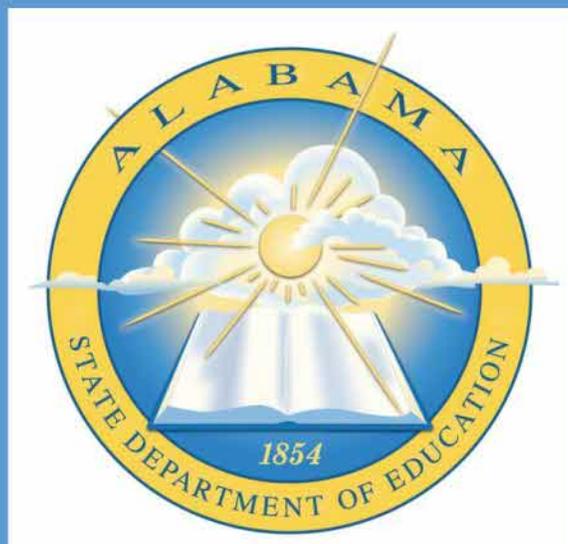


Alabama State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators



ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is pleased to submit to the U.S. Department of Education the following plan that has been developed to address the long-term needs for improving equitable access to great teachers and leaders in Alabama. This plan responds to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's July 7, 2014, letter to SEAs as augmented with additional guidance published on November 10, 2014. Alabama's plan complies with (1) the requirement in Section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) that each state's Title I, Part A, plan includes information on the specific steps that the SEA will take to ensure that students from low-income families, students of color, and students with special needs are not taught by inexperienced, non-highly qualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other children, and the measures that the agency will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the agency with respect to such steps; and (2) the requirement in the ESEA Section 1111(e)(2) that a state's plan be revised by the SEA if necessary. Given the importance of strong leadership, our plan includes specific steps that we will take to ensure that students from low-income families, students of color, and students with special needs are not disproportionately attending schools led by inexperienced or unqualified principals.

Alabama is committed to improving the student outcomes for all students; therefore, this plan's purpose is to improve access to excellent educators that are highly qualified for Alabama's most disadvantaged youth without decreasing our focus on the need for high-quality educators for all districts, schools, and classrooms. It is our aim to narrow and ultimately eliminate the gap between the number and percentage of highly qualified teachers in the state's high-poverty and low-poverty schools. Strategies in the plan are intended to result in equitable distribution of highly qualified, experienced, and effective teachers across the state to increase the likelihood that all students will be taught by a highly qualified, effective teacher and so that all students are on grade level in reading and mathematics. Our comprehensive approach will strengthen and maintain teacher and principal effectiveness across the state with an emphasis on our schools and classrooms with the greatest need.

To create this plan, a team of leaders at the ALSDE took the following steps:

- Developed and began implementing a long-term strategy for engaging stakeholders in ensuring equitable access to excellent educators.
- Reviewed data provided by the United States Department of Education (ED) and our own Public Educator Data System to identify equity gaps.
- Conducted root-cause analyses based on data with stakeholders to identify the challenges that underlie our equity gaps to identify and target our strategies accordingly.
- Set measurable targets and created a plan for measuring and reporting progress and continuously improving this plan.

Scan of Alabama’s Policies, Initiatives, and Currently Available Data

The Alabama Educator Equity Coalition members from the ALSDE began the process by scanning and collecting current policies, initiatives, and data. The specific areas reviewed were the following:

- Existing state policy and practice for improving educator recruitment, retention, and development.
- Common district human resource policies in the state.
- Policies and initiatives focused on Alabama’s Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and other providers that prepare teachers and principals.
- Initiatives relating to professional learning programs.
- Alabama’s efforts to develop, test, and implement a new Educator Effectiveness Evaluation Program. This effort is ongoing, and we are working to identify elements included in the system that can be used as performance metrics to measure equity gaps (e.g., classroom observation scores using tested protocols, student growth measures, summative ratings using multiple metrics for teachers, school surveys, and schoolwide growth measures for principals).
- Available data identified as relevant to the development and implementation of our state’s equitable access plan. As a starting point, we reviewed the data profile prepared by ED, in particular the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) data submitted by our state’s school districts; ED Facts data that we provided to ED on classes taught by highly qualified teachers; and state data similar to that found in the Common Core of Data, including basic information such as demographic and comparable wage data on teacher salaries. To build on these data, we also reviewed additional relevant data that was contributed by our school districts such as teacher and principal turnover rates. Our state director of data management led the process of collecting and reconciling these disparate state and national data resources. Any technical issues were resolved by the data management team.

SECTION 2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We believe that a successful state plan for teacher and leader equity in Alabama could not be developed in isolation by the ALSDE or even by the ALSDE in cooperation with school districts, but rather the plan’s success will depend in large part on a long-term involvement and ownership of other stakeholders, including parents and other community members; teachers and other school employees (including the Alabama Education Association [AEA]); teacher and leader educators; and others from higher education, school boards, civil rights and community groups, and the business community. The ALSDE has involved stakeholders from the beginning and will continue to do so through a statewide Educator Equity Coalition of key stakeholder groups that will oversee the long-term implementation of and improvement of this plan. To ensure that we produced a truly shared plan of action, the ALSDE has held three regional meetings (southern, central, and northern regions of the state). We also worked with several committees and task forces (Appendix C).

We made a list of potential stakeholder groups including state and district leaders, teachers, principals, parents, union leaders, community and business organizations, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), and students to join the Educator Equity Coalition. All minutes of meetings were shared among members of the group. We used e-mails and a newsletter to explain our work in creating this plan. As documented in Appendix A, stakeholders were directly involved in the root-cause analysis. Stakeholders

also collaborated in examining the data to identify Alabama’s most significant gaps in equitable access to excellent teaching and leading, which together with our root cause analysis informed our theory of action. A sample meeting agenda is included in Appendix B.

To begin the equity plan process, the Alabama Regional Inservice Centers provided technical assistance to the team in preparing for the stakeholder engagement meetings. An internal ALSDE team was formed, and the process for reviewing and selecting materials and data to be shared with the stakeholders began. Next, a cross-functional team was formed, made up of a member from each section of the ALSDE, to make sure that if there were any programs within the agency that were already in place, we could work to coordinate efforts to align the strategy in the plan. The next step was to make a list of potential participants including state and district leaders, teacher educators, administrators, higher education representatives, principals, parents, union leaders, representatives from community and business organizations, and students to join the equity group (See Appendix A). In the meetings participants reviewed available data and made suggestions on additional data to include in the plan. After exploring the root causes of inexperienced, out-of-field, or unqualified teachers, the group gave possible strategies. Several of the participants have committed to future meetings and to providing feedback to the plan. A list of those who attended can be found in the appendices.

Our selection of stakeholders was representative of all regions in the state. We asked for volunteers in an e-mail sent to organizations in communities as well as educators. Our list was comprehensive so that we could get a true picture of our state. We wanted this plan to be owned by all of our stakeholders in Alabama. We also asked for input in a newsletter that was publicly posted on the ALSDE Web site at www.alsde.edu.

To document the stakeholder engagement process, we created a list of the groups that we met with and any other members that were included in the process. We also captured whether or not groups participated in the development of the plan following the initial outreach. For stakeholders interested in staying updated on the plan, we provided access to the plan on the AdvancEd Web site. We also kept stakeholders up to date on the progress via e-mail.

As documented in Appendices D and E, stakeholders were directly involved in the root-cause analysis. Stakeholders also collaborated in examining data to identify the state’s most significant gaps in equitable access to excellent teaching and leading that together with our root-cause analysis informed our theory of action. Meeting agendas are included in Appendix B. The following are the groups that participated in the stakeholder meetings:

- Alabama Education Association—The Alabama Education Association is a professional organization for teachers, education support personnel, and advocates. The objective of the group is to work for improved working conditions, salaries, and benefits for all education professionals.
- Alabama Association of Educational Administrators—This is an association that is committed to supporting school leaders through advocacy and professional learning.
- Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS)—CLAS is the umbrella organization for school and system-based administrators in Alabama.
- Alabama Parent Teacher Association (PTA)—The Alabama PTA is a relevant and responsive resource for the engagement of families, schools, and communities in the education and well-being of children and youth in Alabama.

The statewide committee supported the planning of three public stakeholder meetings in each of three regions in Alabama: southern, central, and northern regions. The purpose of the meetings was to accomplish the following:

- Review data and serve as advisors on interpreting the data and the root causes behind Alabama’s equity gaps using the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders resource titled *Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root Cause Analysis* (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement-guide>).
- Identify and prioritize the root cause of inequities in access to excellent teachers and leaders.
- Review and provide feedback on the draft plan.

At these meetings we heard from parents, students, teachers, school and district leaders, pupil services personnel, school board members, community organization members, advocacy group leaders, educator preparation faculty, private business representatives, and other members of the public. To ensure that the conversations were productive and solutions-oriented, we used structured discussion protocols such as Center on Great Teacher and Leaders group protocol in *Resource 10: Build Your Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators* (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement-guide>), as well as the Public Agenda discussion guide on the equitable access to excellent educators Web site (<http://www.publicagenda.org/media/how-can-we-ensure-that-all-children-have-excellent-teachers>). We heard many perspectives—most notably from teachers who emphasized the importance of effective leadership and working conditions for attracting and maintaining effective teachers.

Each meeting had a note-taker using the Center on Great Teacher and Leaders note-taking template in *Resource 5: Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms* (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement-guide>) that systematically captured stakeholder feedback and incorporated feedback from all the meetings into memoranda that were reviewed, discussed by the authors of this plan, and made publically available through the ALSDE Web site. Between meetings, participants were encouraged to engage more widely with colleagues and communicate insights they had gained. These were added to the compilation of stakeholder input.

We will continue to involve our stakeholders in our meetings going forward through additional meetings, ongoing two-way feedback loops, and the support of a statewide Educator Equity Coalition, which will oversee the long-term commitment to implementing the strategies in this plan. Each component of the plan was developed through this collaborative process. The stakeholder groups will be tapped to add substantive knowledge from their particular perspective to engage in ongoing data reviews, root cause analyses, and monitoring and modification of strategies. We will communicate through e-mails, public postings, and social media. The plan will be also be monitored by all through the shared planning resource with AdvancEd. AdvancEd provides technology through a user-friendly interface.

AdvancEd and the Alabama State Department of Education have a partnership that:

- Provides a unified approach to support and enable school improvement and AdvancED/SACS CASI accreditation activities.
- Creates a single, continuous improvement process for Alabama schools/districts that meets state, federal, and accreditation requirements.
- Eliminates duplication of effort at all levels.
- Provides Alabama schools/districts access to research-based products, services, professional learning, and educational technologies.
- Creates a sense of renewed energy about school/district improvement planning.
- Provides a single repository for accreditation, school improvement, and compliance data and information.
- Provides an opportunity for statewide analysis and data-driven planning.

Our districts and schools have been using this platform for continuous improvement for two years. It was required of all schools to have a plan on this platform by October 2014. Our districts and schools have been monitoring their progress on their organizational and academic goals throughout the year; and our stakeholders suggested at the meetings that we use this platform by transitioning this plan into the site and, in turn, the districts and schools will incorporate the equity goals into their continuous improvement plans. This will allow all participants to share in the success of the plan.

Alabama will also participate in feedback loops, conference calls, and future meetings in order to ensure that stakeholder engagement continues. The meetings, calls, and electronic communications thus far have elicited insight into the equity issues. The cycle below indicates the methods that will be used for communication.



We emphasized to our stakeholders that we need to work together so that Alabama continues to strive to accomplish the core principles of equality of opportunity:

- All students deserve an equal opportunity, including equal access to excellent educators.
- Teachers and principals who work in our hardest to staff schools deserve the support needed to succeed.
- Excellent educators are those fully able to support students in getting and remaining on track to graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

When we met with our stakeholders, we took notes to ensure that the plan is one that represents our stakeholders.. We also gathered feedback from our posted newsletter on our Web site and from social media (See Appendix C). Listed below are ideas that were developed from the feedback:

- **Root Causes and Strategies:** Several ideas of root causes of all gaps and strategies to overcome them were discussed in stakeholder meetings (e.g., leadership, recruitment and retention, inadequate preparation, and educator preparation).
- **Root Causes–Educator Preparation:** There are not enough graduates in needed areas.
 - Need more candidates in the content areas and grade levels.
 - Need more incentives to enroll in teacher education programs.
 - Need more candidates in math and science areas.
- **Root Causes–Teacher Candidates:** Candidates are not prepared for the culture of high-poverty and high-minority schools.
 - Need new teachers to be prepared for students who are not on grade level.
 - Need for preparation of new teachers in classroom management.
 - Need for new teacher preparation to deal with special needs students.
- **Root Causes–Related to Leadership:**
 - Need more support for first-year teachers on classroom management.
 - Need more effort to foster parental support.
 - Need less focus on what teachers want and more on what they need.
 - Need less emphasis on athletic success and more on academic success.
 - Need more training in areas like special education.
- **Root Causes–Discipline and School Safety/Security Issues Related to Local Leadership:**
 - Need student behavior issues to be addressed so teachers will not leave.
 - Need to improve the public image of high-poverty and high-minority schools due to the reputation of having more discipline issues.
 - Need more resources.
- **Root Cause–Recruitment and Retention:**
 - Need effective leaders to stay in high-poverty and high-minority schools.
 - Need leaders to be involved in the recruitment of teachers to their schools.
 - Need certain areas of licensure in high-poverty and high-minority schools.
 - Need teachers with little experience in high-poverty and high-minority schools to understand the culture.
 - Need to improve the perception of communities in which these schools are located because it is difficult to recruit.

