

---

---

# *Committee Meeting*

of

## JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*“The Committee will receive testimony from invited guests on the implementation of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) and its impact on school districts throughout the state”*

---

---

**LOCATION:** Committee Room 11  
State House Annex  
Trenton, New Jersey

**DATE:** October 11, 2016  
10:00 a.m.

### **MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:**

Senator Ronald L. Rice, Co-Chair  
Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey, Co-Chair  
Senator Patrick J. Diegnan Jr.  
Senator Samuel D. Thompson  
Assemblywoman Sheila Y. Oliver  
Assemblyman Benjie E. Wimberly  
Assemblyman David P. Rible  
Assemblyman David W. Wolfe



### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Rebecca Sapp  
*Executive Director*

*Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by*  
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,  
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

---

---

**SENATE**

Hon. Ronald L. Rice  
Co-Chair

Hon. Diane B. Allen  
Hon. James Beach  
Hon. Patrick J. Diegnan  
Hon. Samuel D. Thompson

**ASSEMBLY**

Hon. Mila M. Jasey  
Co-Chair

Hon. Ralph R. Caputo  
Hon. Betty Lou DeCroce  
Hon. Sheila Y. Oliver  
Hon. David P. Ribble  
Hon. Benjie E. Wimberly  
Hon. David W. Wolfe



**JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

P.O. BOX 070  
TRENTON, NJ 08625  
(609) 847-3365  
FAX (609) 292-4912

**Rebecca Sapp**  
Executive Director  
rsapp@njleg.org

**MEETING NOTICE**

**TO: Members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools**

**FROM: Senator Ronald L. Rice, Co-Chair**  
**Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey, Co-Chair**

The Joint Committee on the Public Schools will hold a meeting on Tuesday, October 11, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. in Committee Room 11 of the State House Annex, in Trenton, New Jersey.

The Committee will be receiving testimony from invited guests on the implementation of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) and its impact on school districts throughout the state.

**The public may address comments and questions to Rebecca Sapp, Executive Director, at 609-847-3365, or by email at [Rsapp@njleg.org](mailto:Rsapp@njleg.org)**

Issued September 26, 2016

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Charmaine N. Mercer, Ph.D. Director Washington D.C. Office, and Senior Researcher Learning Policy Institute	6
Karen L. Campbell Director Office of Supplemental Education Programs New Jersey Department of Education	32
Diana Pasculli Deputy Chief External Affairs Officer New Jersey Department of Education	32
Matthew J. Angelo Federal Liaison New Jersey Department of Education	33
Wendell Steinhauer President New Jersey Education Association	66
Melanie Schulz Director Government Relations New Jersey Association of School Administrators	75
Jorden Schiff, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools Hillsborough Township Public Schools, and President Garden State Coalition of Schools, and Chair Legislative Committee New Jersey Association of School Administrators	76

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Robert R. Zywicki, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools Weehawken Township School District	79
J. Kenyon Kummings Superintendent Wildwood Public Schools	81
G. Kennedy Greene, Ed.D. Superintendent Newton Public Schools, and Secretary and Legislative Liaison New Jersey Association of School Administrators	85
Judith A. Rattner Superintendent of Schools Berkeley Heights Public Schools	88
Sharon Seyler Legislative Advocate New Jersey School Boards Association	92
Patricia Wright Executive Director New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association	94
Diane M. Genco Executive Director New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition	96
Elizabeth Ginsburg Executive Director Garden State Coalition of Schools	100
David M. Aderhold, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, and Treasurer Garden State Coalition of Schools, and Member Legislative Committee New Jersey Association of School Administrators	101

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Cynthia Rice Senior Policy Analyst Advocates for Children of New Jersey	106
James E. Harris Representing New Jersey Association of Black Educators	110
Patricia A. Tumulty Executive Director New Jersey Library Association	118
James Keebler Director Piscataway Public Library	123
<b>APPENDIX:</b>	
Testimony, plus PowerPoint presentation submitted by Charmaine N. Mercer, Ph.D.	1x
PowerPoint Presentation submitted by Karen L. Campbell, Diana Pasculli, and Matthew J. Angelo	68x
Testimony submitted by Wendell Steinhauer	80x
Testimony submitted by Melanie Schulz	82x
Testimony submitted by Robert R. Zywicki, Ed.D.	83x
Testimony, plus attachments submitted by J. Kenyon Kummings	84x

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

### APPENDIX (continued)

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
Testimony submitted by G. Kennedy Greene, Ed.D.	98x
Testimony submitted by Sharon Seyler	100x
Testimony submitted by Patricia Wright	102x
Testimony submitted by Diane M. Genco	104x
Testimony submitted by Elizabeth Ginsburg	106x
Testimony submitted by David M. Aderhold, Ed.D.	107x
Testimony submitted by Cynthia Rice	110x
Testimony, plus attachments submitted by Patricia A. Tumulty	114x
Letter, addressed to The Honorable John B. King Jr. from David C. Hespe Commissioner New Jersey Department of Education	202x

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)**

**APPENDIX (continued)**

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<i>Summary of the Every Student Succeeds Act, and Legislation Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and FAQs: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and ESSA: An Update on Early Learning submitted by The National Conference of State Legislatures</i>	206x
pnf:1-125	

**SENATOR RONALD L. RICE (Co-Chair):** Good morning.

Okay, can everybody hear us?

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBERS OF AUDIENCE: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: I just want to thank all of you for being here this morning.

Today is a meeting of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools. It's an important day for us because we're at the early stage of ESSA, which is the Every Student Succeeds Act. And I know that New Jersey, like other states, has a mandate to put a plan in place.

But before we get into discussions, I just want to let you know that this is our second meeting of the Joint Committee; so what that means is that we're going to become active. There is a lot of work to be done in education as we move into the end of the year, and next year -- a lot of questions to be raised.

And we also know that we're in a, kind of, transitional period with all the elections going on. But it cannot stop what we do at the State level because, long after we get presidents, and Governors leave, I can assure you that the 120 members of the Legislature -- and the majority will still be around, particularly the members here. They are senior, they are solid, and they are balanced. So you're going to be hearing a lot from us.

