the schools.

The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is the means for collecting, reviewing, and prioritizing data and needs. The Continuous Improvement Leadership Teams that include teachers and administrators will develop 30-60-90 day plans to address immediate concerns from the results of the individual measures as well as AMOs for the All Students group and each applicable ESEA subgroup from the School Performance Index. The teams will be able to use the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST) process to develop long-range plans that include strategies for measuring levels of implementation and impact on student learning. ASSIST is an electronic planning and monitoring process supported by the Southern Accreditation for Colleges and Schools (SACS). Once the specific and precise intervention strategies are determined by the collaborative planning of the RPT and LEA, then appropriate Regional Support Staff (RSS) will be assigned to the district and/or schools. RSS will be assigned based on the identified needs of the district and/or schools matched with the expertise and skills of the RSS. A three-year commitment of support and monitoring will be required and the plan will be adjusted each year based on data and evaluation.

### **Focus Schools**

Focus Schools are any school with a gap index score that falls within the lowest 10% of the Title I schools and any school with a within-school/state achievement gap that is among the largest gap between the All Students group and lowest performing subgroup. Schools are selected from this list until at least 10% of the Title I schools in the state have been identified. Non-Title I schools with comparable gap indexes will receive the same level of support and intervention as the Title schools identified.

When a Focus School is identified, the RPT will meet with the LEA to gather the data and information needed to make a plan that includes precise and strategic actions and support. These are schools that do not require a schoolwide change but rather need to focus services to specific ESEA subgroups. Intervention strategies are student-focused and aligned to the needs of the individual students represented in the subgroup. This collaborative effort will include a multi-day, on-site assessment/instructional audit related to the eight turnaround principles, a review of the feeder schools' data to determine whether a feeder pattern intervention is needed as opposed to a single school intervention, and a more in depth review of the school's data. The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is the means for collecting, reviewing, and prioritizing data and needs. The Continuous Improvement Leadership Teams that include teachers and administrators will develop 30-60-90 day plans to address immediate concerns and will be able to use the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST) process to develop long-range plans that include strategies for measuring levels of implementation and impact on student learning. Once the specific and precise intervention strategies are determined by the collaborative planning of the RPT and LEA, then appropriate Regional Support Staff (RSS) will be assigned to the district and/or schools. RSS will be assigned based on the identified needs of the district matched with the expertise and skills of the RSS.

**Reward Schools**

Recognition of effective practices that produce results is critical to the sustainability of improvement efforts. Schools will be identified for specific improvement results such as student growth, closing the achievement gap, and increasing the number of prepared graduates. These Reward Schools will receive a monetary award (if funds are allocated by the state legislature) and be deemed a demonstration site for other schools. The teachers and administrators at the Reward Schools will be tapped to lead professional learning in their areas of expertise for other educators throughout the region and state. Reward Schools will also provide a site for RPT and RSS professional learning.

**Maximum Impact of Differentiated Support**

To make maximum impact, Alabama is requesting a waiver of the following:

- Components in NCLB, Section 1116, including the processes associated with the identification of school districts and Title I schools for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring if they fail to make AYP for the specified number of years; the requirement that 1003(a) funds may only be used for schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring; and the requirements regarding how 1003(a) funding may be used.
- Limitations of participation in and use of Title VI REAP funds related to school improvement.
- The requirement that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program.
- The restrictions on the use of rewards funding.

These waivers will allow Alabama the flexibility to combine:

- 1003(a) funds.
- The 20% of the local Title I allocation previously reserved for Supplemental Education Services (SES) and transportation funding.
- Any other available federal funds in accordance with the requirements of those programs.

This will allow services such as:

- Focusing on greater individualization of school plans and differentiation of support as determined through the planning and monitoring tool and on-site assessment/instructional audit.
- Incentivizing and spotlighting effective practices that produce results by identifying and targeting rewards schools as demonstration sites for Priority and Focus Schools.
- Providing additional training and support of teachers and leaders in sustaining change and improvement efforts.
- Supplementing the availability of an electronic formative assessment system that is an integral part of the improvement efforts.

Other activities specifically focused on improving the performance of English language learners and students with disabilities can be found in the Delivery Plan in Attachment 13. EL Coaches will work with districts not making Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) on data analysis, CIP development, and targeted improvement. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, Alabama will provide Teacher Compass Suite to AMAO Improvement districts and one to each district statewide. Teacher Compass Suite is designed to increase the academic language

and content achievement of ELs and struggling students. The suite is aligned to Alabama's WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, the Common Core Standards, and research-based instructional strategies to improve academic language and content knowledge of English language learners.

The ASSIST tool will provide a quality planning and monitoring process for districts and schools. Also, it will provide information that will assist the Regional Planning Team in identifying possible professional learning and resources to allow for more individualized and differentiated services to schools and districts. These will be determined through a collaborative process to ensure district ownership and thus increase the likelihood of sustainability. This data will also inform the training and professional learning for the Regional Planning Team members and the Regional Support Staff.

Alabama's Response to Instruction (RTI) process can be found in Attachment 21. Alabama is committed to embedding RTI into the instructional process so that it becomes a regular part of instruction. Professional learning for RTI has been provided and will continue to be a focus in the RIC areas. Intervention strategies for these groups of students will be monitored through the ASSIST tool.

Alabama will use the flexibility to target efforts and differentiate services as well as build capacity of the districts and schools through the RPTs and RSS. Teacher and leader effectiveness will be a focus, and high-quality professional learning will facilitate efforts toward this goal. Alabama believes strongly in building the capacity of districts through a partnership approach to planning, supporting, and monitoring improvement efforts. Student learning is the ultimate goal and will be monitored regularly during this process. A state-funded electronic formative assessment system will be available to all systems in the 2012-2013 school year. All Priority Schools and Focus Schools will be required to use the formative assessment system to monitor the impact of strategies and efforts on student learning. RPTs will review the results with the districts three times during the year. RSS will review the results at more frequent intervals to continue to differentiate services and support.

The timeline below depicts action steps supporting the development and implementation of the new Accountability Model relative to Principle 2.

<b><i>Milestone or Activity</i></b>	<b><i>Detailed Timeline</i></b>	<b><i>Parties Responsible</i></b>
Met with Identified Assessment and Accountability Task Force that was Appointed by the Alabama State Board of Education	September 29, 2011, October 12, 2011, November 2, 2011, and December 14, 2011	Alabama State Superintendent of Education
Capacity Review	February 28-29, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Delivery Organizational Meeting	March 7, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
College- and Career-Ready Delivery Chains Discussion	April 11, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Delivery Routines and Listening	April 25, 2012	Research Information and Data

Post		Services
Delivery Overview and Input Meeting with Regional Teams	May 23, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
AMO Waiver Public Comment	May 4, 2012- May 8, 2012	Alabama State Superintendent of Education
AMO Waiver Approval	May 31, 2012	Alabama State Board of Education
Passing of Act 2012-402 (School Grading System)	May 2012	Alabama Legislatures
Supporting Increased Graduation Rate Listening Post	June 5, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
College- and Career-Readiness Work Session and Listening Post	June 8, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Supporting Increased Graduation Rate Delivery Chains Discussion	June 12, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Alabama Super Computer Partnership Meeting	June 19, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
College- and Career-Readiness Work Session and Listening Post	June 26, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Final Input for College- and Career-Readiness Delivery Plan	July 5-6, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
SBE Presentation: College- and Career-Readiness Delivery Plan	July 10, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Data and Accountability Meetings with Regional Teams	July 30, 2012- August 2, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Development of A-F Framework with Committee of Stakeholders	December 2012	Alabama State Superintendent of Education
<b>2012-2013</b>		
Meet with Stakeholders	On-Going	Alabama State Department of Education
ALSDE Tech Conference Solicited Feedback	June 13, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
ALSDE Mega Conference Solicited Feedback	July 20, 2012	Research Information and Data Services
Public Comment Solicited for ESEA Flexibility Request	August 7, 2012- August 21, 2012	Alabama State Superintendent of Education
Applied for ESEA Flexibility Request	September 5, 2012	Alabama State Superintendent of Education
Hold Meetings with Identified Assessment and Accountability Task Force Members for School Grading	November 1, 2012, November 14, 2012, November 29, 2012 and Continuous	Alabama State Superintendent of Education
Alabama Super Computer Meeting for New Data Collection/Accountability System	On-Going	Research Information and Data Services
Priority Schools Named	Summer 2013	Research Information and Data

		Services
Focus Schools Named	Summer 2013	Research Information and Data Services
Torchbearer Reward Schools Named	Fall 2013	Research Information and Data Services, and Teaching and Learning
<b>2013-2014</b>		
Priority/Focus Schools from Fall 2013 (no new schools named)	Fall 2014	Research Information and Data Services, and Teaching and Learning
Torchbearer Reward Schools Determined and Named	Fall 2014	Research Information and Data Services, and Teaching and Learning
Baseline Data-Phase I Data Points Established	Fall 2014	Research Information and Data Services, and Teaching and Learning
Set AMOs Under New Accountability Model	Fall 2014	Research Information and Data Services
Beginning Phase II: School Performance Index will consist of Achievement, Gap, Attendance, College- and Career-Readiness, Graduation Rate, Learning Gains, Program Reviews, Effective Teachers and Leaders Evaluation, and Local Indicators.	Fall 2015	Research Information and Data Services, and Teaching and Learning
Annual Public Reports Required by USDOE	Fall/Winter 2015-2016	Research Information and Data Services
<b>2015-2016</b>		
Full Implementation: School Performance Index will consist of Achievement, Gap, Attendance, College- and Career-Readiness, Graduation Rate, Learning Gains, Program Reviews, Effective Teachers and Leaders Evaluation, and Local Indicators.	Fall 2016	Research Information and Data Services, and Teaching and Learning
Public Reports for Phase II Data Points	Fall 2016	Research Information and Data Services
New Priority Schools Determined and Named	Fall 2016	Research Information and Data Services
New Priority Districts Determined and Named	Fall 2016	Research Information and Data Services
New Focus Schools Determined and Named	Fall 2016	Research Information and Data Services
Reward Schools Named Under New Criteria	Fall 2016	Research Information and Data Services and Teaching and Learning
Annual Public Reports Required by USDOE	Fall/Winter 2016-2017	Research Information and Data Services

- 2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	<p>a. <input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must:</p> <p>b.</p> <p>c. provide the percentage of students in the “all students” group that performed at the proficient level on the State’s most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and</p> <p>d. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.</p>

Insert text for Option B here.

**2.B Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives**

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p>	<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.</p> <p>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.</p> <p>ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below.</p> <p>iii. Provide a link to the State’s report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2011–2012 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)</p>
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The methodology used to set AMO targets will be Option A. AMOs will increase in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the “all students” group and in each ESEA subgroup that is not proficient within six years.

Attachment 27 displays AMOs for reading/language arts and mathematics (Grades 3-8 and high school) and the Four-Year cohort graduation rate. Alabama will use the AMOs submitted in Attachment 27 as the AMOs for reporting against in Grades 3-8 and high school for

assessments administered in the 2012-2013 school year. In the fall of 2013, Alabama will report (met/not met) against these AMOs by ESEA subgroup in each school, including students in Grades 3-8 and high school, using 2011-2012 as the baseline for 2012-2013 targets at the school and district levels using targets identified in Attachment 27.

The new high school assessments will be administered in the 2012-2013 school year. In the fall of 2013 baseline data from these assessments will be used to establish the AMOs for high school grades to begin implementation in the 2013-2014 school year. New assessments will be administered in Grades 3-8 in the 2013-2014 school year. Unlike the high school grades, the baseline data for Grades 3-8 will not be established until the fall of 2014 using 2013-2014 assessment results. For this reason the state average will be used to report AMOs for Grades 3-8 in the 2013-2014 school year.

All baselines for AMOs will be established for all grades by fall 2014. See the chart below.