Suggested Strategies from Stakeholders to Address Root Causes:

- **Strategies to Address Educator Preparation:**
 - Continue to investigate more nontraditional licensure programs for special education.
 - Advocate for more data-driven decision making for institutions of higher education.
 - Encourage strategic advising at educator preparation programs for directing students to high-needs areas.
 - Help to develop more partnership opportunities between IHE and local districts.
 - Continue to expand loan forgiveness programs.
 - Improve communication about areas with high-needs schools.
 - Advocate for educator preparation programs that will provide better preparation in differentiated instruction to ensure that new teachers are able to address the needs of their students.

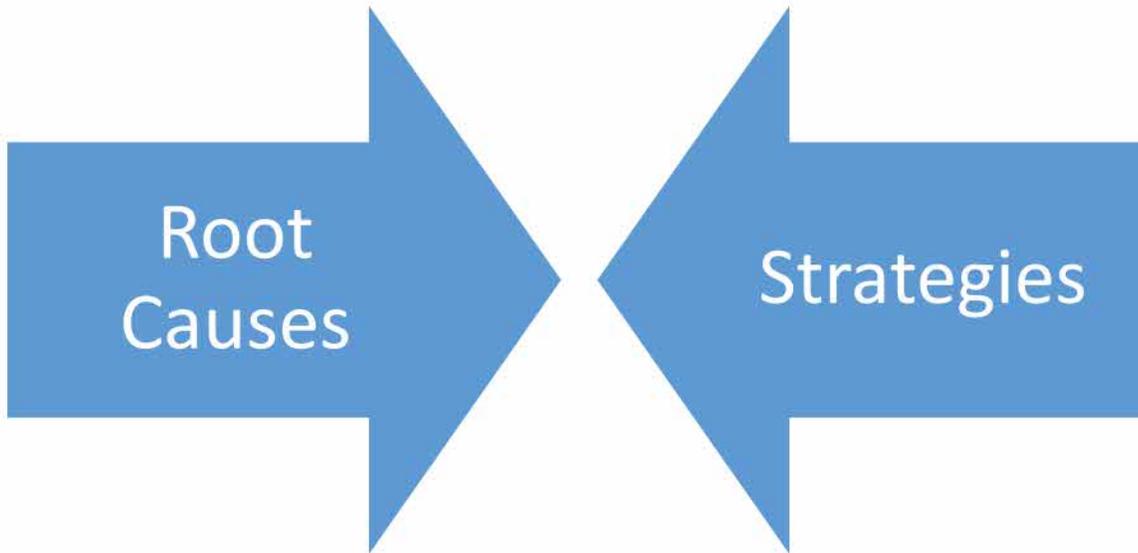
- **Strategies to Address Leadership:**
 - Train leaders on methods to support teachers.
 - Place value on professional learning.
 - Advocate for leader mentoring programs.
 - Place value for quality over seniority.
 - Provide more opportunities to develop leaders.
 - Train leaders to include specific discipline techniques.
 - Advocate for supervision of teachers to be based on individualized needs of teachers.
 - Help leaders and teachers build relationships in the community.
 - Help leaders build relationships with businesses in the community.
 - Help leaders improve how to manage school preference for teachers.
 - Empower leaders and teachers through celebrations of success.

- **Strategies to Address Recruitment and Retention:**
 - Educate leaders to celebrate success.
 - Change the culture of the school.
 - Recruit more academically able candidates to the profession.
 - Recruit determined candidates.
 - Change the hiring process to make it easier for schools to hire strong candidates.
 - Improve trust within the school.
 - Create incentives for teachers to move to the community.
 - Include scholarships for those who will commit to working in high-poverty and high-minority schools.
 - Look at other states' models such as Oklahoma's Urban Teacher Preparation Program and Arkansas's "Grow Your Own" Teacher Cadet Program.
 - Partner with IHEs.
 - Provide professional development opportunities.

The feedback from the meetings and also from our newsletter helped to inform the internal team so that we could become organized in our process.

SECTION 3A. PLAN FOR ELIMINATING EQUITY GAPS

Rationale: Alabama’s plan for eliminating equity gaps involves examining data to reveal equity gaps, analyzing root causes, determining strategies to address gaps, and identifying monitoring procedures. The ALSDE believes the best way to reduce equity gaps is to draw a direct connection between the existing gaps and strategies designed to eliminate those gaps. This will be accomplished by matching strategies to the root causes of the gaps they are designed to address.



SECTION 3B. EXPLORATION AND ANALYSIS OF EQUITY GAPS

To ensure that equitable access work is data-driven we have relied on data sources that are readily available to us. As we have worked with our stakeholder groups, their perspectives have shed greater light on the data and helped us gain a better understanding of the root causes for our equity gaps and our strategies, including unintended consequences or likely implementation challenges for certain strategies.

Alabama recognizes that highly qualified (HQ) status is not the only indicator of effectiveness and that we still have a long way to go to achieve our equitable access goals. When our Educator Effectiveness Evaluation System (Appendix K) is fully operational, districts will report their findings so that we will be able to analyze and identify gaps in teacher and leader effectiveness. Alabama’s Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators provides a comprehensive strategy for state and local action to eliminate these gaps.

DEFINITIONS AND METRICS

Data Sources: Data from multiple sources were utilized in this process. Table 1 represents the descriptions of data sources used.

Table 1–Data Sources

<u>Student Management System</u> —A Web-based system that enables schools and districts to submit and certify data to the ALSDE. The system has the capability to pull data from various source systems on a nightly basis, as well as an on-demand basis, as required by school districts.
<u>School District Financial Management System</u> —A Web-based system that allows districts to submit and certify financial data to the ALSDE. The system has the capability to pull data from various source systems on a nightly basis, as well as an on-demand basis, as required by school districts.
<u>Alabama Educator Directory/Teach Management System</u> —An online, Web-based database that contains general licensure information on teachers and administrators. Educators may also use this Web site to update name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, etc.
<u>AdvancEd ASSIST</u> —A Web-based platform for continuous improvement planning and monitoring. Educators in Alabama have access to this resource for their planning needs.

For this analysis, we relied on data that resides in the Student Management System (2013-2014). This data was related to poverty and minority students. The Teach Management System supplied data on non-highly qualified teachers and teachers teaching out of field. We encountered some limitations in our data analysis. Since much of the data is collected at the local level instead of at the state level, data availability is limited.

Scope—In order to not stretch beyond the capability of the ALSDE or its stakeholders, this plan is designed to focus on the following areas:

- Equity gaps that are the most meaningful.
- Root causes that are the most common across equity gaps.
- Strategies that will address the root causes.
- Metrics that will monitor the progress of the most strategies.

Additionally, in order to leverage resources this plan will begin implementation with an emphasis on the following areas:

- Improving the effectiveness of existing strategies and activities.
- Implementing in districts where the greatest gains can be revealed.
- Supporting the implementation of continuous improvement plans with goal(s) to address staffing.

Alabama examined the most recent set of data available (2013-2014 school years) in order to identify equity gaps to be addressed in this plan. Table 2 represents the demographic, poverty, and minority data for Alabama schools in 2013-2014. We chose to use quartiles to divide “low-poverty” and “high-poverty” schools. Table 3 represents this data in a scatterplot.

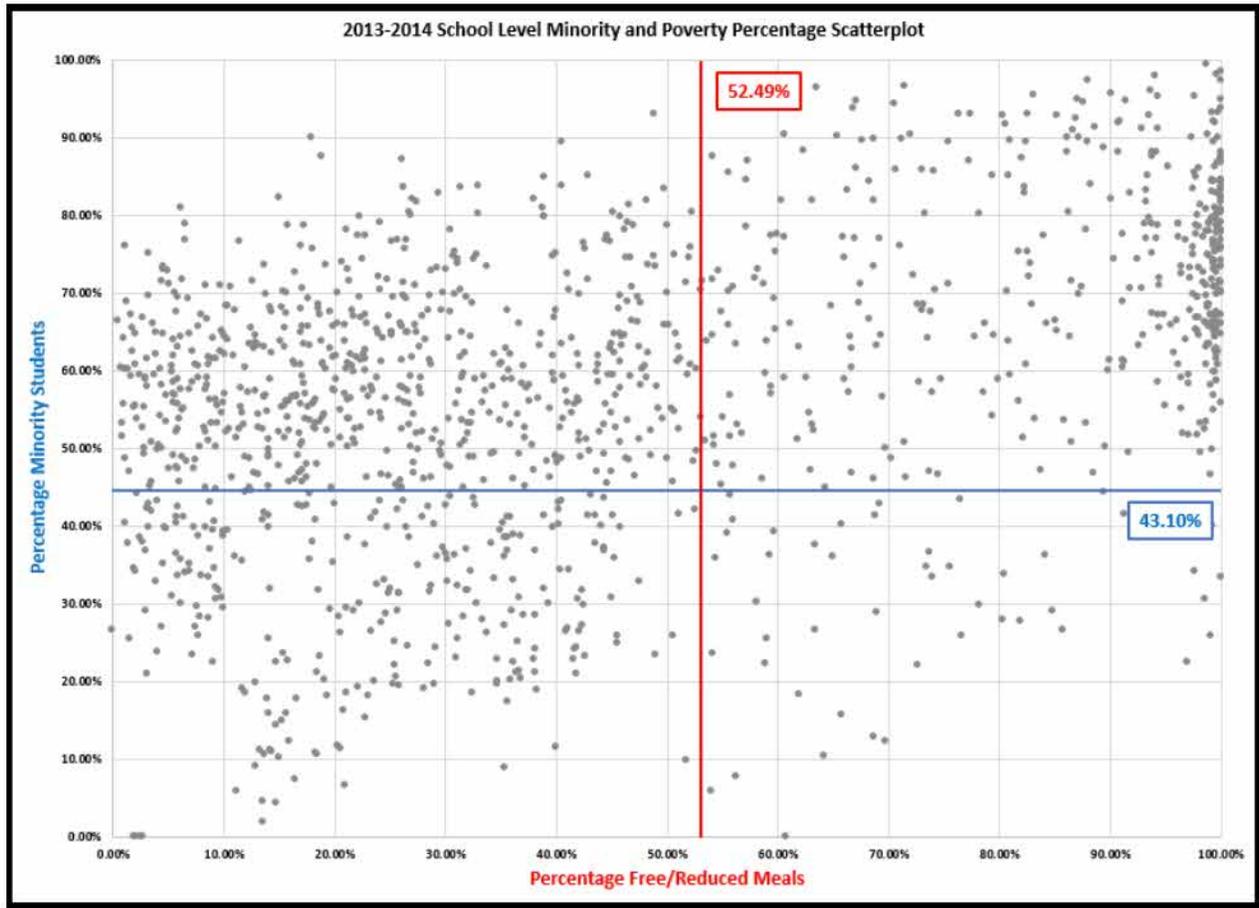
Table 2. Demographic, Poverty, and Minority Data for Alabama Schools in 2013-2014

Number of Schools	1,340
Number of Schools in Each Quartile	335
Number of Districts	135
Total Number of Student Enrollment	746,204
Total Number of Teachers	46,232
Percent Students in Poverty	
All Schools	52.49%
Highest Poverty Quartile Schools (HP)	79.88%
Lowest Poverty Quartile Schools (LP)	29.43%
Percent Minority Students	
All Schools	43.10%
Highest Minority Quartile Schools	93.08%
Lowest Minority Quartile Schools	9.99%

Source: SIS

This data informed our process so that all stakeholders had an accurate picture of the low- and high-poverty data for Alabama. We also presented this information in a scatterplot.

Table 3. Poverty and Minority Data for Alabama Schools in 2013-2014



Once we had discussed this data, we facilitated the discussion on the past equity plan. We further explained our definitions and parameters to our stakeholders.

Alabama’s 2010 Educator Equity Plan focused primarily on highly qualified status, and we realize that there are additional ways to describe excellent teachers and leaders; therefore, we are involved in an on-going process with our educators to determine the rubrics for effectiveness. At this point, we anticipate that each district may have different sets of criteria; therefore, the rubrics may vary from system to system and thus our data analysis will need to account for the variances. Our aim is to ensure that all schools, including the high-minority and high-poverty schools, have excellent teachers and leaders.

Because of the challenges associated with accurately and consistently capturing the qualities of an effective teacher or leader statewide, in selecting teacher and leader effectiveness the ALSDE has elected for comprehensiveness over simplicity. Table 4 reflects the definitions and parameters of the factors that were available for review for the equity gaps.

Populations: We chose to use quartiles to divide “low-poverty” and “high-poverty” schools. The high percentage ranked by poverty and minority measures in Table 3 highlights the need to examine metrics at different levels. We will address schools with both high-poverty and high-minority populations as high need.

Table 4. Poverty and Minority Definitions and Parameters

Poverty Measures	High-Poverty Schools– Schools in the highest 25% of all schools rank by % Free and Reduced Lunch	Range 70.38%–99.49%	Median 79.88%
	Low-Poverty Schools– Schools in the lowest 25% of all schools ranked by % Free and Reduced Lunch	0.00%–45.61%	29.43%
Minority Measures	High-Minority Schools– Schools in the highest 25% of all schools ranked by % non-white students	73.09%–100%	93.08%
		0.00%–17.81%	9.99%

Equity Analysis Factors

The most challenging conversation was what constitutes a significant or important gap that we should be addressing. Since our shortage-area data has not changed drastically over the past few years, we realize that the issue of teachers who are non-qualified needs to be addressed. We also realize that there is a higher percentage of non-qualified teachers at the secondary level. Based on the input from our stakeholders, we hypothesized that some of these teachers could be qualified in another area but are teaching out of field. That said, based on discussions with stakeholders and our understanding of available data, we made determinations about what gaps were of concern. To devise an equity plan, Alabama’s data analysis began with numerous metrics where schools were the unit of analysis for low-income students and minority students.