With that being said, let me take a roll call. And then we're going to have the members say hello to you, and then we're going to start to bring up speakers.

MS. SAPP (Executive Director): Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Here.

MS. SAPP: Assemblyman Rible.

ASSEMBLYMAN RIBLE: Present.

MS. SAPP: Assemblyman Wolfe.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Here.

MS. SAPP: Assemblywoman Jasey.

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILA M. JASEY (Co-Chair):** Here.

MS. SAPP: Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: I'm here. I am Senator Ronald L. Rice; I'm the Co-Chair of this Committee. I'm going to turn it over for a few words from the Co-Chair, Assemblyman Mila Jasey. And then we'll start from my right and let each member say hello to you. And then we'll start the speakers' list.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Senator Rice; and thank you to everyone who has made the effort to come this morning, especially our special guest from Washington, whom I will have the pleasure of introducing in a few minutes.

As the Senator says, change is in the air. And having only read the summary of ESSA-- Between HESSA here in New Jersey and ESSA in Washington, I have to-- It's alphabet soup, for sure.

But what it made me realize is, that it's a lot of information. The summary was 13 pages; so there's a lot for us to learn. And the goal of today's hearing is to do just that -- is to begin the conversation so that we all understand what the implications of this new Act are on our schools -- public schools here in New Jersey.

From what I read it looks like a positive change, and it looks like we're moving in a good direction. And I think it's important for all of us to be well informed.

I'm also happy to report that we expect a couple more members to arrive; but two of our members are very sick and called this morning to say that they could not be here. So that's unfortunate, but we will have a transcript of everything that happens here today.

With that, I'll pass it on.

SENATOR RICE: Thank you, Co-Chair,

Let me just say, for those who are here, you're familiar; it's for our members who may not be paying attention. ESSA is really the new change in the Federal Act, which is really the second time it's been amended since No Child Left Behind. It's really a replacement of No Child Left Behind, and the idea is to clean up a lot of the concerns that were raised throughout the country with No Child Left Behind. And so this is a very important piece of legislation, and the reason we're holding a hearing today for the members' edification is because New Jersey, like other states, is only in the planning stage. And there are supposed to be a lot of stakeholders; we'll hear that conversation today.

And if in fact you hear about stakeholders who are not involved, you need to get in touch with the Department of Education and make sure you get on that stakeholder list. Because the State has already had three or four meetings that we weren't really aware of. And that tells me that if I wasn't aware of them, and you weren't aware of them -- at least, most our members weren't aware of them unless they're in education -- which means that the preliminary talks were kind of, to some degree, possibly exclusionary of some of the people who you think may be stakeholder groups.

So I just want to say that, as we move over to Assemblyman Wolfe.

Assemblyman Wolfe.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: I haven't had time to hand out my prepared remarks; I don't have any. (laughter). Thank you very much.

No, really, I appreciate the opportunity. This is one of the rare times where we, as a bipartisan Committee -- nonpartisan also -- get to hear, before the horse is out of the barn, what's coming down the trail.

As a legislator, I honestly read about what we're going to be doing usually in the *Star-Ledger* or the *Asbury Park Press*. We don't get a lot of information coming to us as legislators.

I'm also glad that we have a lot of stakeholders here to hear about this -- this program. I'm also glad to release, preliminarily, the reduced role of the standardized testing; which is very important but, after what we've gone through with PARCC, I think it's going to be interesting to see how that gets rolled out.

But I know we have a really large audience here, a lot of different stakeholders; a lot of folks I know, a lot of them I don't know. But we're here to listen, not to interrogate or to question -- but really to listen.

So thank you for being here, and it's a beautiful day; and thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Assemblyman Rible.

ASSEMBLYMAN RIBLE: Thank you, Senator and Assemblywoman. Thank you for convening the meeting today.

And I also just look forward to having our dialogue today as well, and see what we can learn as we focus on what's most important to

our state -- the foundation for our children's education. So I just look forward to hearing from everybody here today so we can have that good, educated response from the Legislature on how to support our children's education best.

Thanks.

SENATOR RICE: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Senator Rice.

Of course we're here today, really, for the Every Student Succeeds Act -- which is a follow-up to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act -- which was initially enacted to ensure equitable access to educational resources and opportunities for all students. And of course we're hoping to work to develop appropriate plans to put it in place for the coming year, and we greatly appreciate your coming out today to give your input on it.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, members.

And a little birdie just told me that it's somebody's birthday today -- and that would be Assemblyman Wolfe. No wonder your wife wanted to know how long you were going to be here. (laughter) Happy birthday.

ALL: Happy birthday. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Thank you, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: I think that's a real show of dedication -- that he came on his birthday. (laughter)

And so with that, I would like to call up our first speaker. I'm very, very excited and pleased to say that Charmaine Mercer has come to us

this morning by train from the D.C. area. She is the Director of the Washington D.C. office of the Learning Policy Institute. And she has a very impressive resume that-- Are you going to share it with us, or should I?

**CHARMAINE N. MERCER, Ph.D.:** A little bit. (laughter)

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY:** A little bit; okay. She's also very modest, obviously.

But she is going to set the stage for us this morning by giving us the Federal perspective.

And then she will be followed by -- and I'll just let you now -- by Karen Campbell, Diana Pasculli, and Matthew Angelo. Are you all here? Yes, great; okay. And following their remarks and presentation, we'll have Wendell Steinhauer, Melanie Schulz, Sharon Seyler, Patricia Wright, Diane Genco, Betsy Ginsburg, Cynthia Rice, James Harris, Patricia Tumulty, and James Keehler. And if there are others who have signed up, we will also have you up.

And the reason I'm telling you this is because we don't want to be here to 5:00 p.m., because Dave has to go celebrate. (laughter) We want everyone to have the opportunity to present their information; however, realize this is only the first bite at the apple. We're not going to try to cover everything today, but rather a good introduction.

And so with that, I'm going to turn the mike over to Charmaine. And if you press the button, red is actually "on." (referring to PA microphone)

There you go.

**DR. MERCER:** Thank you.

Good morning. Thank you, Senator Rice, Assemblywoman Jasey, and members of the Committee for inviting me to testify on this important topic.