GRADES	YEAR TEST ADMINISTERED	AMO BASELINE	AMOS IN YEAR TEST ADMINISTERED	TEST
3-8	2012-2013	2011-2012	Cut the gap in ½ method	Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT+)
	2013-2014	2013-2014	Use state average for reporting met/not met	ACT Aspire
	2014-2015	2013-2014	Cut the gap in ½ method	ACT Aspire
	2015-2016	2013-2014	Cut the gap in ½ method	ACT Aspire
	2016-2017	2013-2014	Cut the gap in ½ method	ACT Aspire
	2017-2018	2013-2014	Cut the gap in ½ method	ACT Aspire
High School	2012-2013	2011-2012	Cut the gap in ½ method	Alabama High School Graduation Exam
	2013-2014	2012-2013	Cut the gap in ½ method	Algebra I; English 10
	2014-2015	2012-2013	Cut the gap in ½ method	Algebra I; English 10
	2015-2016	2012-2013	Cut the gap in ½ method	Algebra I; English 10
	2016-2017	2012-2013	Cut the gap in ½ method	Algebra I; English 10
	2017-2018	2012-2013	Cut the gap in ½ method	Algebra I; English 10

AMOs will be set for the state and individually by districts and schools. Alabama will report

AMOs by ESEA subgroup at the state, district, and school levels including students in Grades 3-8 and high school.

In alignment with current practices for reporting, any subgroup results will be noted as ID (insufficient data) if the N-size does not meet or exceed 20.

Insert text for Option C here.

## 2.C Reward Schools

2.C.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

The new state accountability system includes the requirements of Act 2012-402 recently passed by the Alabama Legislature so there is one system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support. Act 2012-402 requires the State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and district performance and to create the Legislative School Performance Recognition Program.

### **Identification of Reward Schools**

Alabama’s letter grade system based on the School Performance Index will be an effective measure for communicating school and district performance. As part of the School Performance Index, the emphasis on the new learning gains measure will produce information to drive the state’s recognition and rewards of schools.

Reward Schools will be identified using the existing Torchbearer Reward School criteria for Fall 2013. Beginning Fall 2016, Reward Schools will be identified using the new Reward criteria that includes the use of the school performance index. See criteria below.

Determination of Torchbearer Reward Schools, Fall of 2013:

- Not a Priority School.
- Not a Focus School.
- Have at least 95% Participation Rate in the “all students” subgroup and all applicable ESEA subgroups.
- Have a Graduation Rate above the state average.
- Be in existence at the time of the award.
- Have at least 80% poverty rate (percent free/reduced meals).
- Have above state average of students scoring Level IV on both the reading and the mathematics sections of the ARMT+.
- Have at least 95% of Grade 12 students pass all required subjects of the AHSGE.
- Must be among the top 20% band of the state using proficiency of ARMT+, AHSGE, and Alabama Alternate Assessment from 2012-13 for Level III and for Level IV.

The following process will be applied:

The following criteria will be used to determine eligibility for Torchbearer Reward Schools. If a school meets all the criteria below, it will become a Torchbearer School.

Using the 2012 and 2013 assessment databases;

1. Eliminate all Priority Schools.
2. Eliminate Focus Schools.
3. Eliminate all schools with less than 95% Participation Rate for the “all student” and ESEA subgroups.
4. Eliminate all schools with a Graduation Rate below the state average.
5. Eliminate all schools that are not in existence.
6. Eliminate all schools with a poverty rate less than 80% (poverty rate—percent free/reduced meals).
7. Eliminate all schools that do not have an average above the state average of students scoring Level IV on both the reading and the mathematics sections of the ARMT+.
8. Eliminate all schools with less than 95% of Grade 12 students passing all required subjects of the AHSGE.
9. Eliminate all schools below the top 20% band of the state using proficiency of ARMT+, AHSGE, and Alabama Alternate Assessment from 2012-13 for Level III and Level IV>

For the fall of 2014 and 2015 Torchbearer Schools will be named based upon the same process used for determination in Fall 2013 with the exception of the assessment results. The Aspire and end-of-course tests will be used in place of the ARMT+ and AHSGE.

Beginning in Fall 2016, Reward Schools shall be:

1. High Performing Schools—Schools that have demonstrated high performance (using the School Performance Index) over a period of three years.  
Schools that are ranked “High Performing” must demonstrate high performance in the “all students” subgroup and all of its ESEA subgroups.  
High schools must also maintain a graduation rate that is among the highest of Title I schools.  
A school with an achievement gap that is not closing in a school may not be classified as a “High Performing School.”  
A list of schools meeting the “High Performing Schools” definition will be generated. Scores will be rank ordered from top to bottom.  
Schools will be selected until at least 5% of Title I schools in the state have been identified. A school must meet AMOs for the “all students” group and the ESEA subgroups with an n-count of 20 or more. A school may not be a Priority or Focus School.
2. High Progress Schools—Schools that have demonstrated the most progress in improving the performance of the “all students” subgroup over a period of three years.  
  
A school with an achievement gap that is not closing, may not be classified as a “High Progress School.”  
High schools must also make the most progress in increasing graduation rates.  
A school must meet AMOs for the “all students” group and the ESEA subgroups with an n-count of 20 or more. A school may not be a Priority or Focus School. A list of schools meeting the “High Progress Schools” definition will be generated. Scores will

be rank ordered from top to bottom based on improvement. Schools will be selected until at least 10% of Title I schools in the state have been identified.

All Reward Schools must maintain a participation rate of 95% or higher in the “all students” subgroup and all applicable ESEA subgroups.

Reward Schools will be named in the Fall of 2013 using the existing Torchbearer Reward criteria. Fall 2014 and Fall 2015 Reward Schools will be named using this same criteria with the new assessments and proficiency measures. The full implementation of the School Performance Index will be implemented in 2015-2016. Therefore, Reward Schools will be named Fall 2016 under the new criteria listed above. .

2.C.ii Provide the SEA’s list of reward schools in Table 2. (Did the SEA’s request identify both highest-performing and high-progress schools as part of its first set of identified reward schools? (Table 2)

See Attachment #24.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

The recognition and, if applicable, rewards proposed by the ALSDE for its High Performing and High Progress schools will be released and published in accordance with the methods and procedures for public notifications. The requirements of Act 2012-402, recently passed by the Alabama Legislature, provide for one system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support. Act 2012-402 requires the ALSDE State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and district performance and to create the Legislative School Performance Program.

Recognition for districts and/or schools will include:

1. Promotion of announcement with statewide media.
2. Special Certificate of Recognition.
3. Prominent display on the ALSDE Web site.
4. Recognition as a demonstration site.
5. Opportunity to provide mentoring to low-performing schools.
6. Recognition as a “best practice” school.
7. Increased opportunities to serve on teams and committees.
8. Financial Rewards (subject to availability of funds).
9. A state-approved Web logo that reflects the category of recognition.

## 2.D Priority Schools

2.D.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State’s Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

**Identification of Priority**

In the Summer of 2013 the following will be used to identify Priority Schools:

1. All SIG Tier 1 and 2 schools.
2. All schools with a Graduation Rate of less than 60% (using 2012 data).
3. Schools with the lowest ranking achievement that have not shown progress (2010 to 2012).
4. Schools will be selected until at least 5% of Title I schools are named.

The following process will be applied:

1. Use the AYP after appeals database for 2010, 2011, and 2012.
2. Determine the bottom 5% of Alabama schools utilizing the following rules:
  - Determine the number of students scoring in Levels 3 and 4 for both reading and mathematics in 2010, 2011, and 2012.
  - Determine the number of students who participated in the test for 2010, 2011, and 2012.
  - Use the number of students that scored in Levels 3 and 4 as the numerator and the number of students that participated in the assessments as the denominator
  - Take the three-year average percentages and rank-order them from highest to lowest
  - Indicate the bottom 5% cutoff based upon the number of schools ranked (minimum of 47 Title I schools)

In Fall 2016 Priority schools will be the classification for:

1. Any school that is a Tier I or Tier II school improvement grant (SIG) school as of September 30, 2012, if applicable.
  2. Any school with a graduation rate of less than 60% for two or more consecutive years.
- OR**
3. The lowest ranking scores using the School/District Performance Index so that at least 5% of the Title I schools are classified as Priority based on achievement and lack of progress.  
Schools are selected from this list until at least 5% of the Title I schools are classified as Priority.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2?

See Attachment 24 for Priority School list.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

The goal of the ALSDE is to build capacity at the district and school level to engage in continual improvement practices that impact student achievement, close achievement gaps, promote student growth, and increase the number of graduates that are prepared for college and careers. All ALSDE efforts to support this goal will be customized for each of the districts based on their current data and capacity. There are common expectations for all districts and schools

to plan for continuous improvement. However, when it comes to interventions and supports, one size does not fit all. An accurate and comprehensive on-site assessment/instructional audit of the lowest-performing districts will determine precise strategies for improvement and support.

### **Priority Schools**

Upon identification as a Priority School, a comprehensive assessment/instructional audit will be conducted through a multi-day on-site instructional review process. A summary report that outlines the results of the comprehensive assessment will be shared with the school leaders following the on-site visit.

The intervention process for Priority Schools mirrors the process outlined in the *Code of Alabama (1975)*. The *Code of Alabama (1975)*, 16-6B-3 (Attachment 30), requires the State Superintendent of Education to designate a team of practicing professionals to visit the school, conduct a study, consult with parents of students in the school, analyze causes of poor student achievement, and make specific recommendations that shall become a part of a school improvement plan for the succeeding year. In some instances, Priority Schools may not make the necessary progress after full implementation of the interventions described. When a school fails to make improvement after a three-year period, the State Superintendent of Education may intervene and assume the direct management and day-to-day operation of the school. The State Superintendent and/or senior leadership staff from the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will meet with the school and district leadership team to identify specific intensive actions to be taken and to develop a 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day plan for those actions. Outside consultants will be assigned as needed to assist with the development and implementation of the plan. Demographic studies, facility utilization evaluation, feeder pattern studies, and partnerships with outside entities with proven success in school turnaround are examples of actions that will be taken to guide development and implementation of intensive and systemic improvement plans.

The results of this multi-day, on-site assessment/instructional audit will provide information that will be considered to determine whether the school and district have the capacity to lead the intervention process. The ALSDE is committed to providing the level of intervention needed to ensure students have an optimal learning environment.

The intervention process is managed through the 11 Regional Inservice Centers. They are located throughout the state at institutions of higher education (IHEs) to provide local support and professional learning. A Regional Planning Team (RPT) has been established in each of the 11 regions. RPTs are composed of representatives from ALSDE sections; Regional Inservice Centers; institutions of higher education; and the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs, Office of School Readiness (pre-K). Training has begun for a core group of turnaround specialists to assist each of the RPTs in planning with the Priority Schools.

An on-site comprehensive assessment/instructional audit will be conducted upon identification as a priority school. Audit results that outline the specific needs of the school will be shared with stakeholders following the on-site visit so that precise strategies, resources, and support can be identified and activated. The RPT along with a member of the School Turnaround Team will plan with the district to identify gaps in foundational elements that can be addressed fairly quickly. These "quick fixes" will be reflected in 30-60-90 day plans. Concurrently, a broader range of stakeholders/partners will engage in a deeper study to begin thinking innovatively about the school and feeder pattern and the ideal vision for the school and community. This collaborative effort will include a review of the feeder schools' data to determine whether a

feeder pattern intervention is needed as opposed to a single school intervention. This inclusive approach addresses immediate needs during the 2013-2014 school year while planning for full implementation of interventions aligned with the turnaround principles during the 2014-2015 school year. The ALSDE is committed to working in partnership with districts and schools to provide customized support of innovative continuous improvement practices. The RPT will review models of school improvement that reflect the eight turnaround principles (listed in 2.A.i.) with district, school, and feeder school leaders. These models will be customized to meet the specific needs and priorities of the schools. Differentiated support will be based on the districts' priorities as determined from a review and analysis of each school's continuous improvement plan and the on-site assessment/instructional audit mentioned above. The ALSDE has a combined regional support staff (RSS) of over 300 specialists/coaches. These specialists/coaches have individual expertise and experience in specific curriculum content, instruction, data analysis, leadership, engaging parents, and effective school practices. Previously, the RSS worked within initiatives in the ALSDE supporting specific programs. The RSS have reorganized into instructional partners and will support specific schools and/or districts based on the need of the school/district matched to their areas of expertise.