Our last Educator Equity Plan focused on HQT status. In contrast, the current plan focuses instead on ensuring that all classrooms are taught by “excellent” teachers who in turn are supported by “excellent” leaders. Recognizing that there are multiple important dimensions of educator effectiveness, Alabama continues to study the multiple layers: qualifications, expertise, performance, and effectiveness in improving student academic success. For the purpose of the plan, we will use the definitions of excellent teachers and leaders below. As we continue this process, we will update this plan’s definitions to reflect the final definition of the terms.

Proper certification is defined as having a valid Alabama certificate in the teaching field(s) and/or area(s) of instructional support in which the person is assigned throughout the school day. The current edition of the *Subject and Personnel Codes* of the Alabama State Department of Education shall be used to determine whether an individual holds proper certification for his or her assignments throughout the school day. (source: *Alabama Administrative Code*, Rule 290-3-2-.01(45), of the Teacher Certification Chapter).

- An Excellent Teacher is properly certified to teach in his or her content area, is able to demonstrate strong instructional practices and significant growth in student learning, and consistently demonstrates professionalism and dedication to the profession both within and outside of the classroom.
- An Excellent School Leader is properly certified to lead both instructionally and administratively, is able to demonstrate strong leadership practices and significant contributions to growth in student learning, and consistently demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to the profession within and outside the classroom.
- An Inexperienced Teacher is a teacher holding a valid Emergency Certificate, Alternative Baccalaureate-Level Certificate, Career and Technical Alternative Baccalaureate-Level Certificate, or a Special Alternative Certificate (source: ALSDE Educator Certification Section). The data is collected at the local level.
- An Out-of-Field Teacher is a teacher holding a valid Alabama certificate that is not in the area(s) he/she is assigned to teach during the school day. The data is collected at the local level.

A school leader holding a valid Alabama certificate that is not in the area of leadership.

A counselor, librarian, etc., holding a valid Alabama certificate that is not in the area of instructional support to which he/she is assigned to serve during the school day (source: ALSDE Certification Section).

- A Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) is a teacher of a core academic subject who is properly certified for his/her position and has demonstrated sufficient content knowledge to meet the guidelines of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB).
(The specific section in NCLB that defines "core academic subjects" is found in the following: "*In this document, "teacher" refers to elementary school teachers and to middle and secondary school teachers of "core academic subjects" as defined in NCLB to include English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.*" The NCLB definition is not applicable to teachers of driver education, health education, physical education, ROTC, or career technical education unless the latter are teaching embedded credit or substitute credit mathematics or science courses.)
- Non-Highly Qualified Teacher is a school teacher of an elementary, middle, and secondary school who not properly certified in the content area for his/her position and has not demonstrated sufficient content knowledge to meet the guidelines of the *No Child Left Behind* (source: *Alabama Administrative Code*, Ch. 290-2-2).
- Teacher Turnover is defined as the number of teachers teaching with emergency or alternative certification in a system from one year to the next (source: ALSDE Certification Section). This data is collected at the local level.

- Teacher Salaries Data is data on salaries offered by Alabama’s school districts and has important implications for the district’s ability to recruit and retain enough excellent teachers for all students.

Alabama has an ongoing process for defining these metrics. In looking for our root causes, we examined the percentages of teachers not highly qualified. In addition, we reviewed salaries of those in their first or second year of employment in teaching. Furthermore, we examined the culture and climate surveys results in participating schools to identify teacher satisfaction.

To identify Alabama’s equity gaps, we considered both the U.S. Census definition of poverty to define “low income” students as well as eligibility for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP). The FRLP is a commonly understood and utilized measure by our school districts and stakeholders. In Alabama, it is also used to calculate state aid. As a result, Alabama is developing mechanisms to account for FRLP in school districts that choose to utilize the community eligibility option. Minority students are identified as a member of a minority race or ethnicity (e.g., African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander/Alaskan Native). We recognize that teacher and leader effectiveness for students who are English language learners, homeless, or in foster care, in isolated rural schools, tribal areas, or in migrant agricultural stream is critically important. We believe that action steps laid out in this plan will benefit all students, not just those specifically focused on as part of the plan.

Exploration of the Data

Past data indicate that Alabama needs to make progress toward having all highly qualified core academic subject teachers equitably distributed across the state. The data also established the need for continued and more targeted state actions to ensure equitable distribution of excellent teachers while increasing the supply and availability of such teachers, particularly the hard to staff districts and schools. The following are key findings from the Educator Equity Profile from 2011-2012: In the quartile of schools with the highest percentage of students in poverty, 5.5 percent of teachers were not highly qualified compared to 2.7 percent of teachers in the quartile of schools with the lowest percentage of students in poverty. In the quartile of students with the highest percentage of students in poverty, 4.9 percent of teachers were in their first year of teaching compared to teachers in the quartile of schools with the lowest percentage of students in poverty. In the quartile of schools with the highest percentage of minority students, 5 percent were in their first year of teaching, compared to 3.1 percent of teachers in the quartile of schools with the lowest percentage of minority students. This data indicates a need for equitable distribution. We also examined current data as it was reported to the ALSDE from districts in our student management system. It indicates that there is a higher percentage of highly qualified teachers employed in districts with fewer high-needs (both high-poverty and high-minority) schools. These districts also have higher starting salaries for first-year teachers. The low-needs schools scored consistently better on the state assessment as well.

One limitation of the Alabama data is that it does not allow for accurate assignment of teachers to students to determine within school disparities in students and teachers. Another limitation is that until full implementation of the state’s Educator Effectiveness system is achieved, which is underway, measures of teacher quality are limited to measures using teacher certification and status of a teacher as either non-highly qualified or highly qualified. Please see Appendix K to view outline of the Educator Effectiveness work.

Although much of the data needed for this plan is collected at the local level, we do have a new resource that is provided to districts and schools for planning and compliance monitoring (see Appendices G-J). This platform enables identified ALSDE staff with permissions access to the schools' plans that gives them the ability to provide support for planning and reporting. The process shows the recognition of the need for effective communication among the ALSDE, the districts, and schools, and it helps with our planning at the state level. All schools have been required to write a continuous improvement plan in the AdvancEd platform (Appendix G). As part of this process, schools looked at their assessment performance and for input from their stakeholders to form goals for improvement. The ALSDE can monitor the progress of the continuous improvement plans; therefore, as part of this data collection we reviewed the goals for targeted schools for connections to attracting, recruiting, and retaining excellent educators. We also reviewed the plans for professional development goals and those aimed at improving the culture and climate of the schools. The AdvancEd system contains a survey that districts and schools can use that questions stakeholders about their perceptions of the school. This survey was not a requirement. However, its use was encouraged for data analysis. Although submitting a continuous improvement plan was a requirement for all schools, they were given flexibility in choosing their own goals based on the root-cause analysis completed at the school level. The ALSDE team conducted a data dive into this platform to help further define the root causes and possible solutions (Appendices G-J).

Equity Gap Analysis

Our data reveal that an equity gap exists for the metrics that we included (Table 5). We used the Educator Equity Profile as a starting point for our examination of root causes. Although the data from the report is from the 2011-2012 school year, we agreed that the data contributed from the identified districts indicates a continued need for excellent educators.

Table 5.

	Teachers Not Highly Qualified	Teachers Without Certification	Teachers in First Year
School Type	Percent Difference	Percent Difference	Percent Difference
Low- vs. High-Poverty Schools	HP-5.5 LP-2.7 2.8	HP-0.7 LP-0.7 0	HP-4.9 LP-3.5 1.4
High- vs. Low-Minority Schools	HM- 5.5 LM-3.3 2.2	HM-0.9 LM-1.5 0.6	HM-5.0 LM-3.1 1.9

We examined data from 2014-2015 and determined the sampling of low-needs (both low-poverty and low-minority) schools had a higher percentage of highly qualified teachers than the sampling of those from high-needs schools. In addition, the salary is greater at the low-needs schools indicating the inequitable distribution (Tables 6-7). It was further noted that the greater need for excellent educators falls in the secondary schools. Our stakeholders recognized this as a gap that must be addressed.

Table 6. Salary of HQT – High-Poverty/High-Minority 2014-15

District	Elementary HQT	Secondary HQT	Starting Salary	Poverty Quartiles
Dallas County	99.47%	77.36%	37,585	2,3,4
Lowndes County	100%	84.62%	37,047	2,3,4
Anniston City	98.75%	81.57%	38,938	2,3,4
Sumter County	85%	61.22%	39,508	2,3,4
Perry County	94.96%	65.22%	37,972	3,4
Barbour County	87.40%	62.38%	38,710	2,3,4

Table 7. Salary of HQT – Low-Poverty/Low-Minority Schools 2014-15

District	Elementary HQT	Secondary HQT	Starting Salary	Poverty Quartiles
Auburn City	98.6%	99.79%	40,324	1
Hoover City	99.7%	99.8%	60,000	1,2
Shelby County	98.8%	97.3%	42,686	1,2,3
Mountain Brook City	95.6%	100%	40,497	1
Trussville City	100%	98.5%	42,326	1
Guntersville City	100%	96.4%	49,329	1,2

The per-pupil expenditures for all sources indicate that although more funds are spent for the higher-needs schools, student performance at low-needs schools was more than double the percentages found in high-needs schools in 2013-2014 (Table 8).

Table 8.

District	ADM	State Source Per-Pupil Expenditure	Federal Sources Per-Pupil Expenditure	Local Sources Per-Pupil Expenditure	All Sources Per-Pupil Expenditure	Reading-Meeting and Exceeding Standards-ACT Aspire Grade 8
Anniston City	2079.60	6199	2255	3,255	11,709	32.84%
Barbour County	908.90	6836	2867	1083	10,786	18.31%
Dallas County	3608.90	6591	2845	896	10,333	37.09%
Lowndes County	1717.40	6542	3437	1745	11,724	22.97%
Perry County	1637.90	6652	2372	787	9,812	30%
Sumter County	1755.60	6792	2319	1,132	10,244	34.44%
Auburn City	7785	5422	807	2503	8733	65.33%
Guntersville City	1986	5402	1169	2339	8,910	63.87%
Hoover City	13882	5680	889	4362	10,931	72.04%
Mountain Brook City	4471	5408	172	6473	12,053	78.11%
Shelby County	22,904	5454	977	2644	9074	62.82%
Trussville City	4259.35	5542	764	2983	9,289	60.39%

This contradiction has implications that we all agreed needed to be examined. Stakeholders questioned if this might be an indication of teacher and leader effectiveness in the high-poverty areas. It further highlighted a need to have a means to measure teacher and leader effectiveness at the local level.

We examined the most recent data from the ACCESS Distance Learning Report April 2015 to discover the rate of enrollment of the selected high-poverty and high-minority schools in Chart 1 in comparison to the low-poverty and low-minority schools in Chart 2 in our state virtual school. This effort is to ensure that all students in Alabama have access to highly qualified teachers.

Chart 1. High-Poverty and High-Minority Schools

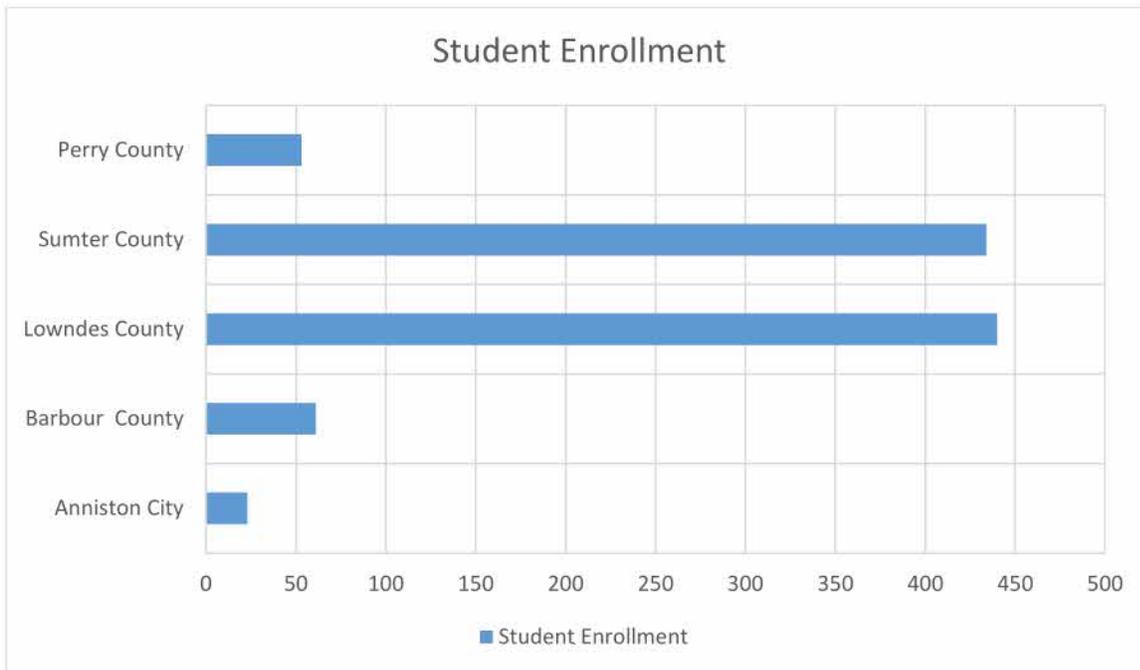
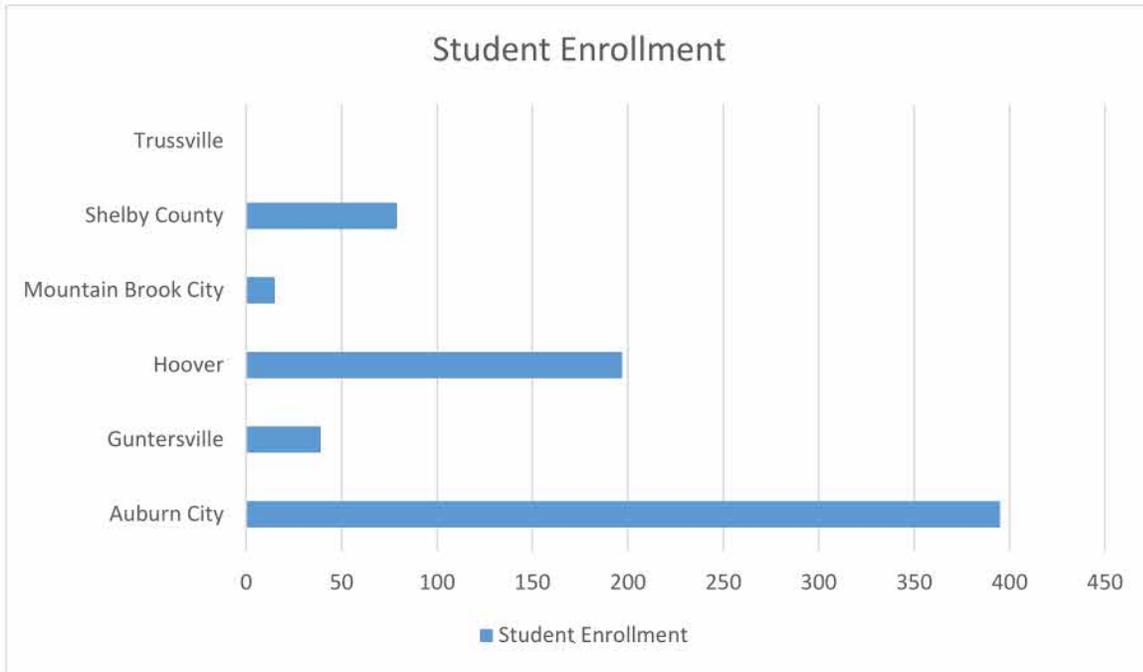