My name is Charmaine Mercer, and I'm the Director of the Washington D.C. office of the Learning Policy Institute. The Learning Policy Institute is a national, nonpartisan research and policy organization that uses high-quality research to shape policies that improve learning for each and every child.

My background is in Federal education policy, as both a researcher and a policy advisor. Prior to joining LPI, I was Vice President for Policy with the Alliance for Excellent Education, which is a Washington D.C.-based organization focused on improving secondary schools. I have also served as the Senior Education Specialist for the Congressional Research Service, as well as a Congressional staffer for both the Authorizing and Appropriations Committees of the U.S. House of Representatives.

In my remarks today I have provided a general overview of the notable requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act -- also known as ESSA -- with the particular focus on accountability.

ESSA is viewed by many, including Senate Health Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander, as a "fix" to No Child Left Behind. It represents what was politically possible at the time; it is not a blueprint for the education system that is needed for the 21st century. ESSA largely maintains NCLB's basic architecture in that it focuses on English language arts and math proficiency and grad rates.

One of the biggest issues from NCLB to ESSA is that it returns a lot of the decision-making authority to the State. Throughout my

remarks I will highlight those areas where the expectations and/or the decision making have shifted from NCLB.

The first area I will cover is Standards. Standards and assessments are the foundation of a State's accountability system. It is important for the State to critically consider how standards assessments align with its accountability system, and how the pieces fit together to support the State's vision for teaching and learning in the 21st century.

Similar to NCLB, states are required to have challenging academic content standards that are aligned with this academic assessment, and they must apply to all public schools and public students in the state. Unlike NCLB, ESSA requires that the standards be aligned with the entrance requirements for credit-bearing course work and State higher education institutions, and with relevant career and technical education standards.

Further, states must have academic standards for math, reading, or language arts and science that contain at least three levels of achievement. States are allowed to adopt alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant disabilities, provided the standards align with the State academic standards and promote access to general education curriculum that is consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act, or IDEA.

States must also show in their plan that they have adopted English language proficiency standards. English language proficiency standards must be derived from the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and address the different proficiency levels of English learners, and be aligned with the challenging State academic standards --

which is a difference between how it was under NCLB. It is important to note that under ESSA, language acquisition for English learners is a required indicator of a states' accountability system. So that didn't previously exist under NCLB; but now language proficiency for English learners is a part of the State's accountability system. I'll talk about it further as we go along.

The next area is Assessments. As was the case under NCLB, states are required to implement a set of high-quality student academic assessments in math, reading, language arts, and science, and be aligned with the State standards. ESSA maintains NCLB's schedule of federally required statewide assessment in math and reading -- or language arts -- and they have to be assessed yearly in grades 3-8 and once in grades 9-12. Science is newly added under ESSA and these assessments must be administered at least once in grades 3-5, as well as grades 6-9 and once again in grades 10-12.

ESSA further requires that the assessments include measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding, which may include measures of students' growth and may be partially delivered in the form of portfolios, projects, or extended-performance tasks.

The assessments can be administered through a single summative assessment or through multiple assessments during the course of an academic year. The result is a single summative score that provides valid, reliable, and transparent information on student achievement and growth.

Assessment results are still required to be disaggregated at the state, district, and school level by race, ethnicity -- whether you're

economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English learners, gender, and migrant status. The State is permitted to have alternate assessments, but they must be aligned, again, with the alternative academic standards and achievement goal. Only 1 percent of the total number of all students in the state can be assessed using these alternate assessments.

Districts may administer a nationally recognized high school academic assessment in place of the statewide assessment. Depending on the final assessment regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Education -- which hopefully will happen next month -- these types of assessments might be those that are included as part of the International Baccalaureate programs, or those that may be offered through AP programs, as well as the performance-based assessments of PARCC or Smarter Balanced -- as long as it is approved by the states and meets all the Federal assessment requirements.

The next area is Accountability, and this is a pretty meaty one; so I'll try to talk a little bit slower.

Accountability: As states are considering the transition to ESSA, there's an opportunity to truly depart from NCLB's model -- accountability model on measuring, sorting, and labeling schools, to a more coherent system where information collected is thoughtfully and deliberately tied to desired outcomes based on your state's unique context. ESSA requires that a state accountability system must be based on its academic standards, and that each state establish long-term goals that include interim measurements of progress towards those goals for all students and for all subgroups of students.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Can you just talk about that a little bit more?

DR. MERCER: Okay, yes. I'll say a little bit--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Okay.

DR. MERCER: --and then I'm going to make sure I come back to it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: All right.

DR. MERCER: But, yes. So unlike-- Under NCLB, you have Annual Yearly Progress, or AYP, for all schools, or all students, as well as for individual subgroups. And that was turned into the Department, and there was an expected target that you were supposed to hit. When you didn't hit that, then the Feds had other things that you needed to do when you didn't meet those targets. That's not the case under ESSA. The state, now, is in the position of deciding how much growth; so you have to come up with a goal that you want all students to achieve, and then you come up with interim measures that must be -- I won't say *aggressive*, but *attainable*, but yet ambitious -- for all students, as well as subgroups of students. But the state is now the one that is saying what that progress should look like, over time; and that has to be presented as a part of the state plan that is put together.

So I will say a little bit more as we go; you might have other questions as I continue.

As states begin designing and building their accountability and improvement systems, it's important that there is clarity about the theory of action and the role of standards, assessments, accountability, and improvement. There should be a shared understanding of how each of

these will be used to drive and support the college- and career-ready goals that the state set for its students.

The Council of Chief State School Officers provides an excellent guide as a tool for states to think through this process of what are some of the questions you want to ask yourself as you're trying to determine what's a measurable goal; what's an achievable goal. If you go on their site and just type in -- I don't even think you have to type in anything; ESSA is one of the first things that pops up, and there's a whole list of tools that states can use. And they also have a team of people that can help think through this as well.