The table below includes some proposed research-based interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that Priority Schools may implement to meet their specific needs and priorities.

Intervention Strategies for Priority Schools	
Turnaround Principle	Strategic Interventions
School Leadership	Provide building administrators the authority and autonomy to hire and manage teacher placement, budget, and school schedule; review the performance of the current principal to determine if the principal has a track record of improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; replace current principal if indicated; and connect the principal with a mentor
School Climate and Culture	Implement a culturally responsive support system to improve safety, discipline, attendance, and other non-academic factors such as social, emotional, and health needs of all students
Effective Instruction	Implement rigorous core instruction aligned with CCRS; implement differentiated instruction for all students based on individual needs; use instructional coaches to provide support for research-based instructional strategies
Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention System	Align curriculum, resources, and assessments with CCRS; implement research-based instructional strategies; use formative assessments to guide instruction; provide appropriate interventions to meet the needs of all students
Effective Staffing Practices	Recruit and hire effective leaders and staff; evaluate the strengths and areas of need of current staff; provide effective PD aligned with the school improvement process; establish a comprehensive system to support teachers with content, pedagogy, and implementation of CCRS; establish a comprehensive system to support teachers struggling with meeting the instructional needs of students with disabilities, low achievement, and ELS; realign and retain staff as needed
Enabling the Effective Use of Data	Utilize data to make instructional and curricular decisions; use data to identify and prioritize needs; provide PD on analyzing and using data to inform instruction and provide collaborative time for review

	and use of data
Effective Use of Time	Design and/or redesign time to meet individual student needs and increase time for learning; provide time for teacher collaboration focused on improving teaching and learning
Effective Family and Community Engagement	Hold community meetings to review school performance; discuss the school interventions to be implemented; complete school improvement plans in line with the intervention model; collect perception surveys; engage parents, family, and community in the school learning process with a focus on academic achievement for all students

In addition to the more general research-based interventions included above, the ALSDE provides specific supports and professional development aligned with the turnaround principles to address the needs of all students. Additionally, the ALSDE ensures that targeted support opportunities are provided to ESEA subgroups typically associated with high risk (i.e., English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students) whose needs are often not adequately met in Priority Schools.

School Climate and Culture:

- Alabama educators are trained on and have access to Positive Behavior Supports, a collection of strategies that emphasize a schoolwide system of support that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments.

Effective Instruction:

- State reading coaches and instructional partners are trained to be instructional coaches of effective instructional strategies and best practices for all content in every grade.
- Alabama educators are trained on and have access to *Makes Sense Strategies* (MSS) software that provides strategies designed for use in diverse-ability classrooms and reflects an extensive body of evidence-based scientific research on pedagogy.
- A 2010-2011 pilot by the Alabama State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) provided job-embedded professional development and coaching for special education and general education teachers in an Alabama district feeder pattern. Student performance was significantly impacted by this collaborative pilot and is being replicated in other feeder patterns in Alabama.
- Districts are required to select a research-based core EL program based on student needs; teachers in all academic areas understand the core EL program and are trained on research-based EL instructional strategies; teachers are trained on the WIDA Standards so they can use them at the ELs’ language proficiency level to make content comprehensible; teachers use EL accommodations at the students’ specific language proficiency levels during lesson delivery to review and assess learning.

Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention System:

- A resource for professional development, *Models of Collaboration: Elementary, Middle and High School*, offers training and demonstration modules for districts to use to provide training for collaborative/co-teaching teams of general and special education teachers on delivering instruction using the five common co-teaching models. The focus on this professional development is to improve instruction for students with disabilities in the regular classroom setting and to ensure that all students have access to the general education curriculum with appropriate supports and services.

- The ALSDE Instructional Strategies Project (ISP) is designed to be the tiered instruction model that is central to Alabama’s Response to Instruction (RtI) implementation that provides resources and support to positively impact instruction across all grade spans and content areas for all children. This process makes the strategic thinking behind effective instruction visible. Student engagement and formative assessment are the pillars of the lesson framework.
- Response to Instruction (RtI) is Alabama’s core support for all students. RtI uses the four core RtI Principles to ensure high-quality instruction:
  1. Students receive high-quality, research-based instruction by qualified staff in their general education setting.
  2. Use of a multi-tiered model of service delivery facilitates differentiated instruction and early intervening services for struggling learners.
  3. Movement between tiers should be guided by a data-driven decision-making process.
  4. Universal screening and progress monitoring are the basis for instructional decisions.
- Global Scholar and ACT QualityCore formative assessment instruments are available from the ALSDE to inform instruction and assist teachers in meeting the needs of all students.

External providers can sometimes offer specific support that Priority Schools may find of benefit when planning for school improvement. Partnerships among external entities to obtain technical assistance, professional development, management advice, data analysis support, and any other support that will help address school and district needs are retained.

The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is the means for compiling, reviewing, and prioritizing data and needs. The Continuous Improvement Leadership Teams that include teachers and administrators will develop 30-60-90 day plans to address immediate concerns and will be able to use the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST) process to develop long-range plans that include strategies for measuring levels of implementation and impact on student learning. Alabama has had a continuous improvement planning process in place for many years, and the schools and districts are accustomed to this process. Modules to support the development of the different elements of the CIP are available on the Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) Web site at <http://alex.state.al.us>. The RPT will use this planning process with the districts to analyze data, identify areas of priority, and develop specific strategies for improvement. Common requirements of the CIP are:

- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of student achievement, student growth, culture, and climate data.
- Aligning curricular targets to the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards.
- Establishing time for teachers to collaborate on student progress, assessment results, and recommended instructional modifications.
- Identifying professional learning opportunities based on the identified needs reflected in the data.
- Engaging family and community.
- Developing goals and strategies to target areas of need for students and teachers.
- Addressing non-academic factors including safety and discipline.
- Identifying resources and technical assistance needed to accomplish goals.

Once the precise intervention strategies are determined by the collaborative planning of the RPT and district, then appropriate Regional Support Staff (RSS) will immediately be assigned to the district and/or schools. RSS will focus support on the 30-60-90 day plans. The RPT and district will meet regularly throughout the year to assess progress and make adjustments. The

long-range plans (ASSIST) will be reviewed regularly in order to adjust and revise strategies. A three-year commitment will be required in order to build capacity and ensure sustainability. The plan will be adjusted each year based on data and evaluation.

### **Priority Districts**

Priority Districts will be named beginning in Fall 2016.

Priority District will be the classification for:

1. Districts with the lowest ranking District Performance Index Score and have demonstrated a lack of progress.
2. Any district with a graduation rate of less than 60% for two or more consecutive years.

Districts are selected from this list until at least 5% are classified as Priority.

The intervention process for Priority Districts mirrors the process outlined in the *Code of Alabama (1975)*. The *Code of Alabama (1975)*, 16-6B-3 (Attachment 30), requires the State Superintendent of Education to designate a team of practicing professionals to visit the district, conduct a study, consult with parents of students in the district, analyze causes of poor student achievement, and make specific recommendations that shall become a part of a district improvement plan for the succeeding year. In some instances, Priority Districts may not make the necessary progress after full implementation of the interventions described. When a district fails to make improvement after a three-year period, the State Superintendent of Education may intervene and assume the direct management and day-to-day operation of the district. The State Superintendent and/or senior leadership staff from the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will meet with the district leadership team to identify specific intensive actions to be taken and to develop a 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day plan for those actions. Outside consultants will be assigned as needed to assist with the development and implementation of the plan. Demographic studies, facility utilization evaluation, feeder pattern studies, and partnerships with outside entities with proven success in school turnaround are examples of actions that will be taken to guide development and implementation of intensive and systemic improvement plans.

Schools need the guidance and support of an organized and effective district governance. Priority Districts will be required to write a System Improvement Plan (SIP) using student achievement and progress data, leadership and community engagement data, and teaching and learning conditions data. ALSDE regional planning teams that have received extensive training in the partnership approach will partner with district and school leaders. The System Improvement Plan must address:

- Curriculum alignment to Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards.
- Instructional support to schools (may be in-district or from ALSDE).
- Leadership support to principals (may be in-district or from ALSDE).
- Evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor progress.
- Professional learning that reflects needs as determined by student data and teacher and leader evaluation.
- Strategies to address gaps and college/career readiness.
- Strategies to engage families and community.

During the planning process with the Regional Planning Team, the districts will be provided with examples and strategies for improvement such as:

- Redesigning the school month, day, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration.
- Organizing data for use by providing a structure and process for collecting, analyzing, communicating, and using data to improve student learning.
- Establishing a communication and feedback loop with family, community, and business partners to increase engagement in the planning and delivery of services.
- Developing organizational and management structures, procedures, and processes to facilitate school safety, discipline, and organizational effectiveness that impact student learning.

The implementation of customized support and strategies to address the needs of Priority Schools and Districts will increase the quality of instruction to all students, improve the effectiveness of leadership and teaching, decrease achievement gaps, and improve student achievement of students.

#### Proposed Priority District Exit Criteria

To exit Priority District status, a district must:

1. Rank higher than the lowest 5% of districts for two or more consecutive years (as measured by rank order on total school/district performance index score).
2. Show improvement by increasing the graduation rate to 70% or above for two consecutive years (for districts that had a graduation rate of less than 60%).
3. Maintain a participation rate of 95% or more on administered assessments.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA’s choice of timeline.

Priority Schools will be those schools that are the lowest performing schools in the state. During the 2013-2014 school year, schools identified as Priority Schools will be Tier I and II SIG schools, high schools with a graduation rate below 60% and schools with the lowest ranking achievement scores until at least 5% of Title I schools have been identified.

The ALSDE plans for early identification of Priority Schools and Districts so support and interventions can be implemented early in the school year in order to quickly respond to student learning needs. SIG schools will continue to implement their SIG models. In the event that the principal’s ability to lead the turnaround effort of a non-SIG Priority School cannot be assessed before the beginning of the school year, immediate needs will be addressed during the 2013-2014 school year while planning for full implementation of interventions aligned with the turnaround principles during the 2014-2015 school year.

The following table outlines the steps and timeline the Non-SIG Priority Schools will follow for implementation of intervention.

Timeline	Action	Person(s) Responsible
Prior to the beginning of 2013-2014 school year	Priority Schools/Districts Named	SDE Leadership
2013-2014 school year	Comprehensive Assessment/Instructional Audit; compile, review, and communicate Audit Summary Report; collaboratively develop and activate 30-60-90 day plans to address immediate needs; assess principal's ability to lead turnaround; review data of feeder schools; engage broad range of stakeholders/partners; develop Ideal vision for school and community; plan for sustainability of continuous improvement	LEA, RPT, School Turnaround Team, SDE Staff, External Providers
2014-2015 school year	Full implementation of interventions aligned with the turnaround principles; ongoing monitoring of progress; adjust and revise improvement plans as needed; focus on sustainability will be paramount	LEA, RPT, School Turnaround Team, SDE Staff, External Providers
Following implementation of 30-day plan	Evaluate progress and adjust plan as needed	Turnaround Team, RPT and LEA
Following implementation of 60-day plan	Evaluate progress and adjust plan as needed	Turnaround Team, RPT and LEA
Following implementation of 90-day plan	Evaluate progress and adjust plan as needed	Turnaround Team, RPT and LEA

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

To exit Priority School status, a school must:

1. Implement intervention services for a minimum of three consecutive years;
2. Rank higher than the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools for two or more consecutive years.
3. High schools that had a graduation rate of less than 60% must show improvement by increasing the graduation rate to 70% or above for two consecutive years.
4. Maintain a participation rate of 95% or more on administered assessments.
5. Meet or exceed the AMO goals for the “all students” subgroup for two consecutive years.

If a Priority School has failed to make significant improvement after three years:

1. The school may lose the autonomy to select and implement interventions to address the learning needs of students.
2. Changes in leaders and teachers may be made.
3. A district facilitator may be assigned to ensure that the CIP is carried out to fidelity.
4. The District and/or ALSDE may intervene in the daily operations of the school.

## 2.E Focus Schools

2.E.i Describe the SEA’s methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as “focus schools.” If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance.