Chart 2. Low-Poverty and Low-Minority Schools



The data show that some of the selected high-poverty and high-needs schools are enrolling in distance learning. In addition, the selected low-poverty and low-needs schools are also participating. Although the results cannot be used to show a gap, it can indicate a program that is making progress in Alabama. Stakeholders stated that we need to continue this strategy, but we need to question highly qualified teacher availability in the high-poverty and high-minority schools. This discussion led to the examination of our available data for the past three years of the distribution of non-highly qualified teachers (Charts 3-5).

Chart 3. Distribution of Non-Highly Qualified Teachers from 2012-2015

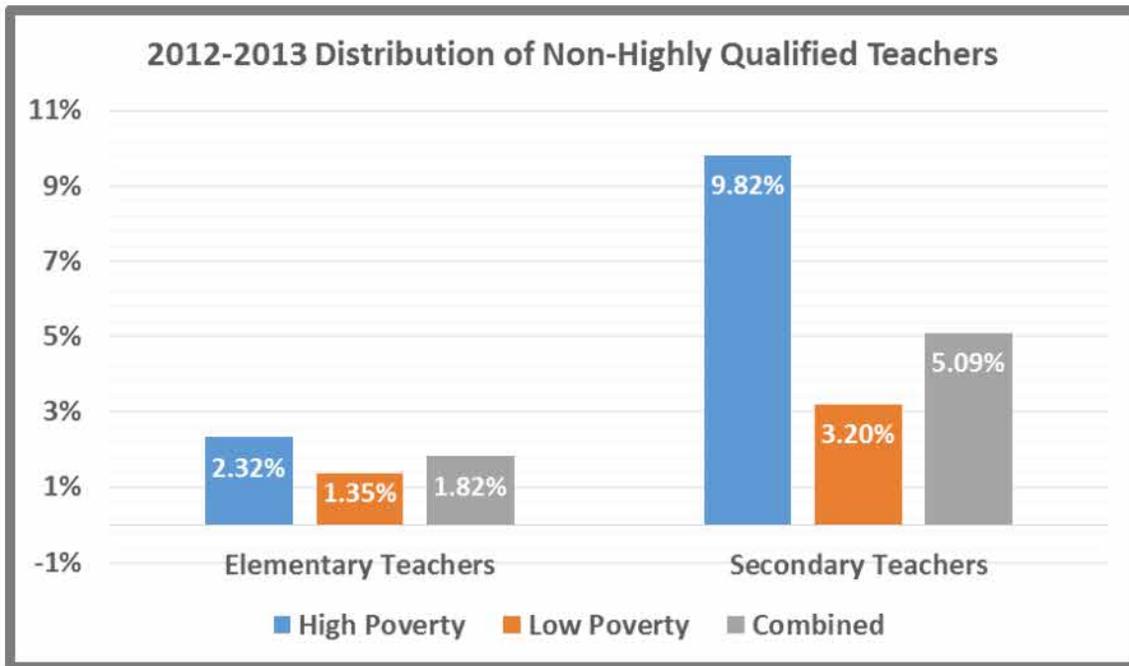


Chart 4.

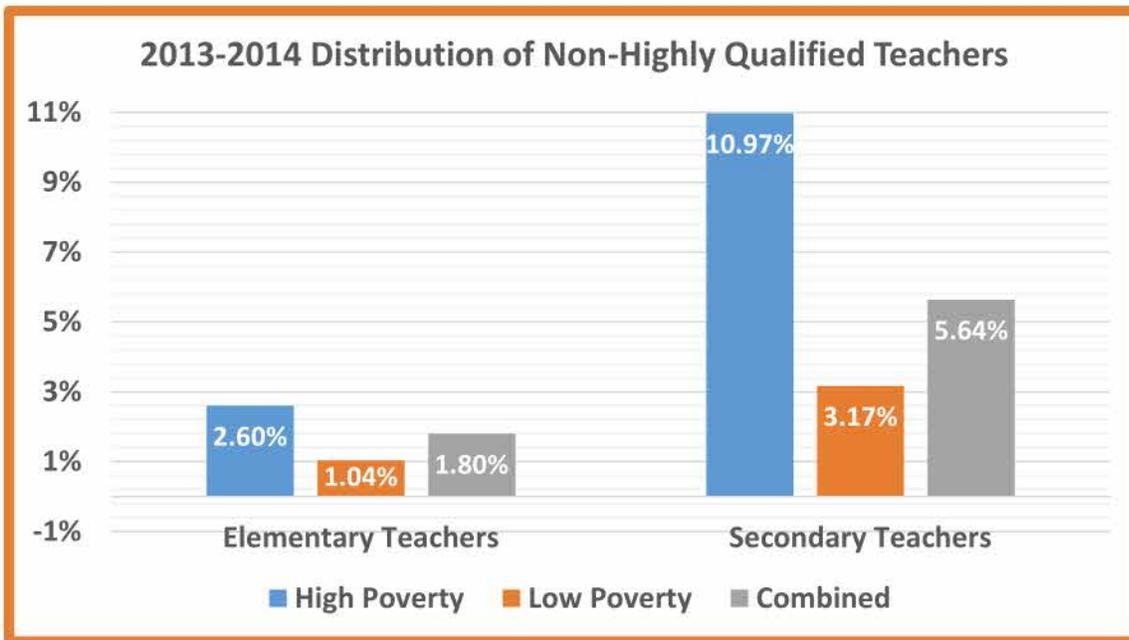
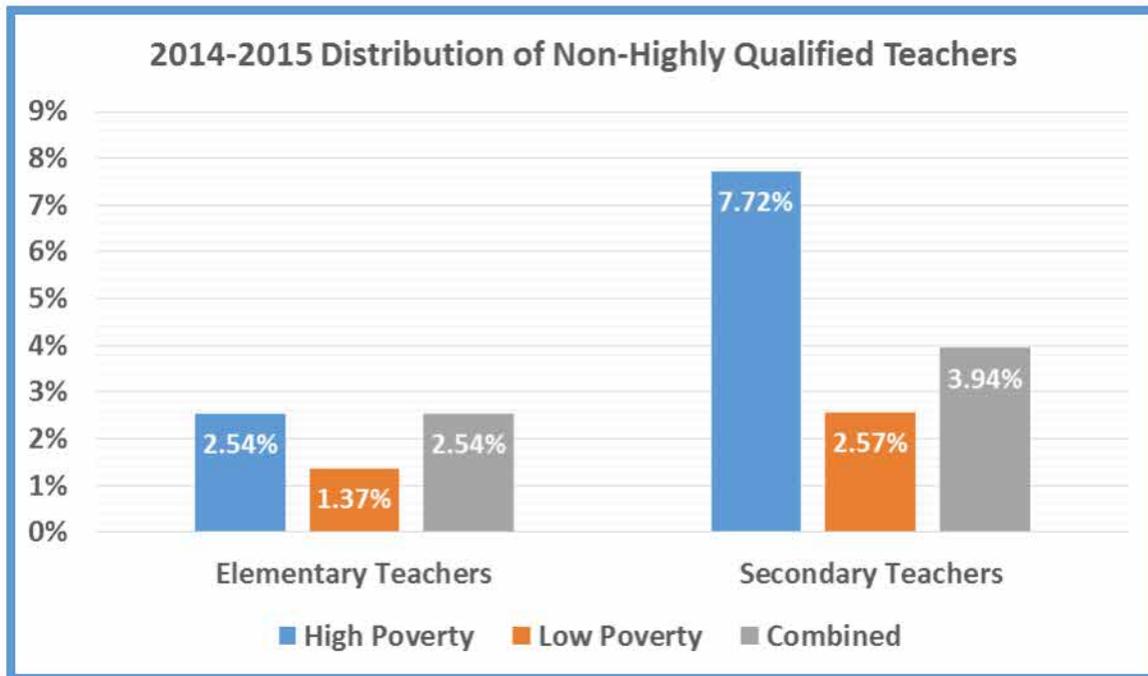


Chart 5.



All three years point to the higher percentage of non-highly qualified teachers located in high-poverty schools. The most recent year shows 2.54% of non-highly qualified teachers are located at the elementary level in high-poverty schools compared to 1.37 in low poverty schools. An even greater equity gap is apparent in the secondary level. It shows 7.72% of non-highly qualified teachers at the secondary level in high-poverty schools compared to 2.57 % located in secondary schools in low-poverty areas.

After discussing these inequities, the need to have a plan of action became clear. The ALSDE internal team decided to look into the AdvancEd platform to discover whether or not the sampling of high-poverty schools had addressed these staff needs in their school continuous improvement plans (see Appendices G-J). One of the tools to address Federal Guidelines for Title I Schoolwide and Title I Targeted Assistance schools is called the Title I Diagnostic. In the template, the schools address the following equity questions:

Instruction by Highly Qualified Staff

- Do all of the instructional paraprofessionals meet the NCLB requirements for highly-qualified? If no, what is the number that is not highly qualified and what is being done to address this?
- Do all of the teachers meet the NCLB requirements for highly qualified? If no, what is the number that is not highly qualified and what is being done to address this?
- Describe how staffing decisions ensure that highly qualified, well trained teachers provide instruction and how their assignments most effectively address identified academic needs.

Strategies to Attract Highly Qualified Teachers

- What is the school's teacher turnover rate for this school year?
- What is the experience level of key teaching and learning personnel?
- What are specific initiatives the school has implemented to attract and retain high-quality teachers regardless of the turnover rate?
- What are specific initiatives the district has implemented to attract and retain highly qualified teachers regardless of the turnover rate?
- If there is a high turnover rate, what initiatives has the school implemented to attempt to lower the turnover rate of highly qualified teachers?

In the ALSDE's support of schools, we have highlighted the turnaround principles with continuous improvement, so we were able to look for goals containing effective leadership, data analysis and staffing practices (management), as well as goals showing instruction and curriculum (instruction) and culture and climate (learning supports) strategies. We examined a sampling of middle schools to determine the number of goals addressed in each of the three areas. A higher percentage of goals were in the area of learning supports at the high-poverty and high-minority schools than in the area of learning supports at the low-poverty and low-minority schools. Chart 6 displays a sampling of high-poverty and high-minority schools, and Chart 7 displays a sampling of low-poverty and low-minority schools. Both samplings had equal emphasis on instruction.

Chart 6. High-Poverty and High-Minority Schools

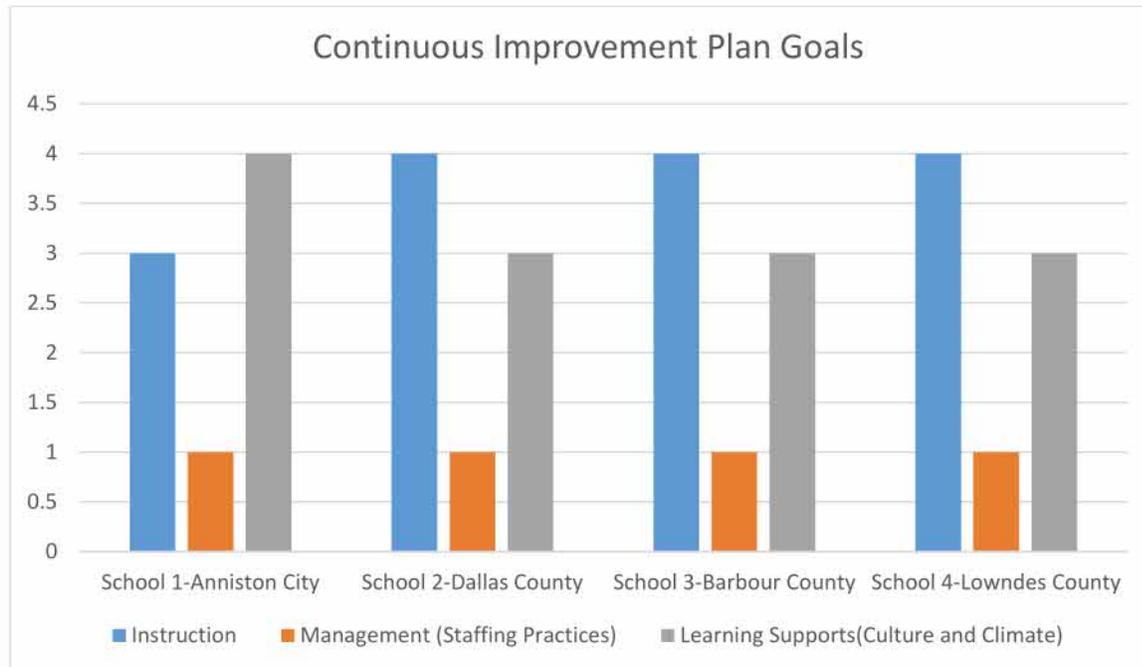


Chart 6 indicates that a higher number of goals occur in the area learning supports than in management.