When designing accountability and improvement systems, consideration should be given to the constellation of measures and indicators that best support teaching and learning for the 21st century, while also supporting the state's vision and theory of action. We suggest that states evaluate their current accountability and improvement systems and determine which indicators are most effective at measuring college and career readiness, and providing actionable data for continuous improvement. If the measures are operating effectively in terms of improving teaching and learning outcomes, they should be included in the new system. If the measures are ineffective or otherwise unaligned with the new vision, they should be discarded. The new accountability system should be accompanied by a process and a system to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of indicators in the accountability system and make changes as necessary. This is really important for continuous improvement.

And that's another change -- it's kind of a metachange from NCLB to ESSA -- is that you don't have to have all of the answers today.

You don't have to have all of the indicators for today. You can say, "Oh, we're going to come back in six months from now after we submit our state plans." Say you submitted it in July; you could come back six months, three months, nine months and make revisions to your plan. Continuous improvement is embedded throughout ESSA, so they want states to understand that if they learn something new, they should incorporate that newness, and not wait for the next reauthorization of the ESEA to fix things. So that's, again, another notable change under ESSA.

ESSA also specifies that states must use multiple measures of student and school performance in their accountability system. It allows states considerable latitude in selecting measures beyond test scores, English language proficiency, and graduation rates which are required. States have the opportunity to consider which indicators could best leverage improvements in teaching and learning.

There are a couple of technical requirements that I want to walk through for each of the measures, so that there is a better understanding of what that means.

So the chosen measures must meet the requirements of ESSA; they must be valid, reliable, and comparable across all school districts; and they must be calculated the same for all schools. They must also allow for subgroup disaggregation and meaningful differentiation between schools.

ESSA requires five separate measures, which may consist of multiple indicators under each measure. And so I'm going to go through all five, and then I'll walk through and give you examples of what could live under each of the five.

So the first is a measure of academic achievement. You can use your annual assessments on PARCC and Smarter Balanced, so that has to be included for English language arts and math. Science is not required to be reported in your accountability system, although the state can choose to add science and any other subject that they want to their accountability system.

For elementary and secondary schools there also must be a second academic measure, which can be a measure of growth. So it can show how much schools and students have learned in any given period, as opposed to just simply saying, “Fifty percent of our students score proficient or above on PARCC,” or something like that. It can be a little bit more nuanced to show how movement has occurred across the spectrum.

The third measure must be the four-year graduation rate for high schools; however, the states can include extended graduation years. So you can do a five- or a six-year graduation as well, in addition to the four-year graduation rate.

The fourth is a measure of progress in language proficiency for English learners.

And last but not least -- one or more measures of school quality or student success.

So those are the five separate categories of measures that must be included in your accountability system. Anything beyond those five, at the state’s discretion, is extra. But those are the five required areas.

The state must annually measure and report this data for all student, and separately for each of the identified subgroups of students.

The law requires each state to meaningfully differentiate the performance of the schools on an annual basis using all of the aforementioned indicators in making the determinations. The state must give -- and this is where it gets a little tricky -- substantial weight to the first four indicators. So for growth, achievement, English language proficiency, and graduation rates -- those four must be of greater weight than the fifth measure, which is a measure of school quality or student success. And again, I'll give you examples when we get to it; but the first four have to have substantially greater weight than the last one, individually and collectively, as required.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Could I ask one question about graduation?

DR. MERCER: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Do we have a standard that everybody is adhering to, and could you tell us what that is?

DR. MERCER: We should; yes.

So there is-- In the regulations for NCLB -- I believe it might have been the 2001 regulations that came back -- they codified how states are to calculate their adjusted -- four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Which essentially says any kid who starts in the 9th grade, unless he or she officially disenrolls from the school or district, gets in that count; and then however many kids make it to graduation. That's the difference. If you start off in 9th grade with a class of 500, there's an expectation, when you get to the 12th grade, that that 500 is still there and you have to account for any of the kids who have been lost along the way -- unless they, again, officially disenroll from the school.

The extended-year graduation rate allows states to get credit for keeping kids in the system for five years and six years. We know, the research shows, depending on how students come into the system, particularly with the implementation of more college- and career-ready standards, it's taking some students longer because they could have been behind, off-track, etc. So keeping them in the system longer under this new construct -- the State can get credit for keeping those kids in the system and actually graduating them. But you have to do the four-year; but you can also include a five- or a six-year graduation rate as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Okay.

DR. MERCER: Okay.

It's worth noting that the DOE -- the U.S. DOE's proposed regulations -- which are not final -- would require a single summative rating overall for the school; and that each indicator receives a rating. And I'll go through this a little bit more later; but they want you to produce-- The regulations right now want every single indicator that you take combined and presented in a single *something*. So that could be a single color; it could be a single number; it could be a single letter -- whatever it is that the state wants to do, but they want it to be a single *something*. But also, of each individual indicator, they're saying, "Give me an individual color, number, or letter -- whatever you want to ascribe -- so that people can see both." One's required; the single summative right now is required, but we have to wait until the regulations come back. There are lots of states and lots of stakeholders who weighed in on this particular proposed reg who are not excited about using a single summative for lots of different reasons, which I'll talk about a little bit as we go through. But the largest one is that it

squishes all the data together and you're unable to determine what's going on and why a school is not performing at a certain level; or even what's working and why a school is performing so well, because we are relying upon, like, a single color, or a single grade, or a single number.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Hmm.

DR. MERCER: Okay. As I said, overall, you have to rate each school with both single summative and the individuals. But it's important to note that this does not preclude a state from using a dashboard system, which is, again-- Think of your car where you know the difference between your oil, your gas, the temperature -- there are all of these things going on on your dashboard at the same time. No one's telling you your car is a C. Like, you have to know exactly what's happening and why. So states can still do that, even after -- once the Department issues its rule, if it sticks with its proposed reg requiring a single summative.

You can also use decision rules to help ensure that schools are identified for needing comprehensive support and improvement; and I'll talk about that a little bit more as I go on.

So choosing the indicators: What indicators might a state consider? ESSA creates opportunities for states to design accountability systems that provide a more comprehensive picture of student outcomes and opportunities to learn. While the indicators required by ESSA reflect a minimum standard, states can take the initiative to design systems that capture more information about the factors that matter most for student success and that provide the most useful incentives for school improvement in these areas. Measures of college and career readiness, student engagement, social and emotional competency, access to a rich curricular

and school climate all provide information about a broader set of outcomes and opportunities that shape student success.