### **Identification of Focus Schools**

Determination of Focus Schools Summer 2013:

- Use Graduation Rate of 2012 and improvement from 2011 for high schools.
- Use proficiency of ARMT+ and AAA from 2011-12 assessments for elementary and middle schools.

The following process will be applied.

1. Use the AYP after appeals database for 2010, 2011, and 2012.
2. Use Cohort Graduation Rate data from 2011 and 2012.
3. Within-school/state gap will be determined based on the gap between the ESEA subgroup and the “all students” subgroup.
4. Perform the following steps to determine Graduation Rate within-school/state gap:
  - a. Determine 2011 and 2012 Cohort Graduation Rate for ALL STUDENTS group and each ESEA subgroup. Then perform the following calculations:
    - i. 2011 ESEA Subgroup Grad Rate—2011 ALL STUDENTS Grad Rate = 2011 Grad Gap
    - ii. 2012 ESEA Subgroup Grad Rate—2012 ALL STUDENTS Grad Rate = 2012 Grad Gap
    - iii. 2012 Grad Gap—2011 Grad Gap = Within-School/State Graduation Gap

5. Perform the following steps to determine Percent Proficient within-school/state gap:
  - a. Determine 2011 and 2012 Percent Proficient for ALL STUDENTS group and each ESEA subgroup. Then perform the following calculations:
    - i. 2011 ESEA Subgroup Percent Proficient—2011 ALL STUDENTS Percent Proficient = 2011 Proficient Gap
    - ii. 2012 ESEA Subgroup Percent Proficient—2012 ALL STUDENTS Percent Proficient = 2012 Proficient Gap
    - iii. 2012 Proficient Gap—2011 Proficient Gap = Within-School/State Percent Proficient Gap
6. Rank-order gaps until at least 10% of Title I schools are identified (minimum of 94 Title I schools).

In the summer of 2013, Focus Schools will be identified based upon assessment results from 2011 and 2012 for schools without a Grade 12. For schools with a Grade 12, 2011 and 2012 Four-Year cohort graduation results will be utilized. Two years of data are being used instead of three because there are only two years of cohort graduation rate data available. For consistency, this will be the case for both schools with a Grade 12 and those without a Grade 12. Schools will be rank-ordered based upon “within-school/state-gaps” between subgroups (all students vs. subgroup) over the two-year period. Schools will be identified until at least 10% of Title I schools are named. Schools that have been named Priority will be removed from the list.

#### Determination of Focus Schools Fall 2016:

- Use Graduation Rate of 2015 and improvement from 2014 for high schools.
- Use proficiency on new assessments from 2015-16 and improvement from 2014-15 assessments for elementary and middle schools
- Rank until at least 10% of Title I schools are named.

From the pool of schools not identified as Priority, “Focus School” will be the classification for:

1. Schools that have the largest “within-school/state-gaps” in achievement/graduation rate between subgroups (All students vs. subgroup).
2. Schools with a gap index score that falls within the lowest 10% of the Title I schools and have a lack of progress over a number of years of the lowest achieving subgroup.

Schools are selected from this list until at least 10% of the Title I schools in the state have been identified as Focus.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA’s list of focus schools in Table 2. See Attachment 24.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that each LEA that has one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the LEA’s focus schools and their students. Provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

The goal of the ALSDE is to build capacity at the district and school level to engage in continual improvement practices that impact student achievement, close achievement gaps,

promote student growth, and increase the number of graduates that are prepared for college and careers. All ALSDE efforts to support this goal will be customized for each of the districts based on their current data and capacity. There are common expectations for all districts and schools to plan for continuous improvement. However, when it comes to interventions and supports, one size does not fit all. An accurate and comprehensive on-site assessment/instructional audit of the lowest-performing districts will determine precise strategies for improvement and support.

### **Focus Schools**

Focus Schools are schools that do not require a school-wide systemic change but rather need to focus on services and support to one or more ESEA subgroups. Upon identification as a Focus School, a data review and root cause analysis will be conducted that is precise in nature to identify factors contributing to the disproportionate gap(s). Additionally, feeder pattern data will be reviewed with district and school leaders to determine if the disproportionate gap(s) is replicated in the feeder schools. The trends in gap data will determine where intensive support should be targeted. Once the contributing factors are identified, a summary report that outlines the results of the root cause analysis will be used to determine precise strategies, resources, and support. An improvement plan will be developed to implement interventions aligned with the turnaround principles.

The intervention process is managed through the 11 Regional Inservice Centers. They are located throughout the state at institutions of higher education (IHEs) to provide local support and professional learning. A Regional Planning Team (RPT) has been established in each of the 11 regions. RPTs are composed of representatives from ALSDE sections; Regional Inservice Centers; institutions of higher education; and the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs, Office of School Readiness (pre-K). A core group of turnaround specialists have been trained to assist each of the RPTs in planning with Focus Schools. The ALSDE has a combined regional support staff (RSS) of over 300 specialists/coaches. These specialists/coaches have individual expertise and experience in specific curriculum content, instruction, data analysis, leadership, engaging parents, and effective school practices. Previously, the RSS worked within initiatives in the ALSDE supporting specific programs. The RSS have reorganized into instructional partners and will support specific schools and/or districts based on the need of the school/district matched to their areas of expertise. The RSS will focus support on the 30-60-90 day plans.

External providers can sometimes offer specific support that Focus Schools may find of benefit when planning for school improvement. Partnerships among external entities to obtain technical assistance, professional development, management advice, data analysis support, and any other support that will help address school and district needs are retained. The following table outlines the steps and timeline the Focus Schools will follow for implementation of intervention.

Timeline	Action	Person(s) Responsible
Prior to the beginning of 2013-2014 school year	Focus Schools identified	SDE Leadership
Beginning 2013-2014 school year and ongoing	Data review and root cause analysis; review data of feeder schools; compile, review, and communicate	LEA, RPT, School Turnaround Team, SDE staff, external providers

	<p>Data Review/Analyze Summary Report; collaboratively develop and activate targeted 30-60-90 day plans to address gap; implement targeted interventions aligned with one or more turnaround principles; ensure support for implementation of interventions; conduct timely and comprehensive monitoring; adjust and revise improvement plans as needed; plan for sustainability of continuous improvement</p>	
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The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is the means for compiling, reviewing, and prioritizing data and needs. After review of the data and root cause analysis, the Focus Schools will have 30 days to assemble their Continuous Improvement Leadership Teams that include teachers and administrators. They will develop 30-60-90 day plans to address immediate concerns and will be able to use the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST) process to develop long-range plans that include strategies for measuring levels of implementation and impact on student learning. Alabama has had a continuous improvement planning process in place for many years, and the schools and districts are accustomed to this process. Modules to support the development of the different elements of the CIP are available on the Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) Web site at <http://alex.state.al.us/si>. The RPT will use this planning process with the districts to analyze data, identify areas of priority, and develop specific strategies for improvement. Common requirements of the CIP are:

- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of student achievement, academic growth, culture, and climate data.
- Aligning curricular targets to the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards.
- Establishing time for teachers to collaborate on student progress, assessment results, and recommended instructional modifications.
- Identifying professional learning opportunities based on the identified needs reflected in the data.
- Engaging family and community.
- Developing goals and strategies to target areas of need for students and teachers.
- Addressing non-academic factors including safety and discipline.
- Identifying resources and technical assistance needed to accomplish goals.

Once the precise intervention strategies are determined by the collaborative planning of the RPT and district, then appropriate Regional Support Staff (RSS) will immediately be assigned to the district and/or schools. RSS will focus support on the 30-60-90 day plans. The RPT and district will meet regularly throughout the year to assess progress and make adjustments. The long-range plans (ASSIST) will be reviewed regularly in order to adjust and revise strategies.. A three-year commitment will be required in order to build capacity and ensure

sustainability. The plan will be adjusted each year based on data and evaluation.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

In order for a school to exit Focus School status, the school must:

1. Meet or exceed the AMO goals for the applicable gap subgroup(s) performance for two consecutive years.
2. Rank higher than the lowest 10% of the Title I schools in the state.
3. Maintain a participation rate of 95% or more on administered assessments.

Alabama has a plan and process for providing differentiated support to all schools and districts. The process involves Regional Planning Teams (RPTs) working in partnership with districts to identify priorities for improvement based on comprehensive data analysis. This partnership approach for improvement includes analyzing data, identifying priorities for improvement, implementing effective strategies, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes. This model of differentiated support will be the process of support for Focus Schools. Additional support and resources will be available to Focus Schools from the School Turnaround Program.

If a school continues to meet the requirements to be identified as a Focus School or has failed to make significant improvement after two years:

1. The school will lose the autonomy to select and implement interventions to address the learning needs of students.
2. Changes in leaders and teachers may be made.
3. A district facilitator may be assigned to diagnose and support improvement among the effective subgroups and will ensure that the CIP plan is carried out to fidelity.
4. The District and/or ALSDE may intervene in the daily operations of the school.

## 2.F Provide Incentives and Supports for other Title I Schools

- 2.F Describe how the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA’s new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Alabama’s new accountability system is designed to provide all schools with a framework needed to stay on course for curriculum rigor and relevance while transitioning to the College- and Career-Ready Standards. Each school will have a set of targets for all ESEA subgroups across all indicators to ensure that schools are accountable for the college- and career-readiness of all students. Alabama’s new model will hold schools accountable for all new college- and career-ready indicators. The results of each measure in each component of the School Performance Index will be part of the public report. These detailed results along with every schools progress towards meeting AMOs will be used by schools, districts, and the Regional Planning Teams (RPT) to analyze areas of concern, bright spots, and for writing Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) as described later in this section. Addressing any AMO not met will be a required component of the CIP. Schools will also have the ability to drill down in the data to individual student reports.

Using the results of the individual measures as well as AMOs in ESEA subgroups from the School Performance Index across all areas including accountability calculations, public reports, differentiated support, and continuous improvement planning will result in teachers and principals identifying and addressing the needs of students in their schools, particularly students with disabilities and low-achieving students.

Both Title I and non-Title I schools will benefit from a cross-discipline network of ALSDE education professionals designed to build capacity at both the district and school levels. Network activities planned will help engage districts and schools in learning effective practices proven to positively impact student achievement, reduce achievement gaps in ESEA subgroups, promote student engagement, and increase the number of graduates prepared for real work and world experiences. The overarching goal of the ALSDE is to build capacity at the district levels by differentiating its support to all districts. District-level strategies include involving central offices in a variety of positive actions designed to build the case for support for instructional change, if needed, and helping districts in planning for implementing change and motivating students, parents, teachers, and other staff for change.

The ALSDE efforts to support this goal will be customized for each of the districts and schools based on their current data and capacity to deliver support for schools, thereby differentiating the impact. The common expectation for all districts and schools will be continuous and sustainable improvement. All Alabama schools will write an annual Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) reflecting their data-determined school needs. The school stakeholders involved in developing the CIP includes administrators, faculty, staff, parents, community members, and students. The CIP outlines a summary of needs based on a comprehensive review of data and includes: goals to address the academic needs of all students with particular emphasis on English proficiency needs; strategies to address school safety, classroom management/discipline, and supportive learning environments; additional components that when addressed positively impact student achievement; and professional learning needs related to academic challenges, English language proficiency, school safety, discipline, and supportive learning environments. A comprehensive review of graduation, participation and attendance

rate data are essential components of the data analysis process for all schools. Districts will concentrate on strategies to ensure that schools in the feeder pattern have vertically aligned and strengthened their curricula and professional learning. Specific goals with strategies and interventions for subgroups that miss graduation, participation, and attendance rate targets must be included in the school's CIP. Schools that miss graduation rate targets for the All Students group and applicable ESEA subgroups must include explicit actions on the CIP to positively impact the graduation rate.

The CIPs of all Title I schools continue to have the required federal components. Non-Title I schools have flexibility in the CIP format, but models used in Alabama provide comparable information and serve to provide a process for setting goals, monitoring progress, and evaluating results for continuous improvement in all schools.