Chart 7. Low-Poverty and Low-Minority Schools

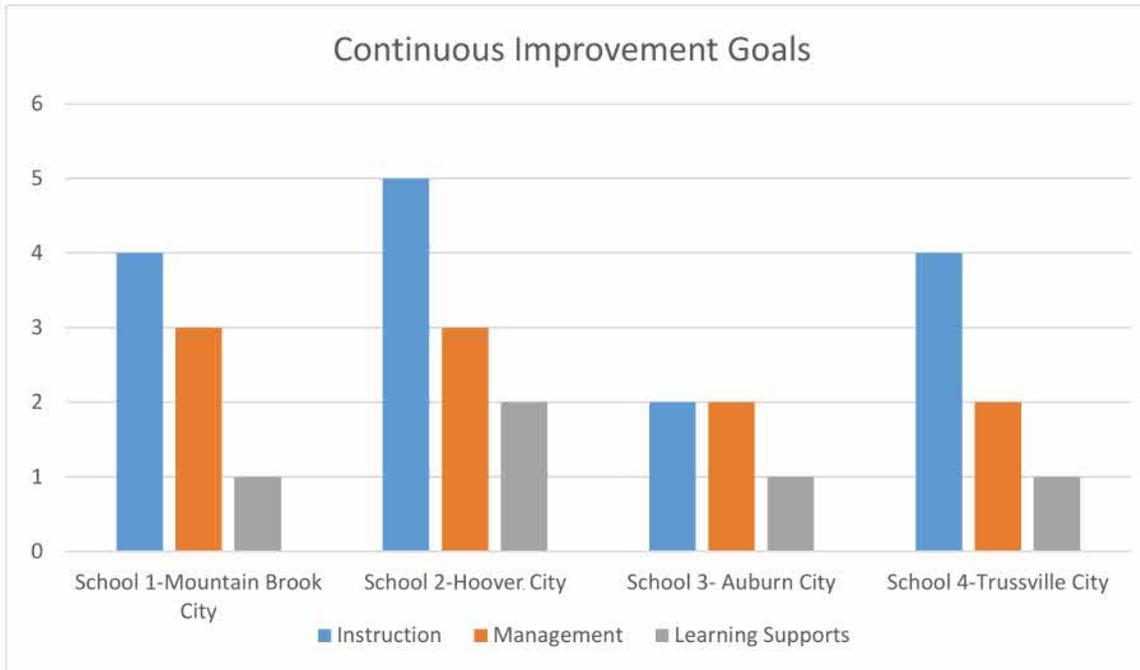
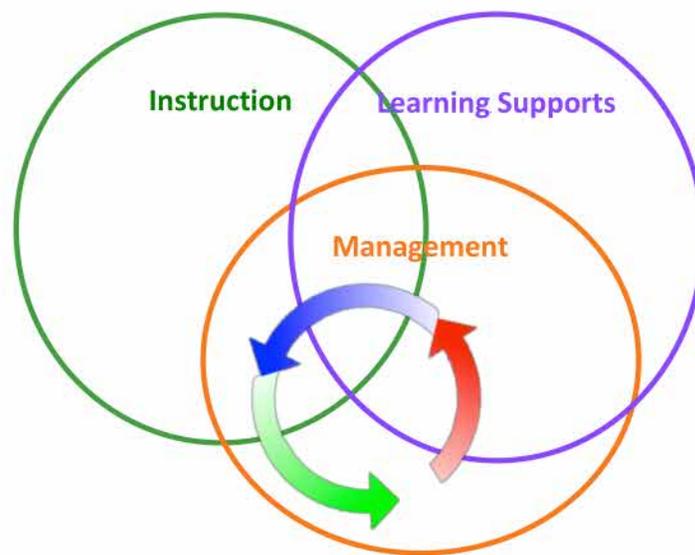


Chart 7 shows a higher percentage of goals in the management area than in learning supports.

The diagram below show the three focus areas of school plans. We examined the progress notes of the schools for ways to establish support for our schools as well as ways we could develop this and other plans for our state.



The ALSDE team conducted a revealing review of the plans in the AdvancED platform (Appendices G-J). It was apparent that both high-poverty and high-minority schools place an emphasis on a need for professional development for improving the culture and climate of the schools. This data was somewhat inconclusive, but much insight was gained from actually reading the schools' plans. The ALSDE internal team spent time with the stakeholders discussing ways to address the schools' and districts' continuous improvement plan goals and the future inclusion of equity goals.

The data and the review of the continuous improvement plans revealed gaps that need to be addressed.

The ALSDE plans to address the following identified equity gaps:

- Students in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to have a non-highly qualified elementary teacher than students in low-poverty and low-minority schools.
- Students in high-poverty schools are more likely to have a non-highly qualified secondary teacher than students in low-poverty schools.
- Teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to have starting salaries less than teachers in low-poverty and low-minority schools.
- Teachers and leaders in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to address professional development needs with learning supports (classroom management, etc.) as a focus in their continuous improvement plans.

SECTION 4. GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIVITIES TO OVERCOME EQUITY GAPS

Alabama is committed to improving student outcomes for all students; therefore, this plan's purpose is to improve access to excellent educators without decreasing our focus on the need for high-quality educators for all districts, schools, and classrooms. Our comprehensive approach will strengthen and maintain teacher and principal effectiveness across the state with an emphasis on schools and classrooms with the greatest need. The Alabama State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators has been developed by a team from the ALSDE, districts, schools, IHEs, and civic and local organizations, as well as parents, students, and community volunteers. Alabama has been providing a resource from AdvancEd to all schools and districts to serve as a platform for their planning needs. In keeping with this open communication and partnership with our schools and districts and recognizing our need for continued improvement planning, this plan can also be found on the AdvancEd platform. Our equitable access plan includes strategies for overcoming our equity gaps and the strategies aligned with the goals of our state strategic plan, PLAN 2020, that encompass learners, support systems, professionals, and schools and districts. Our theory of action will be to have a comprehensive approach to talent management and resources and to implement it carefully and to monitor it to modify when necessary. If we accomplish this, our districts will be better able to recruit, retain, and develop excellent educators so that all students have equitable access to excellent teaching and leading to help them achieve the highest potential in school and beyond.

Goal 1: Professionals/Learners – The Alabama State Department of Education will work collaboratively with its institutions of higher education (IHE) to ensure effective **teacher and leader preparation** to better develop excellent educators for high-needs schools. Alabama has acknowledged the impact of instructional leaders and effective teachers through its development of the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards, the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development, and the Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development (The standards and continuums may be accessed at www.alsde.edu).

Root Causes:

- Students in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to have a non-highly qualified elementary teacher than students in low-poverty and low-minority schools.
- Students in high-poverty schools are more likely to have a non-highly qualified secondary teacher than students in low-poverty schools.

Strategy to Address Root Causes: We believe that well-prepared educators positively impact student achievement and have a lower turnover rate. Thorough teacher and principal preparation provides the candidates with the knowledge and skills they need for successful instruction and leadership; therefore, we will work collaboratively with IHEs to ensure quality programs. The ALSDE will continue to work with IHEs to better prepare teachers to teach “all students” and new administrators to support teachers as they provide instruction aligned to Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS).

In 2005, the Alabama State Board of Education 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.

We will provide the support and resources for educators employed in Alabama’s districts and schools for continued improvement of teaching and leading practices. We will participate in the following ongoing activities for the implementation of the teacher and leader preparation strategy.

- Advocate for the development and funding for a loan/scholarship program for prospective core-academic subject teachers – It would be recommended that a candidate receive a pre-specified funding up to two years of full-time enrollment, and the annual funding would decrease after the completion of all requirements for admission to a teacher education program. The loan pay-back amount would be reduced incrementally each year, up to five years, if the teacher is hired by and continues teaching in a high-poverty and high-minority school.
- Maintain Partnerships with Alabama’s IHEs – The ALSDE maintains a collaborative relationship with the Institutions of Higher Education in the state. Representatives from the IHEs are included in many efforts at the ALSDE and, presently, representatives are members of the Alabama Educator Equity Coalition.

- Advocate for the [University of Alabama at Birmingham UAB Teach](#) program – This program is wrapping up a highly successful first year, surpassing enrollment expectations and garnering philanthropic funding. The UAB Teach program is designed to quickly produce a new teaching force of highly qualified instructors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects. The only program of its kind in Alabama, UAB Teach enables undergraduate STEM majors to receive a subject-matter degree and certification to teach at the secondary level in a traditional four-year plan, representing significant tuition savings from the standard state certification model. The UAB Teach program is based on [UTeach](#), a program that began in 1997 at the University of Texas at Austin (Appendix F).
- Offer Principal Leadership Development Grant – The ALSDE has a comprehensive and aggressive plan in place to ensure the *Project Alabama Consortium for Turnaround (PACT)* project will be implemented as designed to ensure the overall outcomes of the project to develop excellent leaders for high-needs schools are accomplished and within the stipulated budget.
- Advocate for development and funding of a tiered certification process – The tiered certification process would increase salaries and responsibility and decrease professional oversight and support as a teacher or leader progresses through certification phases of intern, novice/resident, professional, master, and expert/instructional specialist.
- Continue to require, facilitate, monitor, and conduct action research on the continued implementation of the Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development and the Alabama Continuum of Teacher Development.
- Advocate for teacher and leader preparation programs, including development of a strong accountability component, to be clinically based so that teachers have ample opportunities to build effective pedagogical skills during the preparation process.
- Advocate for accountability of teacher preparation programs in linking education to the university arts and sciences counterparts in meaningful ways, based on the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards – 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.
- Continue to work with the A+ Education Partnership – Its division, The Alabama Best Practices Center (ABPC), has partnered with the ALSDE to pilot the Instructional Partners Pilot. Now in its fourth 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 his/her school and connects with district and regional content specialists (Alabama Reading Initiative and the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative) when needed. Focused on a partnership approach, instructional partners support the development of effective teaching practices 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 Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards.

- Partner with selected districts to critically review the alignment of educator evaluation and professional learning – Our goal is to fully integrate an evaluation system with a focus on professional learning for student achievement and, as a result, observe higher rates of growth for teachers, principals, and students. Our immediate goal is to complete the ongoing process for the Educator Effectiveness Evaluation System. We are collaborating with educators to determine the data that can identify areas of improvement and the relevant opportunities for professional learning. Teachers and administrators are analyzing multiple components of practice utilizing district-developed rubrics that not only differentiate for quality but also clearly describe pathways for teacher growth. This process will aide teachers and leaders in the identification of areas in need of growth in instructional practice that will ultimately lead to continuous improvement and increases in student performance.
- Advocate to all stakeholders for the continued use of Teach in Alabama, a recruitment Web site for teachers and leaders located at www.alsde.edu.
- Continue discussions for implementation of *Professional Pathways for Alabama Teachers*, a system designed to retain and recognize highly effective teachers, attract and excite new teachers, and enhance teaching quality in every classroom across our state (See Appendix H). In 2008, the Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching developed a system for creating professional pathways for Alabama teachers to present to Governor Bob Riley and the Alabama State Board of Education. It is a visionary redesign of the teaching profession at its core. It would likely retain a significant number of accomplished veterans, and it would attract and retain new teachers with a wide range of 21st Century skills, competencies, and backgrounds that are necessary to meet the needs of today’s students. These might otherwise be lost to the profession. Due to the financial situation in 2008, the plan was not implemented; however, the ALSDE is revisiting the subject of tiered certification and is using this model as the foundation of those discussions. In the *Innovations in Teaching* report, the Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching recommended seven actions designed to implement the *Professional Pathways for Alabama Teachers* and to recruit, train, and retain teachers equipped to teach in the 21st Century classroom. Each recommendation addresses an area essential to the continued pursuit of quality teaching in our state.
 - **Designate two “demonstration sites” for the *Professional Pathways* system.** The ALSDE would seek to work with one rural district and a feeder pattern in an urban district to begin implementation of the proposed *Professional Pathways* system. A primary purpose of the demonstration project would be to ensure that the proposed system incorporates rigorous state standards, while providing appropriate choice and flexibility at the local level.
 - **Improve the quality of teacher preparation.** This set of recommendations would seek to structure meaningful partnerships between Colleges of Education and P-12 schools and districts in order to improve both the academic and clinical preparation of prospective teachers. They would also aim to increase the accountability of teacher preparation institutions for the quality of their graduates.
 - **Expand and consolidate recruitment of new members to the profession.** The ALSDE would communicate the opportunities and rewards of the teaching profession to a larger number of talented young people.
 - **Increase the quality of current alternative certification routes and create new routes that encourage the best and the brightest to enter the teaching profession.** In order to remove barriers that currently prevent talented individuals from teaching, the ALSDE would recommend (a) a partnership with Teach for America and/or an Alabama version of this program, and (b) improving the quality of current Alternate Certification.