It's worth noting that the accountability system can include some indicators that are reported and used only to offer diagnostic information for improvement, and others that guide decision making about schools for purposes of intervention. In some states, local districts may also add indicators for their own purposes that are distinct from the state system. So in that case, those indicators would not live as a part -- they would be a part of the state system, but they may be what the district needs in order to help them determine how best to support the school. So if they know that they're struggling, maybe, with transportation or they tend to have lots of kids who are arriving to school late, that might be a measure that they might want to collect so they could figure out what's going on in the district to better respond to that. But that would not live as a part of the state's accountability system. But in working with districts, you could encourage them to think about indicators that would matter, and help them better support the schools in their districts.

Again, I will provide examples of specific indicators the State might consider to evaluate and support student and school progress, as well as State and district examples, where appropriate.

So the first measure is English language arts, or math and science. To measure these, states may use a single summative assessment or multiple statewide interim assessments during the course of an academic year that result in a single summative score that provides valid, reliable, and transparent information on student achievement and growth. These can include traditional sit-down tests or performance tasks. Since New Jersey is

using PARCC, the State might consider including a short performance task that requires students to investigate questions, find and evaluate evidence, and use critical thinking and written analysis; as well as to engage in modeling and complex problem solving and mathematics tasks.

So PARCC -- in addition to just the normal statewide site that everyone is using -- also offers a performance task that states can choose as well; and students can take that and that could be used either as a measure of growth; it could also be embedded, as here, as a measure of progress so that you can show both. You don't have to only use the state summative, unless the state says so; I'm sorry. So everything I'm saying -- if New Jersey says otherwise, obviously, that's what prevails.

There is also the Performance Assessment Resource Bank. It's an excellent resource for states wanting to develop or strengthen existing performance tasks. It's an online resource that provides performance tasks within key subjects and across disciplines linked to new standards in learning progressions. The tasks are developed with educators across the country, and the tasks have been piloted, vetted for quality, and are accompanied by rubrics and scoring protocols; and, most notably, is free

In addition to that, New Hampshire, Colorado, and Virginia are among the states planning to use the Performance Bank as part of their assessment systems. So again, you don't have to rely on a single summative; you can combine several performance tasks together and, ultimately, roll those up to have one score. Those three states that I mentioned are all using that resource as a part of their assessment system.

New Hampshire's PACE -- which is the Performance Assessment for Competency Education -- they have piloted this under the

waivers. So when Secretary Duncan had given the states an opportunity to do an ESEA waiver, New Hampshire put forth the waiver to do a completely different assessment system. So their assessment -- they assess kids based on competency; which means that they take assessments, and once they're able to demonstrate what they know, they keep moving. If it takes them longer to figure out certain subjects, they're able to stay and take the time that they need. But there are different performance tasks that end up supporting that.

So New Hampshire was able to get a waiver from the annual assessments as a result. In news, they were actually just -- their waiver was renewed under ESSA now; so they will be one of the states that continue to be able to pilot what they're doing. And it just requires-- The agreement with them and the Department of Ed is that they will do their performance tasks and then, in some years, those are-- They're still running the PARCC or Smarter Balanced annual tests. Because the Department wants to make sure that they're not losing kids, or that kids are still performing at the right level and that the new system is just as rigorous as the existing system. So for a little while, New Hampshire is having to run parallel systems -- assessment systems.

So the pilot system uses Smarter Balanced for English language arts and math assessments, once per grade span. That's another thing that New Hampshire was able to do as a part of their waiver. They test kids in grade spans. So, like, grades 3 through 6, you get tested once; and then -- I think it's 3 through 5 -- once in that band. The next band, I think, is 6 through 8; 9 through 12 is where you get your bands; and you have to be tested within those bands. The state developed common performance tasks

in intervening years, and those are also supplemented by local tasks as well -  
- that the district and schools are also developing.

For elementary and middle schools, ESSA allows states to report on student growth as a second measure of academic achievement. Simply measuring status at certain cut points -- as was done with NCLB -- is not sufficient for measuring student growth and achievement because it does not account for student progress in learning over time. Scale scores help reveal how much learning is occurring, and is a more accurate measure of student progress.

Many states, including New York, are moving to include these types of scaled measurements. The School Quality Guide, developed by New York City's Department of Education, measures student achievement and student growth at both at the elementary and middle school levels. Student growth and performance on state tests are used in conjunction with 6th grade core course pass rates to measure achievement at the elementary school level. At the middle school level, student growth and performance on state tests are used in conjunction with core pass rates, as well as high school credits earned by 8th graders and 9th grade credit accumulation to measure student achievement.

So these measures can get as complex as you want them to get, although understanding how they work together is critically important. You just don't want to start selecting random measures and putting them together, because that won't really work. You'll just have a bunch of data, and not really know what to do with it. But moving into the 9th grade, we know it's always helpful to understand how students are performing in middle school, because it's the best predictor of how they are going to do in

9th grade. So some states are using this as an opportunity to do an early warning indicator at the middle school point, and combining that with another state assessment to see how students are performing and having a good measure for that.

At the high school level, again, states are required to include the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as the academic indicator. They may also choose to include an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. This creates positive incentives for schools to admit, keep, and support students with challenges that prevent them from graduating in the standard four years. Including extended-year graduation rates provides an important protection against the perverse incentives that existed under NCLB for schools to exclude lower-performing students in order to boost accountability metrics.

The best measures of progress for English language proficiency are individually administered assessments of listening and speaking, as well as reading and writing, within the content areas. This allows mastery of academic language to be assessed. Using students' gain scores along a continuum of proficiency, rather than a metric such as percent proficient, can better assess the full range of English learners and their needs. This can also incentivize schools to provide support for English language learners at all stages of language acquisition.

The next area I will cover is the fifth indicator -- coming down to that -- and this measures school quality and student success. This is new; this did not exist under NCLB.