The Regional Planning Team (RPT) for each of the 11 Regional Inservice Centers (RICs) will collaboratively plan with the districts and schools in the region to determine the effectiveness of the transition to the College- and Career-Ready Standards and to provide precise and differentiated support based on district and school priority needs. Differentiated support for delivering services will be based on the district's/school's priorities as determined from a review and analysis of the continuous improvement plan and the on-site collaboration described above. The regional support staff (RSS), consisting of more than 300 specialists/coaches with individual expertise and experience, will be able to provide professional learning. Some examples might include teaching effective techniques for mastery of content; improving classroom and school culture; and creating and sustaining caring, safe, and supportive learning environments. Again, the RSS support will be matched with specific schools and/or districts based on their needs and capitalizing on the areas of strengths of the regional support staff.

Using this partnership approach to work with districts and schools, the ALSDE is seeking to provide assistance for all districts and schools that will result in significant and sustainable improvements.

Districts achieving their goals may receive recognition that includes:

- Being published on a list of districts and schools to be released in accordance with the Department's methods and procedures for public notifications.
- Receiving financial rewards, as funds are available, for "closing the gap" between ESEA subgroups related to AMOs.

Districts failing to improve school and student performance will be supported by Regional Planning Teams to assist with:

- Strengthening each school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is evidence-based, rigorous, and aligned with the state's CCRS.
- Using data to inform instruction for continuous improvement
- Establishing an environment in each school that emphasizes safety and discipline, addresses social and emotional needs of students, and provides tools for increasing family and community engagement.
- Providing the principal and school leadership with support in effective staffing, curriculum design, and budgeting.
- Providing job-embedded, long-term professional learning opportunities that will be reflected in successful teacher performance evaluations.
- Demonstrating to the ALSDE that districts have effective systems in place to support principals in their efforts to bring about turnaround in failing schools.

Support for Title I schools not identified as Focus or Priority will be provided by Regional Planning Teams (RPTs). Initial visits to local education agencies (LEAs) have been completed and RPTs have better ideas about what districts want and actually have requested. Schools and districts will be held accountable for improvement strategies and their implementation and monitored through a combination of plans:

- The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).
- The LEA Improvement Plan for districts identified as “Priority.”
- Analyses of baseline and mid-year student assessment data through formative assessments.
- School Improvement Grant (SIG) Monitoring.

For students with disabilities, the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) quarterly meetings are organized around the 11 inservice regions. An ALSDE special education specialist is assigned to each regional team. In addition, each LEA was asked to appoint a special education representative to its CCRS Implementation Team.

LEA special education representatives (including special education directors, other special education central office staff, and special education teachers) are attending the CCRS quarterly meetings. Special education specialists from the ALSDE co-developed the content for the first two quarterly meetings and in some cases co-presented and/or co-facilitated with content specialists.

Currently the focus has been on implementing the new standards with students with disabilities who are working toward general education standards. The Alabama Extended Standards for students taking the *Alabama Alternate Assessment* are currently under revision to align with the new general education standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts. Teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities will receive regional training on the new Alabama Extended Standards once they are released.

The CCRS quarterly meetings are designed as a train-the-trainer model with each LEA special education designee responsible for conveying the information to others in his or her school system. The first two quarterly meetings focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the new standards and generating ideas for local professional learning. There are plans for the future to include information related to supports and services for students with disabilities (e.g., instructional supports, instructional accommodations, assistive technology devices).

Job-alike sessions are part of the quarterly meetings where special educators can voice concerns and share ideas related to the implementation of the new standards. Sharing questions, concerns, and ideas with special educators from other districts has created unique opportunities for encouragement and learning.

In addition, to prepare all LEAs to provide services to English Learners (ELs), the ALSDE will provide support through professional learning opportunities including:

- Providing Virtual Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Institute sessions.
- Providing EL Coaches to work with LEAs not making their Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for ELs.
- Offering Teacher Compass Suite to districts in AMAO Improvement to increase the academic language and content achievement of ELs.
- Providing School Assistance Meetings for Understanding English Learners (SAMUELS) as quarterly regional sessions.

Importantly, for the last six months, members of the ALSDE on RPTs have participated in professional learning activities based on Jim Knight’s book *Unmistakable Impact*, which outlines the partnership principles that have proven to be effective in working with schools and districts to sustain improvement efforts. This partnership approach for designing, supporting, and monitoring school improvement efforts will foster the trusting relationships and transparency needed for change. The Differentiated Support Component of the College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan is found in Attachment 12.

## 2.G Build SEA, LEA, and School Capacity to Improve Student Learning

- 2.G Describe the SEA’s process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:
- i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
  - ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
  - iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has undergone a major reorganization to provide aligned, coordinated, and differentiated accountability, support, and recognition for districts and schools. Alabama’s new Plan 2020 describes the goals and multiple indicators to measure progress in the areas of Alabama’s Learners, Alabama’s Support Systems, Alabama’s Professionals, and Alabama’s Schools/Systems. A single school performance index will be the trigger for recognition and support for schools and districts. The overall number of the indicators incorporates a robust set of success factors but remains strongly focused on the learning gains of individual students. Plan 2020 has led to a cross-sectional effort in the ALSDE to develop a system that matches the needs of districts and schools to the skills and knowledge of state and regional support staff, therefore providing targeted and specific support.

As a result, a new planning, support, and accountability process has been developed. Rather than individual departmental sections operating as independent units, they have been reorganized into Regional Planning Teams (RPTs). Each section is represented on the team allowing for a comprehensive support system to districts and schools within a small regional area. Alabama has 11 Regional Inservice Centers (RICs) that have existing relationships with all of the districts within their regions. The Regional Planning Teams have been established in each of the RIC areas to plan with LEAs for two purposes: (1) to facilitate transition to the College- and Career-Ready Standards and (2) to provide precise and differentiated support based on district and school needs as determined by data analysis and joint planning. In addition to ALSDE staff, RPTs include representatives from the Regional Inservice Centers, Institutions of Higher Education, and the Department of Children’s Affairs’ Office of School Readiness (Pre-K). Other members may be added throughout the year as

needed. The RPTs will plan with the LEAs within their region to determine areas of need and priorities for the greatest impact. The goal of the ALSDE is to build capacity at the district and school level to engage in continual improvement practices that impact student achievement, close achievement gaps, promote student growth, and increase the number of graduates that are prepared for college and career. Joint planning by the RPTs and LEAs will foster shared accountability and ownership of the identified areas of need and plans of action and therefore have a greater likelihood of being sustained.

Differentiated support will be based on the districts' priorities as determined from a review and analysis of each school's continuous improvement plan. Additionally, Priority Schools will receive a comprehensive on-site assessment/instructional audit. The ALSDE has a combined regional support staff (RSS) of over 300 specialists/coaches. These specialists/coaches have individual expertise and experience in specific curriculum content, instruction, data analysis, leadership, engaging parents, and effective school practices. Previously, the RSS worked in initiatives in the ALSDE supporting specific programs. They have reorganized into instructional partners and will support specific schools and/or districts based on the need of the school/district matched to their areas of expertise.

The guiding principle is to work in "partnership" with districts and schools. While Alabama has had a long history of school improvement support, it has primarily been a predetermined set of actions for all school situations. Though there may have been some immediate improvement, once the external assistance was removed, the school often reappeared on the school improvement list. Alabama is seeking to provide the kind of assistance that will result in significant and sustainable improvement. Over the last six months, RPTs have participated in training on Jim Knight's *Unmistakable Impact*, which outlines the partnership principles that have proven to be effective in working with schools and districts to sustain improvement efforts. Alabama recognizes that transparency of practices and data are imperative for change. Transparency occurs when there is a trusting relationship. This partnership approach to designing, supporting, and monitoring school improvement efforts will foster trust and transparency. The Differentiated Support Component of the College- and Career-Ready Delivery Plan is found in Attachment 12.

The goal of the ALSDE is to build school and district capacity to sustain continuous improvement following the removal of external support. The partnership framework allows schools and districts to be partners in the decision making, implementation, and evaluation process. Gradual release of responsibility will be the model that members of the RPTs, RSS, Turnaround Office, and ALSDE leaders employ to facilitate the schools and districts' sustainability of improvement practices. Sustaining improvement depends on generating and supporting an organizational culture that can maintain development and change (Harris, 2009).

RPTs will work in partnership with district and Priority and Focus Schools to build capacity to support the improvement process. Embedded in this structure is a plan to assist districts and schools in assessing progress of implementation and impact of interventions. The frequency and structure for assessing progress will be conducted in a differentiated manner based on the capacity and needs of the district. RPT, RSS, and members of the School Turnaround Program may assume roles of leader, observer, or consultant in the progress monitoring process based on the district's capacity to recognize evidence of progress of implementation and impact of interventions on student achievement and school improvement. This structure supported by RPTs and the School Turnaround Program for checking progress and improvement will be part of an on-going process reflected in the district's Continuous Improvement Plan.

Within the improvement/turnaround plan, the school and/or district must demonstrate that it has the capacity to plan for, implement, and monitor turnaround efforts. In addition, the school/district must:

- Clearly describe what its approach will be to result in rapid, systemic change in its Priority/Focus School within three years. This must include a theory of action guiding its strategies and school-level interventions.
- Provide a description of the district's planning process, including descriptions of teams, working groups, and stakeholder groups involved in the planning process, especially the process used by district- and school-level teams to identify the interventions selected for the Priority/Focus School.
- Describe how the district will recruit, screen, and select any external providers to provide the expertise, support, and assistance to the district or to schools.
- Describe the district's systems and processes for ongoing planning, supporting, and monitoring the implementation of planned efforts, including the teaming structures or other processes, such as the use of liaisons, coaches, or networks, that will be used to support and monitor implementation of school-level effort.
- Describe current district policies and practices that may either promote or serve as barriers to the implementation of the proposed plans and the actions they have taken or will take to modify policies and practices to enable schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively.
- Describe how the district will ensure that the identified school(s) receive ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the state, district, or designated external partner organizations.
- Describe how the district will monitor the implementation of the selected intervention at each identified school and how the district will know that planned interventions and strategies are working.

Though support will be customized for each of the districts based on their current data and capacity, there are common expectations for all districts and schools to plan for continuous improvement. The Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is the means for collecting, reviewing, and prioritizing data and needs. The Continuous Improvement Leadership Teams that include teachers and administrators will develop 30-60-90 day plans to address immediate concerns and will be able to use the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST) process to develop long-range plans that include strategies for measuring levels of implementation and impact on student learning. Alabama has had a continuous improvement planning process for many years to which the districts and schools are accustomed. Online modules to support district and school planning are available on the Alabama Learning Exchange website (<http://alex.state.al.us>). The RPT will use this process with districts to analyze data, identify areas of priority, develop specific strategies for support, and a plan for monitoring progress.

In August 2012, the School Turnaround Program was developed for the primary purpose of coordinating support for and monitoring progress of Priority and Focus Schools and Priority Districts. The School Turnaround Program, in partnership with Regional Planning Teams and Regional Support Staff, will provide precise and differentiated support to Alabama's lowest performing schools/districts. Intensive intervention will focus on priorities identified by the schools/districts, results of the comprehensive needs assessment/instructional audit, and data analysis. This collaborative effort will also include a review of the feeder schools' data to determine whether feeder pattern intervention is needed. The goal of this partnership is to build capacity within the schools/districts to sustain continuous improvement.

This new reorganization and focus has garnered much enthusiasm and optimism both at the ALSDE and in the local districts. Under the guidance of a new State Superintendent of Education, every policy and practice is being evaluated to foster shared accountability. The ALSDE plans to take this opportunity to consolidate and target federal funding to ensure districts and schools can successfully implement the interventions needed to improve and turnaround their schools.

Support and accountability for Priority and Focus Schools and Priority Districts are explained in 2.D and 2.E.

A further explanation of differentiated support offered through the turnaround program is explained in Attachment 33.