The structure of Professional Pathways for Alabama Teachers would be five stages of career development:

- *Apprentice Teacher* is the designation for prospective teachers (i.e., individuals who have been admitted to approved teacher education programs or alternative baccalaureate certification programs) and interns. Apprentice Teachers work with Professional or Master Teachers in approved clinical experiences.
- *Classroom Teacher* is the designation for the Individual who chooses to focus exclusively on student learning. While working on teams with colleagues, the Classroom Teacher chooses not to pursue the work required for the Professional Teacher designation, nor to assume leadership responsibilities associated with that role.
- *Professional Teacher* is the designation for individuals who want to spend most of their time with students in their own classrooms, but who are also interested in leading team colleagues as department chair, grade-level chair, school improvement committee chair, cooperating teacher, and other similar roles. Professional Teacher is the gateway into the new role envisioned by the *Professional Pathways* system.
- *Master Teacher* is the designation for individuals who qualify to assume more complex roles. These roles may focus on either supporting the learning of peers (e.g., mentor, demonstration teacher) or teaching larger numbers of students (e.g., distance learning teacher).
- *Learning Designer* is the designation pursued by the Professional Teacher who is interested in systems design. This designation might incorporate specialists in any of the following areas: assessment, instructional design, curriculum design and mapping, or instructional technology. The details are located in the Appendix H.

The primary benefit of Professional Pathways is that it allows potential leaders in the teaching force to utilize their leadership skills while remaining in the classroom. Additional details are provided in Appendix H.

Goal 2: Schools and Districts – The Alabama State Department of Education will work collaboratively with districts with high-needs schools to develop better recruitment, hiring, induction, and compensation practices.

Root Causes:

- Teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to have starting salaries less than teachers in low-poverty and low-minority schools.
- Students in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to have a non-highly qualified elementary teacher than students in low-poverty and low-minority schools.
- Students in high-poverty schools are more likely to have a non-highly qualified secondary teacher than students in low-poverty schools.

Strategy to Address Root Causes – Human Capital Management refers to the adoption of a spectrum of policies (preparation, recruitment, hiring, induction, professional learning, compensation, and/or school climate) in a coordinated and aligned way. The ALSDE will provide support and resources for districts with high-needs (high-poverty/high-minority) schools in order to improve their recruitment, hiring, induction, and compensation practices for better access for excellent teachers and leaders. The ALSDE

will create a model and demonstrate how to build and manage effective talent. The following ongoing activities will be part of the process of the implementation of the Human Capital Management strategy:

- Collaborate with districts to develop effective talent models to support the recruitment, hiring, and retention of excellent teachers and leaders – These models will connect to the organizational strategies of the districts.
- Support the analysis of current teacher distribution and root cause analysis to forecast both long- and short-term needs.
- Advocate for the removal of barriers to innovation by delivering training and development and sharing delivery strategies.
- Improve and expand the induction and mentoring program – The ALSDE will conduct a survey and then, using the results of the survey and feedback provided by a focus group of new teachers, it will continue to provide training for teachers who are serving as mentors to beginning teachers and will expand the program as part of the long-term induction process. To support this expansion, districts will be encouraged to use their Title I, Part A, and Title II, Part A, funding. The ALSDE will also provide best practices for inducting teachers into the profession in all school districts. To ensure that Alabama’s professional teachers and leaders are provided with high-quality opportunities to learn and collaborate with colleagues to continually improve instruction, identification of individual needs will guide professional learning and the advances in education practice.
- Assist district staff in developing community partnerships that will provide community-based incentives to highly qualified core academic subjects teachers who agree to work in hard to staff schools and live in the schools’ communities.
- Continue to conduct training for local board of education members, district and designated school staff, and staff from selected state educational organizations on developing and implementing policies, procedures, and practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining excellent educators, particularly in districts identified as having hard to staff schools.
- Continue to provide Teach in Alabama, a teacher and leader recruitment site.

Goal 3: Support System – The Alabama State Department of Education will work collaboratively with districts with high-needs schools to improve the support system in order to attract excellent educators.

Root Cause:

- Teachers and leaders in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to address professional development needs in learning supports as a focus in their continuous improvement plans.

Strategy to Address Root Cause: Fiscal Equity – We believe that high-needs schools tend to face complicated resource needs at the school level (e.g., larger individualized education program costs, costs associated with behavioral issues, and remedial education needs). If available resources at these schools are systematically inadequate, their ability to maintain attractive school facilities and provide teachers with instructional and non-instructional support will suffer, leading to high teacher turnover. The ALSDE will collaborate with districts with high-needs schools in order to improve the working

conditions and climate in high-needs schools. To implement this strategy, we will participate in the following ongoing activities:

- Model and support the managing of school budgets – It is a complex process and not a sufficient part of Alabama’s formal training. Moreover, given that high-needs schools tend to face complex resource requirements at the school level (e.g., larger IEP costs, costs associated with behavioral issues, remedial education needs), good budget management is especially difficult in these schools. In recognition of this situation, the ALSDE will provide budget management training targeting the challenges of school leaders in our most high-needs schools. An initial training will be mandatory across the state and will cover basic budgeting best practices, including estimating costs properly, identifying reserve funds, and creating strategic spending plans. Beyond this plan, the ALSDE will work intensively with selected districts, providing leaders the opportunity to use state fiscal staff as a resource on the budget process. This use will be primarily through virtual communication and peer review requests. District staff will coordinate this process. Finally, the state will facilitate the communication between administrative staff on budget management and allowable use through a moderated online discussion board.
- Advocate for better hiring practices – The ALSDE will encourage districts to apply for grants. We will also consider new staffing models that could improve access through digital course choice or teams of high-quality educators.
- Review school spending plans to ensure that they meet the state’s requirements for equitable access to a suitable public education – The ALSDE periodically reviews these plans, and the district review must, at a minimum, include a representative sample of schools and an assessment of alignment to school and district priorities, disparities between high-poverty and low-poverty plans, and accuracy of cost estimation. The final report is then submitted to the ALSDE as proof of completion.
- Model and advocate for strategically allocating federal funds.
- Advocate for critically reviewing alternate funding streams – The ALSDE will conduct a review of funding streams (e.g., Title I, Part A, School Improvement Grants; *Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act* funds; Title III, Part A; and various competitive programs) to determine if the funds can be deployed more effectively in support of our teacher and leader equity goals. We will also seek to identify other funds that can be directed into teacher and leader equity-related professional learning such as a mentoring program for aspiring teacher leaders.
- Advocate for recruitment incentives – The ALSDE will encourage recruitment campaigns and incentives to attract and retain potential and high-quality educators to high-needs schools. Such campaigns will involve strategic recruitment events by hard to staff schools through their local educator preparation programs. Research has shown that teachers and leaders often prefer to work close to where they grew up. With this information in mind, we will ensure that these campaigns take into account the geographic location of targeted schools, loan forgiveness, and recruitment bonuses in high-needs locations.
- Advocate for increasing teacher/principal salaries so that salaries are competitive in high-needs schools. Recognizing the insufficiency of teacher and principal salaries, the ALSDE will pursue available grants in this area. If granted, the teacher and principal salaries could be based on teacher and principal performance and provide additional compensation to high-performing teachers and principals in hard to staff schools and subjects.

- Advocate for educator career advancement opportunities in high-needs schools – In recognition of the relative lack of career advancement opportunities in high-needs schools, the ALSDE will strongly encourage districts to create teacher-leader programs, particularly in high-needs schools.

Goal 4: Professionals/Learners – The Alabama State Department of Education will support ACCESS Distance Learning as a means of providing highly qualified teachers to high-poverty and high-minority schools.

Root Cause

- Students in high-poverty schools are more likely to have a non-highly qualified secondary teacher than students in low-poverty schools.

Strategy to Address Root Cause: Continue Implementation of ACCESS Distance Learning – ACCESS is a supplemental program that started in the fall of 2005; it served 51,809 course enrollments in the 2013-2014 school year. It is one of the largest state virtual schools in the country. ACCESS Distance Learning offered 20 recovery courses in school year 2013-2014. As of school year (SY) 2014-15, it also offers 15 credit advancement courses to students who “exhibit proficiency beyond the level required” (as approved by the Alabama State Board of Education as part of the 2008 First Choice Initiative).

- Continue and expand ACCESS Distance Learning – In school year 2013-2014, 27,712 students in 132 school districts (out of 136 total) took ACCESS courses either from delivery school sites during set time periods or off-site; 4% of courses are offered by interactive video conferencing. The ACCESS state appropriation for SY 2014-2015 is \$18.5 million, the same as for 2013-2014. Funds for hiring, teacher training, and course development are distributed to three support centers that then receive an additional \$250 per course enrollment. All students in Alabama must complete “one on-line/technology enhanced course or experience prior to graduation,” which could include an online course or a blended “online experience incorporated into courses used to fulfill requirements for graduation.” Exceptions through Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are allowed. The ALSDE has published guidelines on the essential characteristics of a quality online experience, specific course standards to meet the graduation requirement, and guidelines for online teachers.
- Analyze data showing the number of students enrolled in ACCESS Distance Learning in high-needs (high-poverty/high-minority) schools.
- Work with the high-needs schools with low enrollment to determine the challenges.
- Expand the course catalog with more courses for students who are enrolled.

Goal 5: Professionals/ Learners – The Alabama State Department of Education will work collaboratively with districts with high-needs schools to provide support and resources for professional learning needs.

Root Cause

- Teachers and leaders in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more likely to address professional development needs in learning supports as a focus in their continuous improvement plans.

Strategy to Address Root Cause: Professional Learning – It should be ongoing, comprehensive, and more effectively aligned to practice needs and growth goals of our educators. Professional learning is an important tool for enabling teachers and leaders to keep up with new ideas in pedagogy and interact to improve their practice. We will participate in the following activities to implement this strategy:

- Continue to provide professional development initiatives – Alabama currently has two major professional development initiatives: Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and Alabama Mathematics, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI). The Alabama Reading Initiative is the ALSDE’s effort to improve reading achievement by improving teachers’ ability to teach reading that is especially important for those teachers in high-needs schools. The ARI provides professional development in several different areas in order to serve teachers: pre-service teachers, regional reading coaches, comprehensive training, and adolescent literacy. The Alabama Mathematics, Science, and Technology Initiative is implemented in all 11 Alabama Regional Inservice Centers. Mathematics and science teachers receive training and continue to receive ongoing support through AMSTI.
- Conduct studies to ascertain critical needs for teachers who are teaching English Language Learners (ELL) – Based on findings, advocate for services to develop and implement a multi-year training and mentoring program for core academic subject teachers so that their practice is culturally relevant and employs knowledge, understanding, skills, and strategies needed to effectively teach core academic subjects to ELLs.
- Continue implementation of the state support team called the regional planning team – The ALSDE is committed to providing differentiated support to districts as they implement the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS).
- Continue training for the implementation of the CCRS.
- Monitor closely district continuous improvement plans that should include professional development goals.
- Advocate for the continued implementation of the Alabama Professional Development Standards.

SECTION 5: ONGOING MONITORING AND SUPPORT

The ALSDE will track teacher qualifications, teacher assignments, student population demographics, and academic accountability over time at the state level and school level. These data will be used to ascertain the degree and effectiveness of the Alabama State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators. Data will also be used to identify the need for making mid-course corrections and to support the development of additional policies to address residual inequities in the distribution of educators. The following activities will take place to monitor the progress of the implementation of the plan.

- Regional planning teams plan to monitor improvement plans found on the AdvancEd platform from selected schools on a quarterly basis to determine progress of school improvement plans.
- Program support staff will use desk review results and regional support summaries during scheduled visits to corroborate district progress toward implementation of this plan.
- Compliance assistance and program support staff will submit formal monitoring updates to the ALSDE staff quarterly. The ALSDE staff will monitor reports, discuss challenges and solutions, and redirect resources to accomplish desired goals during quarterly meetings.
- Quarterly reports of teacher qualifications and assignments by district, grade range, and core academic subject will be generated and disseminated to designated ALSDE staff.
- Districts have continuous access to reports that show assignments of teachers working out of field or working under emergency or alternative certificates in the schools.
- Selected schools' continuous improvement plans will be monitored for effective staffing strategies.
- ALSDE staff will monitor the ACCESS Distance Learning reports for continued implementation in high-poverty and high-minority schools as well as all other schools.
- The ALSDE will publicly report progress of this plan on its Web site, www.alsde.edu.