A system that focuses on the whole child and the whole school requires a more comprehensive set of indicators that measure the range of

skills and competencies students need to be successful upon graduating from high school. The resources and conditions that support students' opportunities to learn must also be included. When systems include information about school resources and supports, the staff can readily identify inequities and respond appropriately with supports to aid in improvement,

So as I said, this final indicator -- you will also hear people commonly referring to it as the *fifth indicator* because it's the newest one that got added -- we describe these as representing opportunities to learn, and engagement and support. So I will talk about the different indicators that can live under both of those.

By looking at students' opportunities to learn, state accountability systems provide information about the resources and conditions that influence student learning outcomes. In addition, opportunities-to-learn outcomes can be used to hold a district and state accountable for providing the resources necessary for schools to meet ambitious goals for student learning. Examples of possible indicators include access to rigorous and engaging curriculum, access to resources, and access to qualified teachers.

So that can be accomplished usually if you have some type of AP or honors course; if you're offering an International Baccalaureate Program -- giving them access to those. And it's access and completion, not just access -- because access alone tends to lead to gaming of the system because you're just enrolling kids in classes without making sure they're prepared -- and are making sure you have the staff to be able to support

them. So it's both access to the course and completion of the course that are important.

In Monroe County, Georgia, the district adopted a comprehensive set of indicators of school conditions that influence students' opportunities to learn, such as the quality of facilities, Internet access, new teacher retention, staff attendance, and professional learning. This information can be used by educators at the school district and state level to ensure all students have access to equitable and adequate opportunities to learn, and that educators are supported in working with students.

The second group of indicators are indicators of engagement and support. They provide information about the culture and climate of schools, including data on parent and community involvement, safe and supportive school conditions, student participation and engagement in schooling, and measures of social and emotional learning. States can choose to include indicators of engagement to meet or exceed the requirements of ESSA, which requires only one indicator of school progress or student success.

California has a group of school districts that they affectionately call the *CORE Districts*. It started under the waivers. This set of school districts was the only set of school districts to receive a waiver from NCLB. They got together because the state didn't want to put forth a waiver; they were able to get, at the onset, 10 school districts -- which represented, I think, almost close to half of the students in the state between those 10 school districts to band together to put forth their own ESEA waiver. They were granted a waiver; and so this is at least part of

that -- and I'll talk about what they did -- but they are known as the *CORE Districts*.

So CORE developed a student survey and a teacher documentation system after reviewing the research on the social and emotional factors that promote long-term learning. As part of this process, they identified four key factors considered important for student academic performance. They were also measureable and actionable predictors of student success. The four factors are growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness. These are just a few of the options that could be used, and these are the ones that they chose to include in their system.

There are two ways to think about including these types of measures in an accountability system. One, using social and emotional indicators as a part of a multiple measures system of accountability encourages a broader definition of student success. We recognize that there's more to learning, more to being successful than just mastering English language arts and math; that also learning how to learn is just as important. And two, it incentivizes schools to create opportunities for meaningful learning that will foster students' growth as self-directed learners.

The biggest considerations when selecting measures for the fifth indicator are identifying those that are most actionable. Oftentimes there is data that we can collect that we feel is really, really important. But if there's nothing on the school side, or the district side, or the state side that can be done about it -- just collecting it for the sake of collecting it and you're unable to do anything with it -- it is not really useful and can, kind

of, convolute your accountability system. So being very mindful of the indicators that you select -- actually, to being kind of within your bailiwick to be able to respond to it.

You also want to make sure you're discouraging negative incentives. Again, as I said, like with attendance or access to rigorous coursework, just getting more students in these courses really isn't the goal. You want to make sure that they're meaningfully learning; which means that the teachers in those courses probably need to have a more expansive array of tools because you're changing the population of kids who are now in some of these more rigorous courses. So giving them-- Access to them is one part of it; but making sure that they are able to complete the course is just as important.

And you also want to select measures that allow for meaningful differentiation. For example, attendance rates are generally viewed as an indicator of engagement because it's assumed that students who are engaged attend class; and those who are not, don't. So people say, "Yes, I'll just do attendance, because that lets me know that kids are meaningfully engaged." This assumption is also supported by high attendance patterns nationwide; and most schools report having an 80 percent or higher attendance rate. That's irrespective of the urbanicity rule, etc.; 80 percent is kind of the norm. But this doesn't allow for meaningful differentiation between schools. So if 80 percent of our schools are telling us 80 percent, you can't really tell; there's no way to make a distinction. And that is one of the requirements when you're selecting the indicators -- is that you have to allow for meaningful differentiation between schools.

So if you were to combine attendance rates with chronic absenteeism, that's where you would get a change; that's where you would be able to see. And that's also something that you could begin to focus on - - if kids are kind of chronically absent, constantly. And there is a Federal definition; the State may also have a definition for what constitutes *chronic absenteeism*. But when you combine those two, it's not only telling you the kid-- You know, you get your participation and your attendance rates, but you're really wanting to focus on kids who are missing 10, 11, or more days, because you know there's not a lot of learning going on there if they're missing that many days of schools. But it also presents you with something that you can respond to and fix. So combining these two would allow for greater differentiation and provide a more accurate indication of student engagement, because kids who are not there, obviously, are not engaged.

When designing accountability systems that meet as a requirement, states should also be cognizant of how these measurements will be used to inform school improvement and support under ESSA. So under NCLB, again, you had your AYP; if you didn't make your AYP, they gave you a couple of years to try to fix it. If you didn't fix it, they gave you one more try, based on their four prescriptive methods. And if that didn't work, there were a whole host of things that then needed to happen.

This is different. ESSA is putting states back in the driver's seat and saying, "If a school doesn't make progress, based on the standards and the goals that you've set, what happens?" And the state has to determine what happens, right? There are some boundaries, but they're pretty broad; and so being clear in this area is really important. So when

you're designing your accountability system, think about the data that one might need to help inform school improvement.

The state accountability system should signal to every school their areas of strength and areas in need of support and growth, and also provide districts needed information about where major interventions need to occur.

States are expected to identify the level of support they will provide to districts and schools along the spectrum of need. The new law provides states with significant flexibility to reimagine how to provide supports to schools.

ESSA requires that by school year 2017-2018, states must establish a methodology for identifying schools in need of comprehensive support and improvement, which will include the lowest performing 5 percent of all schools receiving Title 1, and any high school failing to graduate one-third or more of their students.