Alabama plans to use the following federal funding to support implementation of its differentiated accountability, consequences, and support system:

- 1003 (a) funds will be targeted toward academic achievement and building capacity in Priority and Focus Schools.
- Any present 1003 (g) funds will be awarded to Priority Schools using 1003(g) criteria.
- Title I, Part A, 1003(a) state-level “set asides” will be used to support school improvement activities particularly in Priority and Focus Schools under the guidance of the ALSDE and its Districts.
- Districts with Priority and/or Focus Schools will be required to set aside an amount up to 10% of their Title I allocation based on a sliding scale contingent on poverty and enrollment as a supplement award above the school allocation to provide state-approved programs and services targeted to identified needs in the Priority and/or Focus Schools.
- Priority and Focus Schools that do not meet the 40% poverty guidelines for eligibility to operate a schoolwide program will be allowed to become schoolwide programs if other requirements are met.
- Title I funding will be allowed for rewards in Title I Reward Schools.

### **Specific Uses of Federal Funds**

Federal funds will be utilized to supplement state and local funds for targeted, precise interventions with an emphasis on building local capacity for sustaining the improvements and changes. Funds will be used to address low achievement and achievement gaps in the schools and districts of greatest need. In addition, funds will be used for:

- Comprehensive on-site assessments/instructional audits to determine the status of schools and districts as related to the principles of school turnaround and their capacity for leading the turnaround.
- Greater individualization of school plans and differentiation of support.
- Additional staffing to support the turnaround processes in Priority and Focus Schools.
- Ongoing training of turnaround specialists in the RICs.
- Training for turnaround schools and follow-up.
- Incentivizing and spotlighting effective practices that produce results by identifying and targeting Rewards Schools as demonstration sites for Priority and Focus Schools.
- Providing additional training and support of teachers and leaders in sustaining change and improvement efforts.
- Supplementing state funds for an electronic formative assessment system for districts and schools to include training, coaching, and follow up.

**Support to Assure Successful Interventions**

Alabama is working closely with the EDI (Education Delivery Institute) to ensure Plan 2020 is a living document that holds the ALSDE accountable for goals, plans, and results. Delivery plans for the strategies described in this waiver are included in Attachments 12 and 13.

“Stocktake” meetings are held regularly with the State Superintendent to ensure that the plans are being implemented and monitored. The Regional Planning Teams are part of a structure that provides support but also communicates progress between the LEAs and the ALSDE. Accountability for actions and monitoring results is at the core of this support system.

The ASSIST tool will also provide a real-time assessment of each district's progress. Through regular monitoring by the RPT, immediate intervention and support can be provided.

## Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

### 3.A Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the SEA’s plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2012–2013 school year;</li> <li>ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and</li> <li>iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012–2013 school year (see Assurance 14).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students;</li> <li>ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and</li> <li>iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.</li> </ul>
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#### **Governor’s Congress on School Leadership**

The Governor’s Congress on School Leadership was convened by Governor Bob Riley and State Superintendent Dr. Joseph B. Morton in November 2004. The Governor’s Congress included 100 delegates from K-12 education, higher education, the State Department of Education, education foundations and agencies, professional associations, businesses, and communities. The Congress was responsible for researching best practices and for making recommendations regarding leadership standards, principal preparation, certification, evaluation, and working conditions. Supported by the work of the Wallace Foundation and the Southern Regional Education Board, two results of the Congress were the *Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders*, a set of eight standards with explanatory indicators adopted by the State Board of Education in 2005,

<http://www.alsde.edu/Home/Executive/BoardResolutions.aspx?view=1070>, and The *Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development*,

<http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/Ala%20Continuum%20for%20Instructional%20Leaders.pdf>, which describes leadership practice for each standard indicator across a continuum of five practice levels: Pre-Service Leadership, Developing Leadership, Collaborative Leadership, Accomplished Leadership, and Distinguished Leadership.

### **Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching**

The Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching (GCQT) commenced its work in January 2006 with a charge to 90 representative stakeholders from Governor Bob Riley “to examine, recommend, and work to implement laws, policies, and practices affecting teachers and teaching effectiveness to ensure student success in Alabama’s public schools” and to “promote the aggressive recruitment, preparation, support, retention, and growth of quality teachers in order to raise student achievement in Alabama.” From the Commission’s work, *The Alabama Quality Teaching Standards* were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education in 2006, <http://www.alsde.edu/Home/Executive/BoardResolutions.aspx?view=1259>, and provide the framework for the *Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development*, <http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/Alabama%20Continuum%20for%20Teacher%20Development.pdf>.

The Commission’s work was informed by research on the relationship between teaching quality and increased student achievement. Early initiatives of the Commission focused on two critical pieces of its overall mission:

- Improving the readiness of new teachers coming into the profession.
- Promoting the continual learning, growth, and effectiveness of teachers throughout their careers.

In conjunction with the New Teacher Center, a research and best practices organization founded in 1998 as part of the University of California at Santa Cruz whose primary focus is improving the effectiveness of teachers across the country, the Commission created the *Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development* to help address and provide support for increased teacher learning and development through informed self-reflection. The *Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development* describes teaching practice for each standard indicator across a continuum of five practice levels: Pre-Service and Beginning, Emerging, Applying, Integrating, and Innovating.

### **Plan 2020**

In 2012, the Alabama State Board of Education adopted Plan 2020, which is a map of the future for education in Alabama (<https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/55/plan%202020.pdf>). Among the goals for insuring teacher and leader effectiveness, Plan 2020 requires the following:

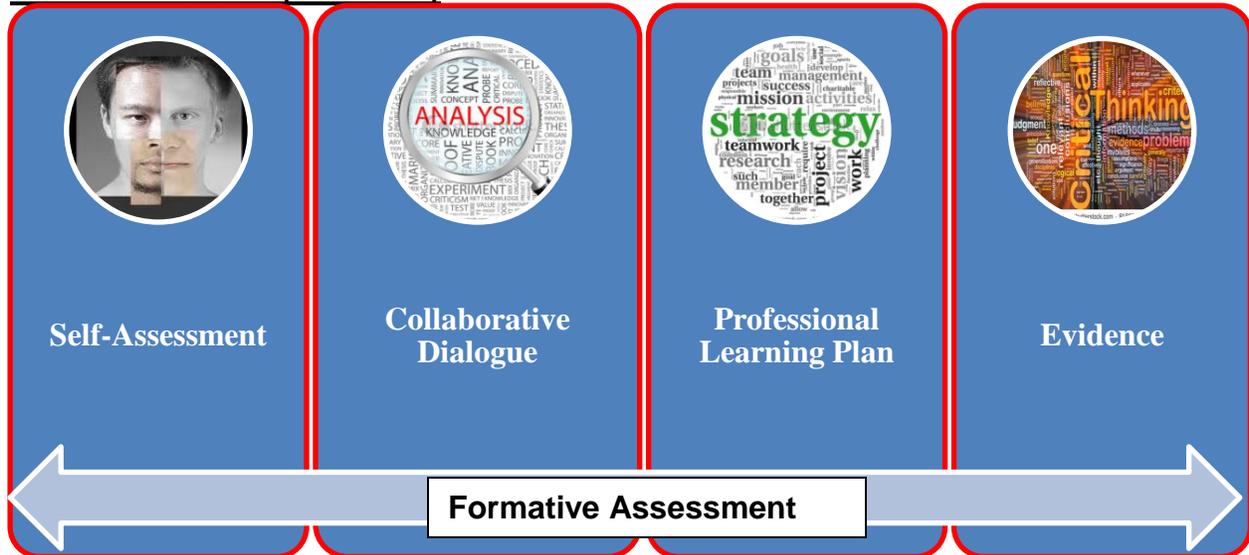
- Develop and implement a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement.
- Provide research-based professional growth opportunities for Alabama’s teachers and leaders based on their individual and collective professional learning plans.

### **Developing EDUCATEAlabama and LEADAlabama**

From the leadership and teaching standards and the accompanying continua that describe professional practice at five levels, multiple stakeholders came together to begin the development of new teacher and leader evaluation systems with both formative assessment and summative evaluation. EDUCATEAlabama (<http://www.alsde.edu/Home/Executive/BoardResolutions.aspx?view=1526>) is the new formative teacher assessment system, and LEADAlabama is the new formative assessment system for leaders. These assessment systems are online and replace a paper-and-pencil system. Below are visuals of each formative component of the systems with accompanying explanation.

NOTE: Results of the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project indicate that using three measures are likely to be more valid and reliable than using more than three. The MET Project used student achievement, student survey responses, and observation results. In addition, the MET Project results indicated that weighting the measures equally yields the highest levels of validity and reliability. The design committee will be made aware of data from this study as decisions are made from the following initial thinking:

### EDUCATEAlabama (Formative)



**Self-Assessment:** The EDUCATEAlabama Self-Assessment is completed and used to focus a conversation with the instructional leader about professional practice and areas needing improvement. When data are available, the self-assessment should reflect concerns over student growth data (online and interactive).

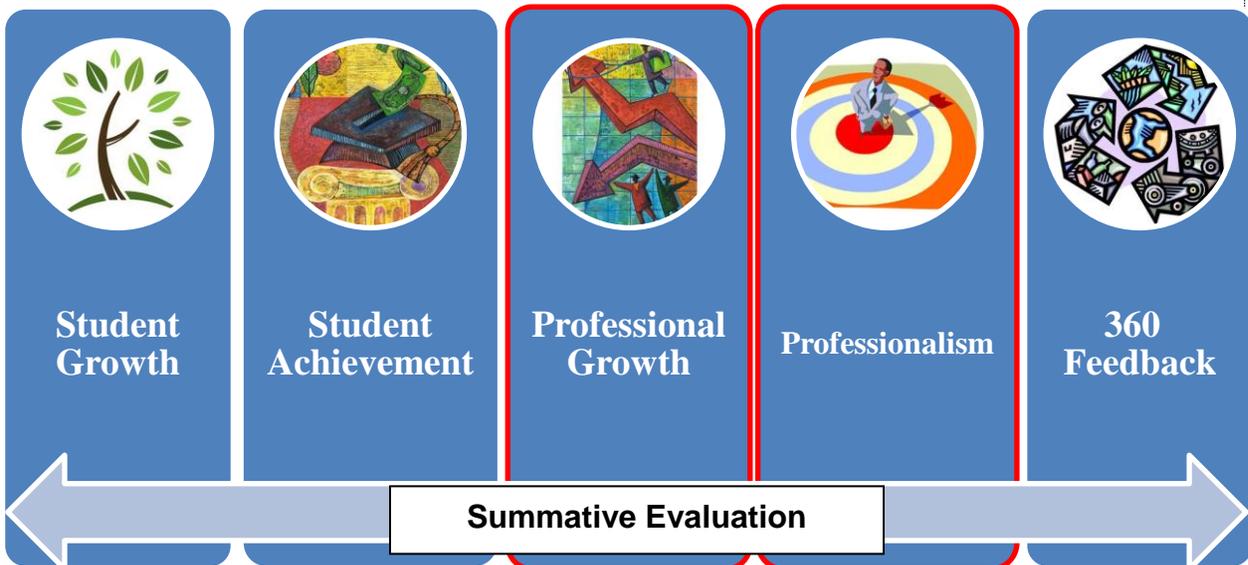
**Collaborative Dialogue:** A conversation with the instructional leader is completed to inform the Professional Learning Plan. The teacher and instructional leader determine the content of the Professional Learning Plan. When data are available, the Collaborative Dialogue should reflect concerns over student growth data (online and interactive).

**Professional Learning Plan (PLP):** This collaboratively developed plan must be completed to include professional learning goals tied to Alabama Quality Teaching Standard Indicators needing improvement. When data are available, the PLP should reflect concerns over student growth data. Numerous online professional development opportunities are attached to every indicator to support teacher professional growth. These online opportunities include modules from the IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University (online and interactive).

**Evidence:** A Professional Learning Plan completely enacted with evidence of active work towards improvement for each selected Standard Indicator that is expected to lead to improved student growth is the evidence (online and interactive).

**EDUCATEAlabama (Summative, Teacher Effectiveness)**

The following graphic indicates current thinking about the summative elements of EDUCATEAlabama as required by Plan 2020. A design committee is currently meeting to determine which elements will be included in the final analysis and the weight each element will carry in the summative evaluation.