ALABAMA IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Activities	Parties Involved	Organizer	Time Frame	Frequency
Request for new voluntary data submissions in AdvancEd platform including: Climate Survey with working conditions section	All Districts	ALSDE Coordinator of Research and Development	Starting Summer 2015	Annually
Professional Learning Regional Meetings	Participating LEAs	ALSDE Coordinator of Student Learning	Starting Summer 2015	Quarterly
ALSDE Review of Funding Streams	Internal ALSDE Team	ALSDE Coordinator of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness	Starting Summer 2015	Annually
Human Capital Alignment Meetings	Participating LEAs	ALSDE Coordinator of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness	Starting Summer 2015	Twice a year
ACCESS Distance Learning	Participating Schools and ALSDE	ALSDE Office of Research, Information, and Data Services	Summer 2015	No less than three sessions-more as requested
Educator Equity Coalition Meetings-Implementation Feedback	Participating Stakeholders	ALSDE Coordinator of Research and Development	Starting Fall 2015	Ongoing
Educator Preparation and Licensure Task Force Meeting	Task Force Members	ALSDE Coordinator of Teaching and Leading	Fall 2015	Quarterly
Final Approval Equitable Access Plan	Internal ALSDE, stakeholders and the public	ALSDE Office of Teaching and Learning	September 2015	One time
Submission of Continuous Improvement Plans containing goals for Equitable Access	All Districts	ALSDE Office of Teaching and Learning	October 2015	Annually

APPENDIX A. ALABAMA EDUCATOR EQUITY COALITION–MEMBERS

Educators

Name	Title/Position	E-mail
Michele White	Instruction Technology Co	mdwhite@mcpss.com
Stephanie Danzy	Federal Programs Co.	sdanzy@mcpss.com
Karen Mohr	Mobile Chief Academic Officer	kmohr@mcpss.com
Belina Roberts	Federal Programs	bwroberts@mcpss.com
Lee Jacobs	District Coordinator	ljacobs@dothan.k12.al.us
Cherrye Parker	Federal Programs Supervisor	cparker@bhm.k12.al.us
Lashonda Rodgers	District Coordinator	lrogers@wilcox.k12.al.us
Remeka Little	District Coordinator	rlittle@bessk12.org
Gloria Odutola	Federal Programs Coordinator	Gloria.odutola@mps.k12.al.us
Rafael Simmons	Federal Programs Coordinator	
Tanya Miles	District Coordinator	
Jacinda Hollins	Assistant Principal/Teacher Leader-Math	jhollins@mcpss.com
Bernard Mitchell	District Coordinator	
Kellie Yeager	District Coordinator	kellieyeager@jefcoed.com
Pamela Patton	Federal Programs Specialist	Pamela.patton@hsv-k12.org
Towana Davis	Principal	Towana.davis@hsv-k12.org
Mr. Daryl Washington	Montgomery District	Darryl.washington@mps.k12.al.us
Vickie Poe	Dallas County District Coordinator	poev@dallask12.org
Zella Ford	Dallas County District Coordinator	fordz@dallask12.org
Toby Murphy	Selma City School-teacher	(b)(6)

Business and Community

Name	Title	Location	E-mail
Mayor Sandy Stimpson	Mayor	Mobile, AL	Marty.carrell@cityofmobile.org Executive Assistant to Mayor
Mayor George Evans	Mayor	Selma, AL	
Rep. Darrio Melton, AL67- House Democratic Caucus Chair	State Representative AL-67	Selma, AL- Montgomery, AL	win@darriomelton.com
Congresswoman Terri Sewell	Congress- representing 7 th District	Selma, AL	http://sewell.house.gov
Carolyn Powell	Community	Selma, AL	(b)(6)
Carrie Bearden	Community	Selma, AL	
C.S. Weerts	Community	Selma, AL	

Institutions of Higher Learning

Name	Title	Location	E-mail
Dr. Linda Bradford	Dean-Div. of Education Stillman College		lbradford@stillman.edu
Dr. Shelia Austin	Dean-School Of Education Auburn University - Montgomery	Montgomery, AL	Saustin1@aum.edu
Dr. Deborah Horn	Retired from Chair of Miles College		Dhorn83706@aol.com
Dr. Beth Quick	Chair-Dept. of Ed Univ. of AL. Huntsville	Huntsville, AL	Beth.quick@uah.edu
Dr. Deborah Voltz	University of Alabama in Birmingham/School of Education	Birmingham, AL	voltz@uab.edu

APPENDIX B. STAKEHOLDER MEETING AGENDA EXAMPLE



Alabama Educator Equity Coalition- March 27, 2015

- I. Welcome and Overview
Mrs. Logan Searcy- Research and Development/ALSDE
- II. Introduction of Members
- III. Identify Stakeholder Leader and Recorder
- IV. Plan Requirements
Consultation and Input- Present Educator Equity Profile 2011-2012
Explain Key Terms- Inexperienced, Unqualified, Out-of-Field Teachers
Definition of Effective and Highly Effective
Identification of Root Causes by Stakeholders
Possible Explanation of Root Causes (Equity Gaps)
Strategies
Measuring Progress and Reporting
- V. Closing and Remarks

APPENDIX C. STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER/ALSDE WEB SITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Alabama State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Vision

To give all students equitable access to Excellent Educators. The ALSDE will support districts:

- To understand what equitable means.
- To identify and utilize strategies to move districts toward the goal of ensuring that every students in every school has equitable access to excellent educators.
- To implement state-level changes to support districts in this work.
- To monitor progress toward equity.

Equity Plan

*USED posted Educator Equity Profiles on line at

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/resources.html>

*State Equity Plan requires that states engage stakeholders to share the data and develop the plan
2011-2012 USED Data utilized for Alabama Educator Equity Profile-

Civil Rights Data Collection: Data for teachers in their first year, teachers without certification or licensure, teachers who were absent more than 10 days, and adjusted average teacher salary. This is reported directed from LEAs to CRDC.

EDFacts- Data for classes taught by highly qualified teachers.

Alabama's Equity Plan

- The Alabama Equity Plan is our state's opportunity to clearly identify equity gaps, engage stakeholders to discuss our equity gaps and talk through our strategies to eliminate these gaps, and to articulate steps for Alabama to close our equity gaps.
- As outlined by the USED, the plan must include the following:
 - Stakeholder Engagement
 - Identification of Equity Gaps
 - Root Cause Analysis of Identified Equity Gaps
 - Measures and Methodology for Evaluating Progress
 - Public Reporting on Progress
- Equity Gap Requirements
 - USED requires states to calculate equity gaps between rates which children from low income families and children of color are taught by "inexperienced," "unqualified," or "out-of-field" teachers compared to rates at which other children are taught by these teachers.
 - USED encourages states to look at equity groups for other sub-groups, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Requested Feedback

Questions:

- What do you think is the best way to define "excellent educator?"
- What would you hypothesize are the underlying causes of our equity gaps?
- What strategies should we use (or are currently being used) to promote equitable access and eliminate inequalities in access?

For more information and to e-mail feedback, please e-mail lsearcy@alsde.edu.

APPENDIX D. STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES-EXAMPLE

Note-taker: Michelle White, Mobile County School System Technology Coordinator

March 27, 2015

Present at Meeting:

Representatives from four districts, community participants, and ALSDE personnel (Equity Coalition)

The meeting began with personnel from the ALSDE making introductions of everyone present and highlighting the purpose for the meeting. It was clear in the PowerPoint presentation that the purpose of the meeting was to form a plan with all stakeholders in order to improve equitable access to excellent leaders and teachers in high-poverty and high minority school. The first phase of the meeting was designated to form definitions that will be used in the plan. Much time was spent on the definition of an effective teacher and the definition of effective leader. It was also suggested from participants that these definitions could vary from system to system. It was decided among those present to use the terms of excellent teacher and leader in the plan. Other definitions were then discussed and agreed upon.

The next phase of the meeting was designated as a time to examine the available data. The Equity Data Profile was distributed to all present. Other data available was presented as well. The group began discussing the possible root causes for the identified gaps. The group began listing the root causes for the note-taker and decided that these should be added to the plan.

After this discussion, the group began formulating possible strategies to be included in the plan. Also, discussion was had about the success of the strategies that were currently in place. After the strategies were listed, the group began discussing which strategies would be the best for the Teacher and Leader Equity Plan for Alabama. The note-taker took detailed notes during the meeting and shared it with the Equity Coalition. Communication was discussed for upcoming meetings and how the plan would be monitored and reported was also discussed before the meeting was adjourned.

Examples of sign-in sheets are provided.

Alabama Educator Equity Coalition Meeting

Stakeholder Sign in

Organization	Name	Location	Position	email	Phone
	Lee Jacobs	DCS	Federal Prog.	ljjacobs@dothan.k12.al.us	791-4020
	Jeff Hatfield	DCS / CMS	Assistant Principal	jehatfield@dothan.k12.al.us	794-1470
	LAKISHA STOKES	MPS	At-Risk Intervention	lakishastokes@mps.k12.al.us	221-0226
	Lashonda Rogers	Wilcox	Federal Programs	lrogers@wilcox.k12.al.us	334-682-2043
	Henry Allen Chief	Selma	P.T.O.	Madison.al.us@charter.mad	4078746
SDE	Andrie Bradford	ALSDE	Fed. Programs	abr Bradford@alsde.edu	334-242-8199
SDE	Karen Porter	MGM	Ed Admin	kporter@alsde.edu	2-8154
Cahaba center	Carrie Bearden		EANU Intervention	carrie.bearden@cahabamentalth.com	431-5511
City of SELMA	JAMES BENDERSON	City of SELMA		jbenderson@selma-al.gov	
City of Selma	Sabrina Simmons	City of Selma	Executive Asst to Mayor	mayorassistant@selma-al.gov	334-349-6703
Selma City Schools	Rafael Simmons	Selma	Secondary Coordinator / Federal Programs	rafael.simmons@selmacityschools.org	334-874-1100
Dallas Co. legislative office	Sabrina Fulford	Selma	Rep. Dorrio Melton Assst.	(b)(6)	
Montgomery Public School	Darryl Washington	Montgomery	Comm. Adm.	darryl.washington@mps.k12.al.us	334-269-3636
Selma City Schools	Angela Mangum	Selma	Superintendent	angela.mangum@selmacityschools.org	

APPENDIX E:

Alabama Educator Equity Coalition Meeting-South

Stakeholder Sign in - March 27, 2015

Organization	Name	Location	Position	email	Phone
MPS	Darryl Washington	Montgomery	Curriculum Inst Asst	darryl.washington @mps.k12.al.us	334-467-3468
MCPSS	Stephanie Danzy	Mobile	Sch. Imp. Spec	sdanzy@mcpss.com	251-221-5204
MCPSS	Mehle White	Mobile	Technology Coord	mdwhite@mcpss.com	251-221-6215
ALSDE	TONY TRACER	MONTGOMERY	Research & Development	TTTRACER@ALSDE.EDU	334-353-4515
MCPSS	Jacinda Hollins	Mobile	Asst. Principal	j.hollins2@mcpss.com	251-751-1579
MCPSS	Karen Mohr	Mobile	CAO	kmohr@mcpss.com	251-221-4160
MPS	Gloria Oduola	Montgomery	Federal Programs	gloria.oduola@ mps.k12.al.us	334-221-3958
MCPSS	Belinda Roberts	Mobile	Exec. Director Fed. Programs	bwroberts@mcpss.com	251-221-5202

UABTeach paves the way for new STEM teachers

by [Meghan Davis](#)

The only program of its kind in Alabama, UABTeach enables undergraduate STEM majors to receive a subject-matter degree and accreditation to teach at the secondary level in a traditional four-year plan.



The [University of Alabama at Birmingham UABTeach](#) program is wrapping up a highly successful first year, surpassing enrollment expectations and garnering philanthropic funding.

The UABTeach program is designed to quickly produce a new teaching force of highly qualified instructors in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects. The only program of its kind in Alabama, UABTeach enables undergraduate STEM majors to receive a subject-matter degree and accreditation to teach at the secondary level in a traditional four-year plan, representing significant tuition savings from the standard state certification model.

The program, sponsored by the [College of Arts and Sciences](#), the [School of Education](#), and the [School of Engineering](#), enrolled 70 freshman and sophomore students in four sections of the Step 1 course this past fall, far exceeding expectations. More than half (36) continued into the program's Step 2 spring courses, and an additional 36 students enrolled in Step 1 in the spring semester.

UABTeach moved into its new home in Heritage Hall in October. The [UABTeach Workspace](#) is a multipurpose space, which provides a classroom for the UABTeach courses, laboratory for students to plan lessons and collaborate, and office space for the master teachers and administrative program staff.

Co-directors John Mayer, Ph.D., professor and associate chair of the [Department of Mathematics](#), and Lee Meadows, Ph.D., associate professor in the [Department of Curriculum and Instruction](#), spent the summer talking to incoming freshmen at orientation. Their hook was simple: “What will you do if you don’t get into medical school?”

The pitch worked on freshman biology major Erianna Parnell.

“I hadn’t thought of that,” the Montgomery native said. “If you’re a freshman and you’re a STEM major, you should really consider this program.”

Early teaching experience

Master teachers Amy Morgan, Ph.D., and Paulette Evans, Ed.S., prepare UABTeach students for their first classroom experience quickly after the semester begins. In partnership with local schools, teams of students observe two lessons and teach three of their own.

The Step 1 class dives into the 5E instructional model, which emphasizes interactive lessons that build new knowledge on top of experiences to reinforce concepts.

“Teachers are asking, ‘Why wasn’t this around when I was becoming a teacher?’ Our mentor teachers get to be on the front lines of teacher preparation.”

“We start our students teaching at the elementary school level so they get a chance to learn about childhood development,” Morgan said. “In the next semester, they go into middle schools and beyond that into high schools, where they’ll be certified to teach.”

Entering the classroom early offers students immediate insight into the profession and into being a professional, Morgan says. Freshmen have packed schedules and little experience communicating as peers with professional educators, but they learn fast, she adds.

“This is the greatest thing about the program: to let students who think they might want to become teachers see what teaching is like right away,” Meadows said. “They get to make an informed decision. Some students will say, ‘No!’ But we also know that some undecided students will go out and teach and say, ‘I love this.’”

Teaching also challenges students to explore their chosen discipline in new ways.

“I graduated with a degree in biology and learned a lot, but I didn’t acquire a deep understanding of biology until I had to teach it,” said Evans, a UAB biology alumna. “They’re picking up critical thinking skills they may not even be conscious of yet. We help them to think about

teaching in a completely different way than traditional models. They are there to facilitate student learning.”