Following school year 2017-2018-- Following the school year, identification of schools must occur at least once every three years. States must notify districts when they're not making progress as needed. States must also demonstrate that the selected interventions that they're using for schools are evidence-based; ESSA does provide a definition for *evidence*. In it, it's a little bit different than what it was under ESEA.

And then I'll say last, but certainly not least -- is stakeholder engagement. Input from stakeholders is a requirement under the new law. It is also good strategy to generate support and create meaningful implementation. The process of gathering input is an opportunity for states

to identify partners who will help implement changes and communicate with the state about its vision, mission, and implementation of the strategy.

There is obviously a lot more that I could say about ESSA, as it is a very large bill. But I wanted to leave time for questions, which I am happy to answer.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: I think what you've helped us realize is how overwhelming this change is. (laughter) And so I think, at this point, I'm going to give the members who joined us a chance to say hello. And I'm going to-- While they're doing that, I'm going to ask you to-- You can remain at the dais, and I'm going to ask Karen Campbell, Diana Pasculli, and Matthew Angelo to come up to the table. And perhaps in your testimony you might want to address some of the issues that Charmaine has raised that present challenges to us here in New Jersey.

Obviously, as I said at the beginning, we're not going to cover all of this today. This is just the beginning of our building an understanding of the new rules and regs. And anyone who has written testimony is welcome to submit that as well.

And I want to thank Charmaine Mercer.

And Assemblyman Wimberly, would you like to say good morning, and wish Assemblyman Wolfe a happy birthday? (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: Well, I will start off with that -- a happy birthday to one of my Assemblymen from the other side of the aisle. Happy birthday. (laughter)

Thank you for being here today; and this has been very informative. So as we absorb and read, I look forward to questions on that line.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Yes; good morning, everyone. And happy birthday, Assemblyman Wolfe. You know you're one of my favorites. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You'll always be the Speaker.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And I hope you have a grand celebration today.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And I'm just happy to be here to expand my knowledge of ESSA and its implications for students in our state.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: I'm just here to listen; most importantly, to say happy birthday to Dave, who's really -- all kidding aside -- one of the nicest, most nonpartisan, just-tries-to-do-the-right-thing-for-everybody people I've ever met. Many, many more happy returns.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Okay; let me cut in here, for a couple of reasons.

Number one, let the record reflect that Assemblyman Wimberly is present; let the record reflect that Speaker Emeritus Sheila Oliver is present; and let it reflect that Senator Diegnan is here -- present.

Let me also say to the members -- as the Speaker was speaking -  
- you can see I've had a chance to look at a lot of this stuff -- that it was  
important to have this, this morning, to document-- The Federal law is a  
real thick document. But I think what should have been taken from her  
articulation -- this other legislation is unlike No Child Left Behind. This  
ESSA offers a lot of opportunities and flexibilities for us to do things here in  
the state. And the idea is to take it away from the national government and  
put it into local hands as to how we measure out our progression, if you  
will, and the achievement of students; but also what we put in place.

You also should have gotten from her testimony that the law  
requires that there are certain things that the Federal government said every  
state must do; but that's the foundation that we're built on. And the reason  
-- if you look at your packet -- that you have a list of stakeholders-- And I  
see one that should actually be on it that is not there yet. I think these are  
stakeholders that were at the formative -- the past hearings and meetings  
they had. It's important that you look at that to see if anyone is missing,  
because the plan that has to go back to the State -- and there are  
timeframes for submitting all this stuff, as it relates to the Federal  
government, and approvals. And so I think that's important.

It's really important that this plan is inclusive of the thinking of  
the Legislature, as it relates to what we're hearing from our constituency  
base -- who have to run these systems, I'm talking about. Some of them are  
here, and some of them are on the list, and some of them are not. Because  
at the end of the day, once we put something in place, as legislators, we  
don't need to be here arguing back and forth as to the plan. We should be  
here arguing, "Okay; what we all put in place, collectively" -- *we* meaning

our constituent stakeholders -- “is it needs fixing, and we’ll fix it together.” But we know that we started off on the same page.

And so I’m hoping-- And also, finally, before the speakers speak, I asked staff to make sure that when they invite the speakers, the speakers give us their opinions based on what they know so far as it relates to the pros and cons of ESSA versus the No Child Left Behind. And that’s pretty much where we are right now.

With that being said, I’ll give it back to the Co-Chair so she can identify who she wants to speak first.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Well, I guess we can go in order.

You’re representing the New Jersey Department of Education, right? And I thank you for coming this morning; we appreciate it. And we’ll start with Karen Campbell.

**K A R E N L. C A M P B E L L:** Good morning, Assemblywoman Jasey.

We had prepared a presentation to provide to the Committee. So we’d like to start with that first, if that’s okay with you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Yes.

MS. CAMPBELL: And I’m going to turn it over to my colleague, Diana Pasculli.

**D I A N A P A S C U L L I:** Thank you very much. And thank you so much, Senator Rice--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Red is on; yes. (referring to PA microphone)

MS. PASCULLI: Thank you; does that work?

MS. SAPP: Is the red light on?

MS. PASCULLI: Yes.

MS. SAPP: Okay.

MS. PASCULLI: Okay.

Thank you, Senator Rice; thank you, Assemblywoman Jasey and all the members. And of course, happy birthday to Assemblyman Wolfe as well. (laughter) Although I'm meeting you for the first time, we very much appreciate, as the Department of Education, being invited to this conversation, and very much appreciate you taking the time on this important topic.

So once our remaining member of the panel introduces himself, we'd also like to give you an overview, as mentioned, of where we are in New Jersey on the State plan, particularly with all the stakeholder engagement that Senator Rice pointed out and highlighted.

Thank you.

**MATTHEW J. ANGELO:** Good morning. My name is Matthew Angelo; I'm the Federal Liaison at the New Jersey Department of Education, helping with the rollout of the Every Student Succeeds Act, including the stakeholder engagement, as well as policy analysis. And helping make sure that we're making informative and collaborative decisions.