**Student Growth:** This measure will track the academic growth of each individual Alabama student and relate this growth to the teacher who was responsible for the learning environment. The Student Growth measure will require a process that indicates where each student's knowledge level is related to a specific subject at the beginning of a year or at the beginning of a course. Then a summative evaluation at the end of the year, or the end of the course, will measure the learning/understanding each student gained as a result of the learning/teaching experience. Student Growth will be the difference between the initial measure and the final measure of understanding. For tested grades and subjects the statewide assessments will be used as a component of student growth. For all non-tested grades and subjects alternative measures will be developed.

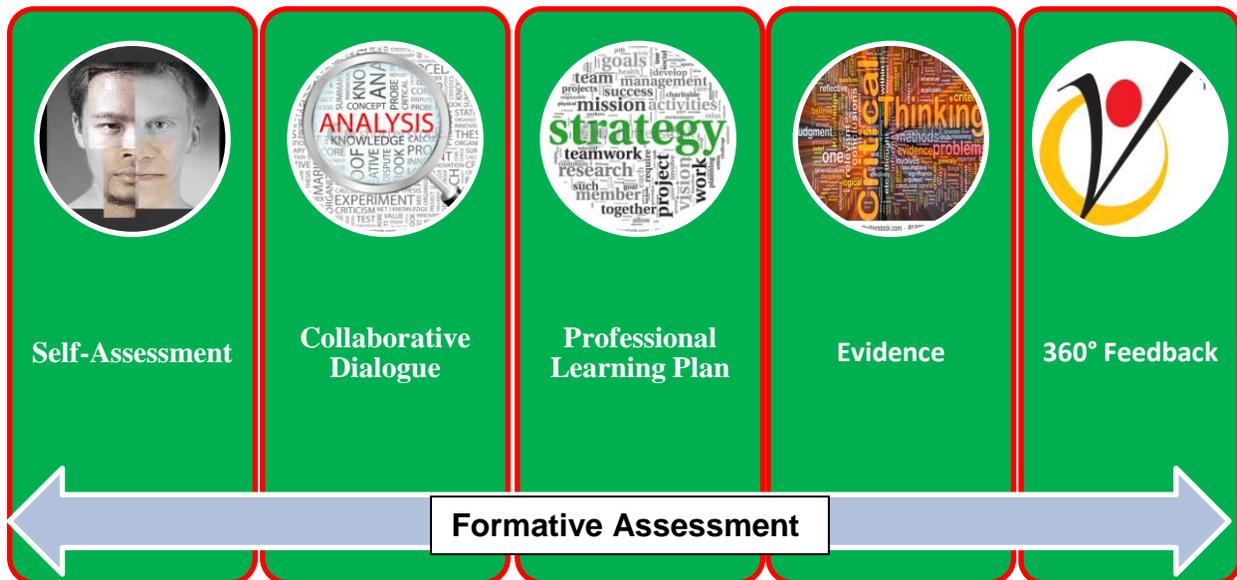
**Student Achievement:** This measure could be based on data from state tests. The data will be used to look at overall classroom improvement for each teacher, subgroup gaps, and progress toward school wide achievement goals.

**Professional Growth:** This measure could be based on the completion of the EDUCATEAlabama formative process to include the self-assessment, collaborative conversation with the principal, development of a Professional Learning Plan, successful completion of the growth processes outlined in the Professional Learning Plan to include evidence as required. A completion score based on a Likert-scale rubric could be entered by the instructional leader (online and interactive).

**Professionalism:** This measure could be based on an instrument that collects data on teacher attendance, teacher compliance with local board and school policies, reliability, teacher leadership initiative, and other measureable professional attributes. It could be completed by the instructional leader and could yield a score (online and interactive).

**360° Feedback:** This measure could be based on an instrument to collect data from students (appropriate ages) and parents/families and supervisor. This 360° instrument could gather perception data and indicate a summative score for the teacher based on willingness to assist students, communication with parents/family, willingness to take leadership positions when asked, and other kinds of perception data.

### **LEADAlabama (Formative)**



**Self-Assessment:** LEADAlabama Self-Assessment is completed and used to focus a conversation with the instructional leader's supervisor about professional practice and areas needing improvement. When data are available, the self-assessment should reflect concerns over student and teacher growth data (online and interactive).

**Collaborative Dialogue:** A conversation with the instructional leader's supervisor is completed to inform the Professional Learning Plan. The instructional leader and supervisor determine the content of the Professional Learning Plan. When data are available, the Collaborative Dialogue should reflect concerns over student and teacher growth data (online and interactive).

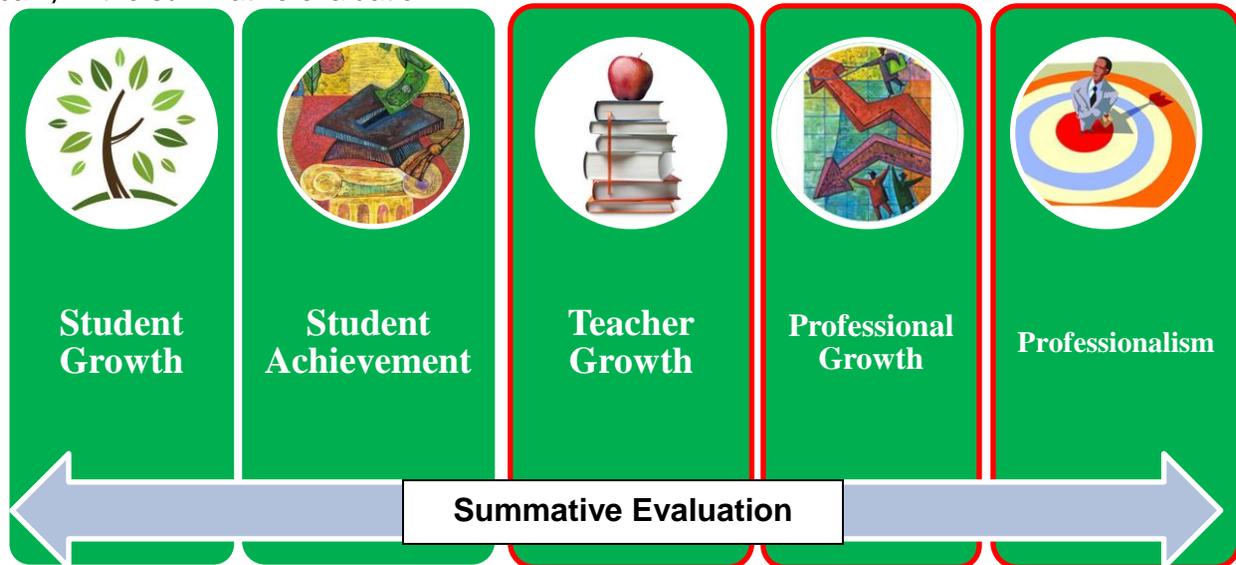
**Professional Learning Plan (PLP):** This collaboratively developed plan must be completed to include professional learning goals tied to Alabama Standards for Instructional Leader Indicators needing improvement. When data are available, the PLP should reflect concerns over student and teacher growth data and data from the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leaders in Education (VAL-ED) (online and interactive).

**Evidence:** A Professional Learning Plan completely enacted with evidence of active work towards improvement for each selected Standard Indicator that is expected to lead to improved leadership to support student and teacher growth is the evidence (online and interactive).

**360° Feedback:** This measure will be based on data from the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leaders in Education (VAL-ED). This 360° instrument will gather perception data concerning leadership from all teachers and the supervisor. These data should be used to inform the Professional Learning Plan.

**LEADAlabama (Summative, Leader Effectiveness)**

The following graphic indicates current thinking about the summative elements of LEADAlabama as supported by Plan 2020. A design committee is currently meeting to determine which elements will be included in the final analysis and the weight each element will carry in the summative evaluation.



**Student Growth:** The Student Growth measure will require a process that indicates where each student's knowledge level is related to a specific subject at the beginning of a year or at the beginning of a course. Then a summative evaluation at the end of the year, or the end of the course, will measure the learning/understanding each student gained as a result of the learning/teaching experience. Student Growth will be the difference between the initial measure and the final measure of understanding. For the instructional leader, Student Growth could be calculated using data from all students in the school to determine a percentage of students who met growth goals and those who did not. For tested grades and subjects the statewide assessments will be used as a component of student growth. For all non-tested grades and subjects alternative measures will be developed.

**Student Achievement:** This measure will be based on data from state tests. The data could be used to look at overall classroom improvement for each teacher, subgroup gaps, and progress toward school wide achievement goals. For the instructional leader, Student Achievement could be calculated using data for the entire school.

**Teacher Growth:** This measure could be based on the completion of the EDUCATEAlabama formative process by all teachers in the instructional leader's school to include the self-assessment, collaborative conversation with the principal, development of a Professional Learning Plan, successful completion of the growth processes outlined in the Professional Learning Plan to include evidence as required. A completion score based on a Likert-scale rubric could be entered by the instructional leader (online and interactive).

**Professional Growth:** This measure could be based on the completion of the LEADAlabama formative process to include the self-assessment, collaborative conversation with the supervisor, development of a professional learning plan, and successful completion of the growth processes outlined in the Professional Learning Plan to include evidence as required. A completion score based on a Likert-scale rubric could be entered by the supervisor (online and interactive).

**Professionalism:** This measure could be based on an instrument that collects data on leader attendance, compliance with local board and school policies, reliability, leadership initiative, and other measurable professional attributes. It could be completed by the supervisor and could yield a score (online and interactive).

The Alabama State Department of Education will continue to involve key stakeholders in the development of teacher and leader evaluation systems. Current and future design committees include teachers, assistant principals, principals, superintendents, and State Board of Education members. Always at the table are representatives of professional associations including the Alabama Education Association, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools, School Superintendents of Alabama, and Alabama Association of School Boards. University and college partners also participate in all design decisions. All decisions concerning definitions of teacher and leader effectiveness, the measures included in the definition, and the weight carried by each measure will be recommended by a stakeholder group broadly representing all stakeholders and approved by the State Board of Education.

It is the intent of the Alabama State Department of Education to meet the goal established by Plan 2020. These goals include the development and implementation of a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement and provide research-based professional growth opportunities for Alabama’s teachers and leaders based on their individual and collective Professional Learning Plans. The formative elements of both the teacher evaluation system, EDUCATEAlabama, and the leader evaluation system, LEADAlabama, are currently being implemented. The summative measures to define teacher and leader effectiveness are currently being researched. The intent is to design summative components of EDUCATEAlabama and LEADAlabama and submit the design to the State Board of Education and the United States Department of Education in 2012-2013 with full implementation in 2015-2016. The Alabama State Board of Education must vote on the new summative evaluation system in order for Alabama to require its LEAs to implement a system consistent with state requirements.

### **3.B Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems**

- 3.B Provide the SEA’s process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA’s adopted guidelines.

The teacher and leader evaluation systems approved by the Alabama State Board of Education were developed by a large group of stakeholders. The state-adopted evaluation systems are available for use to all LEAs at no cost to the LEA. However, LEAs are also given the option to design their own evaluation systems provided they meet specific criteria, address the state teacher and leader standards, and are approved by the Alabama State Department of Education for use. (See Attachment 22, which is a copy of the letter from the State Superintendent of Education giving permission to local superintendents to use locally designed evaluation systems and requiring that they be submitted for approval.) (See Attachment 23, which describes the approval criteria that must be met.)

The following is the ALSDE’s plan for developing and adopting guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems to align teacher and leader practice to effectiveness definitions and to provide appropriate professional study to support and improve professional practice improvement.

**Technology Platform Design**

- Alabama’s formative evaluation processes for teachers, EDUCATEAlabama, and for leaders, LEADAlabama, operate on a technology platform that is managed by the Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASC). The ASC is building the technological platform to support the summative evaluation systems allowing maximum interface between the formative and summative evaluation components as Alabama determines the multiple measures used in the definition of teacher and leader effectiveness.

**Alignment Design**

- All decisions related to the design of the summative elements of teacher and leader evaluation are being aligned with Alabama code and legislation; local, state, and federal regulations; and will support the goals of Alabama’s PLAN 2020. Decisions are being made as the result of recommendations from a stakeholder committee representing diverse and multiple stakeholders.