New way of teaching, learning

Parnell worked with students at Clay Elementary School in Pinson.

“I am teaching students differently from the way I learned,” she said. “We are helping students discover and learn the scientific method through experimentation instead of memorizing it.”

She and her teaching partners helped students apply the scientific method by building model helicopters. Though they simplified science and math lessons for younger students, Parnell was impressed as she watched her students discover that simple modifications of the helicopter’s wings changed its speed.

“Seeing them take something small and make almost a whole new lesson — it was great,” she said. “I see why teachers love it. It made me want to seriously consider teaching.”

As an incentive to students, Steps 1 counts as a first-year experience (FYE) course in the College of Arts and Sciences — students in the School of Engineering complete a separate FYE course. Upon successful completion of the course, all students are reimbursed tuition costs for the course.

“For a first-year experience course, who wouldn’t want to go out into a school and teach local kids? It is an experience that can change how you look at your own life and academic studies,” Evans said.

Freshman biomedical engineering major Emma Rose Latham, of Sumiton, Alabama, jumped at the chance to explore both teaching and a subject that interests her.

“Teaching’s always been in the plan for me, but I really wanted to do engineering as well,” she said. “When I heard about this program, I got really excited. It’s been a great experience so far. I love working with kids and being able to go out and teach.”

Morgan and Evans are building a local network of teachers who are on-site mentors and advocates for UABTeach.

“Teachers are asking, ‘Why wasn’t this around when I was becoming a teacher?’” Meadows said. “Our mentor teachers get to be on the front lines of teacher preparation.”

Multiple funding partners

Initial funding for the program came from the [National Math and Science Initiative](#) through a grant from the [Howard Hughes Medical Institute](#). UAB will match the \$1.45 million grant to support of the implementation costs of the program during a five-year grant period. Philanthropic support from the [Mike and Gillian Goodrich Charitable Foundation](#) and [The Belk Foundation](#) is helping fund scholarships for UABTeach students and stipends for mentor teachers. Additional support from community partners is helping provide teaching-oriented, paid internship opportunities with organizations such as the Birmingham Zoo, McWane Science Center and Jones Valley Teaching Farm for students to enhance in-classroom experiences.

UABTeach is based on [UTeach](#), a program that began in 1997 at the University of Texas at Austin to better prepare and increase the number of certified STEM teachers. The program proved so successful that the UTeach Institute was established in 2006 to support program replication. Currently, 44 universities throughout the United States are implementing UTeach programs; as of spring 2014, more than 2,000 students will have graduated from these programs collectively. UABTeach will graduate its first class in 2017.

UTeach students at UT-Austin consistently have high grade-point averages and tend to graduate in five or fewer years. Mayer attributes the on-time graduation rate to the cohort feel of the program. UAB students have begun organizing a UABTeach student group as a resource to their fellow students and a hub of education-related volunteer opportunities.

“This is one of the secrets to the dramatically higher on-time graduation rate of UTeach students,” he said. “Partly it comes from financial support, and partly it comes from the sense of fellowship among the students.”

Across the program, 90 percent of graduates of UTeach become teachers, and of those, 80 percent are still teaching five years later. More than half of those who continue teaching work in economically disadvantaged schools. The institute predicts that, by 2020, more than 8,000 UTeach graduates will be instructing 4.8 million secondary school students.

“We’ll capture more potential teachers than going the traditional route,” Evans said. “Our numbers are going to be far better.”

APPENDIX G. ADVANCED AND ALSDE PARTNERSHIP

www.advanc-ed.org/alsde

APPENDIX H. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

The screenshot shows the AdvancED website interface on an iPad. The browser address bar shows 'advanc-ed.org'. The page title is 'William Silas Garrett Elementary School' and the user is logged in as 'Mrs. Logan Wilkinson Searcy'. The main navigation menu includes 'Portfolio', 'Profile', 'Diagnostics & Surveys', 'Assurances', 'Goals & Plans', 'Reviews', and 'Progress'. The 'Portfolio' section is active, showing an 'Overview' with instructions to select a school year and a document. A table lists documents for the 2014-2015 school year:

Days Past Due	Due Date	Status	Document
	October 15, 2014	Approved	Alabama Technology Plan: Transform 2020
	October 15, 2014	Submitted	ACIP

Below the table are links for '2013-2014 School Year' and '2012-2013 School Year'. The footer contains copyright information for 2015 Advance Education, Inc. and the ASSIST logo.

All districts and schools are provided this resource for continuous improvement planning. The above page shows the two plans that were written for the 2014 school year. Plans for 2015-2016 are in process under the goals and plans tab.

APPENDIX I.

William Silas Garrett Elementary School			
Mrs. Logan Wilkinson Searcy ▾			
Goal 3- All educators and students will have tools to access a comprehensive viable infrastructure when and where they need it.	2	2	2
Goal 2- Prepare and Support Teachers and Leaders to Graduate College- and Career-Ready Students.	2	2	2
Students who receive services from the Special Education department will reach proficiency levels in reading and math.	1	1	2
2015-2016-Teachers will engage the learners through high quality aligned college and career ready standards, instruction, and assessments for all content areas.	2	4	8
2015-2016 All teachers will utilize research based instruction	1	1	1
2015-2016 Staff will identify barriers to teaching and learning and align support systems to address barriers	1	1	1
2015-2016-Our school will have a system in place to increase academically focused family and community engagement	1	1	1
2015-2016 All professionals will have the support and resources to address curriculum, assessment and intervention	2	2	2
2015-2016 Our school will have effective staffing practices in order to retain and develop excellent educators	1	1	1

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All goals appear in a “goal tree” under the goals and plans tab. Please note the goals in development for the 2015-2016 school year.

APPENDIX J.

The screenshot shows a mobile browser interface on an iPad. The address bar displays 'advanc-ed.org'. The page header identifies the user as 'Mrs. Logan Wilkinson Searcy' and the school as 'William Silas Garrett Elementary School'. The main content is a list of educational goals and activities, each with a checked checkbox. The items are as follows:

Type	Description
Goal	2015-2016-Our school will have a system in place to increase academically focused family and community engagement
Objective	demonstrate a behavior that ensures that our s...
Strategy	Implementation of Family Engagement
Activity	Parent Parties (Type(s): Parent Involvement; Dates: 8/6/15-5/27/16)
Goal	2015-2016 All professionals will have the support and resources to address curriculum, assessment and intervention
Objective	demonstrate a behavior that ensures profession...
Strategy	Professional Dev Centered on College and Career Ready Standards
Activity	CCRS Professional Learning (Type(s): Professional Learning; Dates: 9/1/15-5/27/16)
Objective	demonstrate a behavior that ensures our educat...
Strategy	Implementation of Data Analysis
Activity	Data Meetings (Type(s): Professional Learning; Dates: 8/6/15-5/20/16)
Goal	2015-2016 Our school will have effective staffing practices in order to retain and develop excellent educators
Objective	demonstrate a behavior that ensures that the s...
Strategy	Implementation of Professional Development Plan
Activity	Co Teaching Model (Type(s): Professional Learning; Dates: 8/6/15-5/27/16)

At the bottom of the list, there is a checked checkbox with the text: 'Include progress notes for the goals selected.'

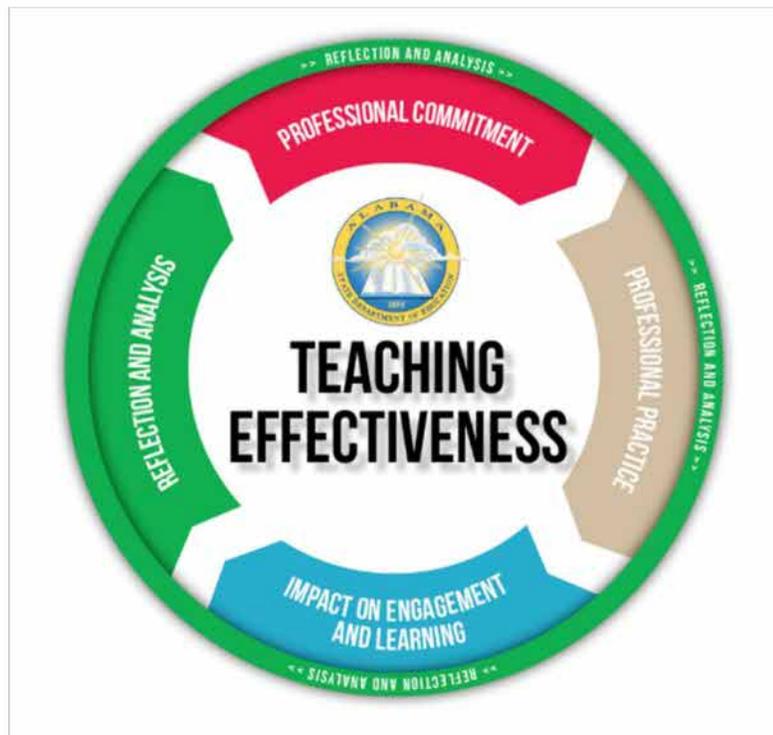
Please note the goals in development for the 2015-2016 school year. Progress notes may be used to communicate among the school, district, and LEA.

APPENDIX K.

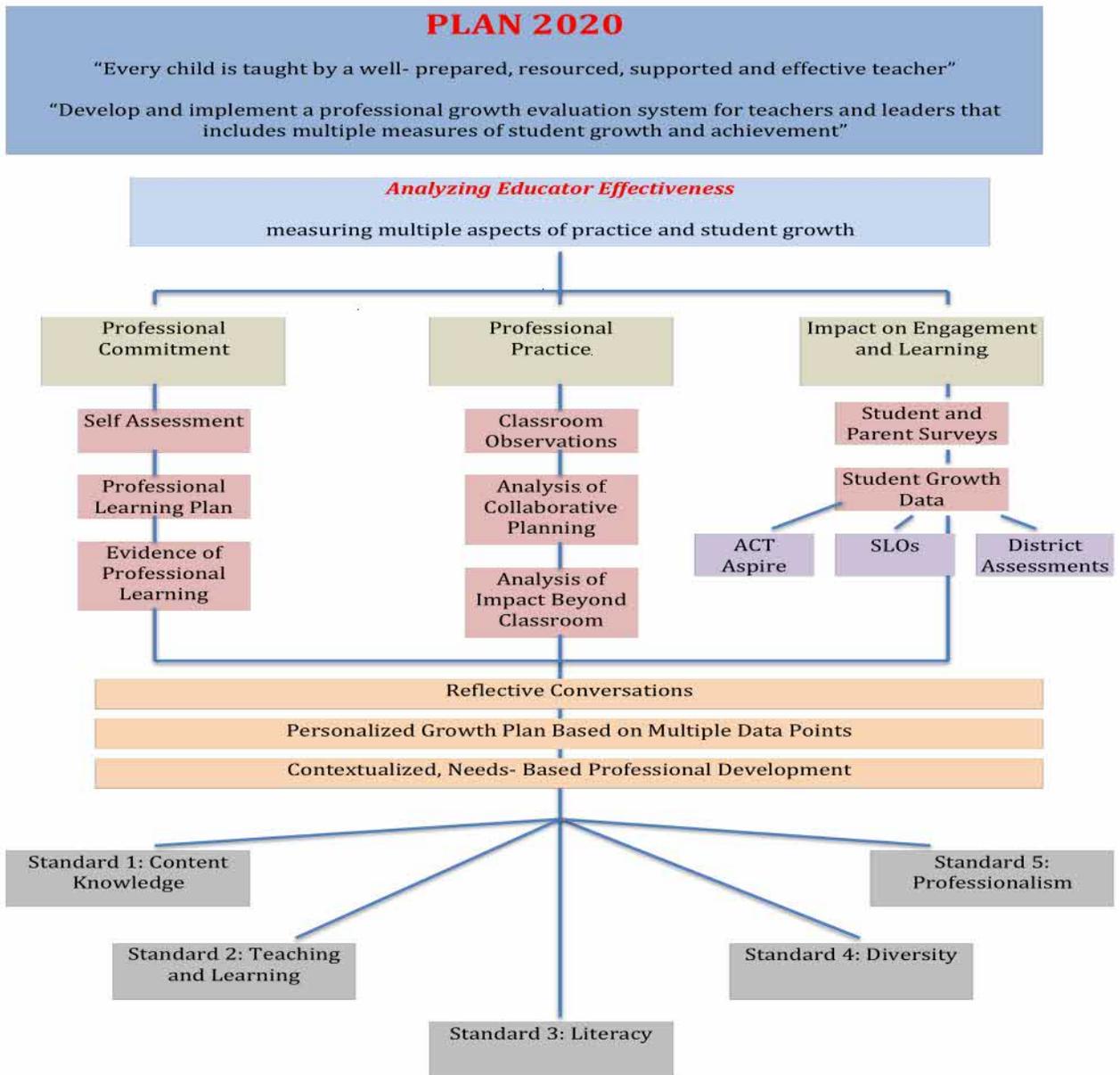
Alabama has been defining educator effectiveness and how it relates to Alabama’s Plan 2020. Plan 2020 states the following:

- “Every child is taught by a well- prepared, resourced, supported and effective teacher.”
- “Develop and implement a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement.”

To reach teacher and leader effectiveness, the following areas will be addressed by the districts and schools: professional commitment, professional practice, and impact on engagement and learning.



Alabama will have a system in place this year that will analyze educator effectiveness. Please see the chart below.



Alabama will continue to work on this design in collaboration with its stakeholders. With this measure, we can now address whether or not effective educators are located in the high-poverty and high-minority schools in Alabama.

APPENDIX L.

Link to Governor's Report: <http://ti.sp.alsde.edu>