**Stakeholder-Driven Design**

- The Deputy State Superintendent of Education will ask professional organizations to recommend members for the Alabama Professional Evaluation Design Committee. The State Superintendent of Education will approve a design committee representing the following:
  - Alabama Education Association—recommended teachers
  - Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools—recommended principals/assistant principals, LEA central office staff
  - School Superintendents of Alabama—recommended superintendents
  - Alabama Association of School Boards—recommended school board members
  - A+ Education Partnership—recommended business representatives
  - Alabama Association of Colleges for Teacher Education—recommended higher education representatives
  - Alabama State Board of Education members
- Non-voting representatives from the ALSDE will be the Deputy State Superintendent of Education; representatives from the Office of General Counsel, Office of Policy and Budget, Office of Teaching and Learning, Office of Teaching and Leading, Research, Information and Data Services, Evaluation, Assessment; and representatives from the Alabama Supercomputer Authority.
- The committee will be supported by one Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Administrator who will provide technical and meeting support and ensure clerical support is provided when needed for travel, expenses, documents, etc.

**Committee Design**

- There will be approximately 40 members of the Alabama Professional Evaluation Design Committee. The anticipated committee membership will consist of 10 teachers, 5 principals, 5 assistant principals, 5 central office staff, 2 state school board members, 5 local school board members, 3 business representatives, and 5 university representatives. Teachers of English language learners and special education will be included on the Committee. The committee will be divided into the following three task forces:

- **Task Force One: Student Growth**

Task Force One will be responsible for working with the Alabama State Department of Education Student Assessment Section in the Office of Teaching and Learning to recommend how data from Alabama’s Student Growth Model will be used to define teacher and leader effectiveness.

- **Task Force Two: Student Achievement**

Task Force Two will be responsible for working with the Alabama State Department of Education Student Assessment Section in the Office of Teaching and Learning and with the Accountability Section to recommend how student achievement data (subgroup gap analysis) will be used to define teacher and leader effectiveness.

- **Task Force Three: Additional Multiple Measures**

Task Force Three will be responsible for determining additional multiple measures that will be used to define teacher and leader effectiveness. Proposed summative elements of professional growth, professionalism, results of 360° evaluations, and teacher growth will be considered.

**NOTE:** The three task forces will convene as a full committee to recommend the weights for each multiple measure used to determine teacher and leader effectiveness. The Committee will review and consider findings of the Measures of Effecting Teaching (MET) Project as it considers which multiple measures to include and the weighting of each in the evaluation systems. Following approval by the State Superintendent of Education, the committee will also oversee a pilot of the evaluation system and will recommend initial benchmarks for effectiveness definitions based on the results of the pilot.

In 2014-2015 Alabama will pilot the summative evaluation processes for teachers and leaders in a limited number of LEAs. These processes will include the collection of data from multiple measures (including student achievement and growth) to support effectiveness definitions and to support the process of tying effectiveness definitions to teacher and leader practice in the piloting LEAs. Preparation for the pilot will assist in formulating content for statewide training and implementation. The pilot will also be used to uncover any technological difficulties, confusion, or complexities that must be remediated before statewide implementation. Results of the pilot will inform any improvements or changes needed before the statewide implementation of the summative evaluation elements in 2015-2016. The pilot will also be a test for the articulation between the formative elements and summative elements of the system to support the diagnosis of weaknesses in teacher and leader practice and measures needed to ensure improvement.

Both the formative and summative elements of EDUCATEAlabama and LEADAlabama are/will be electronic. Monitoring of the systems is as simple as opening the system and observing input. The ALSDE will monitor compliance with and effective use of the systems. Both online systems can/will have the capability of drilling down to each LEA, school, leader, and teacher. Monitoring will be about compliance to a degree but mostly about the quality of input and the connection to quality, timely, and appropriate professional development for the purposes of improving teacher and leader practice as indicated by expressed needs and data from the multiple measures. The ALSDE will monitor implementation and effective use of the systems by region, LEA, and school. Patterns of weakness in teacher and leader practice across the state will be used to support improvement. LEAs and the ALSDE will use the results of the formative and summative processes to make decisions about needed professional development for improvement. LEAs may ultimately use the data to support decisions concerning promotion and employment. Data will be shared with Alabama’s educator preparation institutions.

Staff in the office of EDUCATEAlabama/LEADAlabama will have oversight responsibility for ensuring that personnel in the 134 LEAs are trained. This training has been and will continue to be a collaborative effort with the 11 Alabama Regional Inservice Centers, the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools, the School Superintendents of Alabama, the Alabama Association of School Boards, and the Alabama Education Association. Training will consist of initial regional face-to-face trainings for key LEA staff supported by online training and information on the EDUCATEAlabama/LEADAlabama Web site. In addition, each LEA has an evaluation coordinator whose job is to ensure appropriate evaluation training at the local level. Staff in the Office of EDUCATEAlabama/LEADAlabama are in constant communication with the 134 evaluation coordinators. The Regional Planning Teams will also be a conduit for information related to the needs of LEAs concerning the effective use of the formative and summative elements of the evaluation systems.

- Current Alabama State Board of Education policy allows Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to develop their own teacher and leader evaluation system using the following guidelines:
  - The local superintendent formally requests permission from the State Superintendent of Education to create a locally developed evaluation system.
  - If granted permission to begin the design, the design must include:
    - Self-assessment using the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards for teachers and the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders for all leaders.
    - A dialogue process between the educator and his/her supervisor concerning the strengths and weaknesses revealed by the self-assessment and those perceived/witnessed by the supervisor.
    - A professional learning plan that results from the dialogue.
    - Evidence over time that the professional learning plan is being enacted and that it is resulting in the desired changes in educator practice.
    - All parts of the evaluation system must have a timetable connected to them as indicative of professional growth over time rather than a check list, a one-sitting event, or simply a process.
    - All evaluation systems must have a process for capturing data related to all elements of the evaluation.
    - All locally designed evaluation systems must be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education for review and approval before they may be implemented.
    - Review is done by the ALSDE professional evaluation staff and a recommendation is made to approve, return to LEA for further design, or deny approval.
    - Results of the evaluation systems must be submitted to the ALSDE either electronically or in hard copy.
    - Currently, 5 of the 134 LEAs support a locally developed formative evaluation system.
    - Summative components of the evaluation system developed by an LEA will be reviewed by the ALSDE professional evaluation staff to ensure compliance with state requirements.
    - The LEA-developed systems will require similar multiple measures to include student achievement and/or growth and must follow similar weighting of the measures as required in the state system.
    - As with the evaluation system developed by the state, all LEA-developed results will be reviewed by the ALSDE.
    - Results of the locally developed systems will be used to determine definitions of effectiveness for teachers and leaders in the LEA developing the evaluation.
    - Training to support effective implementation of the state summative evaluation

system will be accomplished through a series of annual face-to-face trainings at the 11 Alabama Regional Inservice Centers and through WebEx presentations. LEAs will be responsible for training to support locally developed systems.

- Both the state and locally developed summative evaluation systems will be monitored by the ALSDE. Because all systems must capture data electronically, continual monitoring of the systems as to timeliness and quality of data input and the accuracy of student achievement and growth data tied to effectiveness definitions will be monitored electronically for the state and for locally developed systems.

We anticipate that the same procedures will be followed if LEAs continue to elect to develop their own support and evaluation systems.

**NOTE:** As the summative elements of EDUCATEAlabama and LEADAlabama are finalized and results of the evaluation system are linked to definitions of teacher and leader effectiveness, the Alabama State Board of Education may need to determine whether LEAs will continue to be allowed to design local evaluation systems or must use the state-designed and approved model to ensure that the definition of teacher and leader effectiveness is universally aligned with standards of practice across Alabama's 134 LEAs.

**Plan to create, adopt, and implement professional evaluation systems including formative and summative assessments yielding teacher and leader effectiveness definitions**

Milestone or Activity	Detailed timeline	Parties Responsible	Evidence	Resources Needed	Significant Obstacles
State Board of Education retires former evaluation system for teachers and adopts EDUCATEAlabama	Done	State Superintendent of Education	Board Resolution May 14, 2009		Accomplished
State Board of Education retires former evaluation system for leaders and adopts LEADAlabama	Done	State Superintendent of Education	Board Resolution June 28, 2012		Accomplished
Implementation of technology-driven formative evaluation systems, EDUCATEAlabama and LEADAlabama	Done	Alabama Supercomputer Authority, ALSDE Evaluation Section	Full implementation August, 2012 evidence by online system and data and evaluation data for all teachers and leaders in Alabama		Accomplished
Approval of 5 requested LEA-developed evaluation systems	Done	State Superintendent of Education	Full implementation August, 2012. Documentation on file		Accomplished
State Board of	Done	State	Board		Accomplished

Education approval to create a teacher and leader effectiveness definition based on multiple measures		Superintendent of Education	resolution, May 27, 2010		
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**Plan to create, adopt and implement professional evaluation systems including formative and summative assessments yielding teacher and leader effectiveness definitions**

Milestone or Activity	Detailed timeline	Parties Responsible	Evidence	Resources Needed	Significant Obstacles
Convening of SIG Professional Evaluation Committee to determine multiple measures for a pilot in SIG schools	Convened July 12, 2012	ALSDE Federal Programs	Committee members list, meeting agenda and sign-in sheets	Data from the SIG pilot will be used to inform state-wide effectiveness definitions	Determination of assessments to be used for growth model
Members of the Alabama Professional Evaluation Design Committee (APEDC) approved	March 2013	State Superintendent of Education	Member list	Nominations from professional organizations	
Convening of APEDC Review MET Project and results of SIG Pilot	April 2013	ALSDE Evaluation Section	Meeting agenda, minutes, member sign-in	Multiple states evaluation research. Proposed summative designs	
APEDC Task Force Meetings	April-July 2013	Task Force Members, ALSDE Evaluation Section	Meeting agenda, minutes, member sign-in	Multiple states evaluation research. Proposed summative designs	

**Plan to create, adopt and implement professional evaluation systems including formative and summative assessments yielding teacher and leader effectiveness definitions**

Milestone or Activity	Detailed timeline	Parties Responsible	Evidence	Resources Needed	Significant Obstacles
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Task Forces report recommendations for Multiple Measures Guidelines to the USDOE	August 2013	Task Force Members, ALSDE Evaluation Section	Report delivered to State Superintendent of Education		
APEDC convenes to recommend weights for multiple measures	September-October 2013	APEDC members, ALSDE Evaluation Section	Recommendations delivered to State Superintendent of Education		
Public Review of Recommended Multiple Measures and Weights and Submission of Summative Evaluation	November-December 2013				
State Board of Education adopts plans and approves pilot in selected LEAs; Option begins for LEAs to create locally developed evaluation systems	January 2014	State Superintendent of Education	List of LEAs in the pilot		
LEA pilot training for state-approved summative evaluation systems	February-April 2014	ALSDE Evaluation Section		Training manuals, online support, training agenda, online sign-in	All materials must be developed and temporary technology platform must be used
Begin development of technology platform to support the state-wide summative components	February-April 2014	ALSDE Evaluation Section, Alabama Supercomputer Authority	Screen shot development, links to formative assessment platforms, training developed	Online training processes	Tight timetable, funding
LEA plan review and approval	June-July 2014				

**Plan to create, adopt and implement professional evaluation systems including formative and summative assessments yielding teacher and leader effectiveness definitions**

Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Parties Responsible	Evidence	Resources Needed	Significant Obstacles
Implement state pilot of state-approved summative evaluation systems in selected LEAs; locally approved plans piloted	August 2014-May 2015	Selected LEAs supported by ALSDE Evaluation Section	Data gathered from the pilot		
Convene the APEDC to review pilot findings	June 2015	APEDC members and ALSDE Evaluation Section			Time to make changes to the system based on pilot data
Implemented suggested changes to the state and locally approved system	June-August 2015	ALSDE Evaluation Section, Alabama Supercomputer Authority			
Implement formative and summative evaluation systems and apply effectiveness definitions to all professionals	August 2015-May 2016	ALSDE Evaluation Section and all LEAs			