So with that, I'll turn it back over to Diana. Thank you so much, Senator Rice and Assemblywoman Jasey, for having us; and all the Committee members.

MS. PASCULLI: So as mentioned, I'm Diana Pasculli. And my role as Deputy Chief of External Affairs is to oversee the stakeholder outreach and the outreach to our school community members, our parents,

our educators, our broader community members as we implement this ESSA. We call it *ESSA* in our Department; I know it's had to get them all aligned. But it's the Every Student Succeeds Act.

And we are engaged in planning and writing our State plan.

And so, as was mentioned by both Senator Rice and Senator Thompson earlier today, the Every Student Succeeds Act is-- Just a little background: It is the reauthorization, in fact, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that was actually passed in 1965. And the purpose of this law was to ensure equitable access, particularly for students living in poverty, to education resources and opportunities.

The way this works is that states and school districts are eligible for funds if they comply with the laws. And it was wonderful to come after a very good description of our new law, and all the different areas that we must comply with and areas where we do have discretion as a State. And we will try to address some of those for you today.

And the funds are funneled essentially through the State, but directly to schools and districts for students living in poverty and in other areas. And it's important to note that this really makes up less than 10 percent for every school district budget in our state. So it's just something to put into context.

But in order to qualify for these laws (*sic*), we as a State must submit a plan. And I'm here to tell you today some updates -- or provide some updates for where we are in our State plan that we intend to submit in the spring of 2017.

Concurrently, all districts must submit this State plan. They apply to the State on a yearly basis. And while we are very engaged in these

very important questions that were brought up in the earlier presentation, we are also looking to best support all of our districts as they identify their needs and cement their State plan, and that very much happens concurrently.

So for the State plan, you heard a lot of the details. And what we have to do a little bit more broadly -- what we have to do is describe our plan to the U.S. Department of Education. And what we will have to describe is those long-term goals, as Assemblywoman Jasey was asking about. We also have to describe how we measure and report out on our school performance from across the state; and then how we best provide tools through that reporting. We are looking to see how we can best provide our tools to our parents, community members, and educators about identifying -- so they may best help identify what their students need, and where we can then help them. And part of the accountability system that was mentioned is that it's the measures and the performance that we're going to look at when we determine what schools are in most need and how we will help support those schools.

So that's the process that we have to describe; and it's very focused on school level accountability.

There are also a few funds that are up to the State, and we are working with stakeholders for that entire plan, but also how we will best spend and distribute those funds that go to the State.

As I mentioned, there's a lot going on concurrently -- as we are developing our plan, we're also supporting our districts. And so the most important part on this slide is the center area, where we are engaged with stakeholders to develop our State plan. We are going through a process at

this time where we are identifying those policy questions, areas of discretion, and just figuring out what's best for our kids here in New Jersey.

We are also supporting districts by providing guidance. I'll show on a calendar later that we have a series of technical assistance sessions set up for November -- starting in November, and are working with stakeholders and districts to help improve that guidance so that it may best meet their requirements.

I very much appreciate how Senator Rice highlighted the importance of our stakeholder engagement, and wanted to explain that. First of all, it's an absolute requirement of how we implement-- It's a requirement for states, and all our districts in New Jersey, to be engaged and in constant conversations and dialogue with our stakeholders. And sometimes it's important to remember our stakeholders are our communities; they're us; they're our citizens; they're our parents, teachers, families, students, and the broader community members.

And we really look at this outreach -- we put it into three different types. The one thing that we've been doing is just listening and learning. You know, while I love PowerPoints -- as you can tell -- and it's important to kind of download a lot of that information and for all of us to have a collective understanding of what ESSA is, it's also very important for us, as a State Department, to just hear from folks about what's most important. We have a lot of expertise in New Jersey, and we were privileged to hear from many folks over the summer, throughout September, about just -- even in initial stages, what they care the most about.

We also, though -- as we develop a plan, there are areas of discretion. So an example is that we, as a State, will have to decide if we will use the minimum requirement of the four-year cohort graduation rate, or if we should consider, as a State, to also look at a five-year or six-year cohort rate. And so that's an example where we, as a State, have discretion, and we want to go to the field and ask those specific questions to make sure that we're moving in the same direction.

And finally, as always -- concurrently, and once we develop the plan -- it will be our job to make sure that we're informing all members of the community about the changes and the new law.

What we've done for engagement, so far is we started, as I mentioned, sort of, in the listening and learning stages. And one format was to ask, through a survey, members of our school communities what they care the most about in their schools. It was a very -- it was a five-minute survey that just said, "What's important to you in your schools? What do you want to see in public reporting?" So we have performance reports in New Jersey; we have had extensive performance reports for many years. And we're using this opportunity to look at those reports and make sure, again, that those are the tools that families and community members need to be able to advocate best for their students; and use that as one of many tools -- data points, if you will.

We have received over 5,000 survey responses from every single county. And we have actually kept it open, upon demand, and we are going to close it and hopefully share with the public some of those responses. It's just one of many ways that we're listening.

Something else that we did over the summer was -- and thankfully, with so much expertise in this room behind me -- we engaged in many conversations, meetings, and different points in dialogue. I think I heard a lot of words used like *conversation* and *dialogue* about today; that really was the approach of the summer and September, where we were talking to folks with different expertise and backgrounds, and hearing what they care about again, as I mentioned.

Finally, we engaged in four Listening and Learning sessions. I want to publicly thank Assemblywoman Jasey for attending our first session; it was an honor to have you. And we were able to meet with over 140 people and heard some speakers. This was just one of many different ways that we heard from people about what they cared about under ESSA.

And what was very powerful for me was, through our conversations and our Listening and Learning sessions, not only did we hear about the content and how our educators and parents want us to write that plan; we also heard a lot from parents, from educators, from community members about how we can improve our engagement with parents, and educators, and community members. And that was very powerful, particularly for me to say, "Okay, how can we better structure and engage, moving forward?" And so there was a lot, including a fourth Listening and Learning session at a better time for folks. There's a lot that these conversations informed.

Notably, something that was very much demanded -- and rightfully so -- was a forum where we can engage with representatives from different associations and groups from all over the state. And so we had -- we started, last month, our first of many meetings with an ESSA

Stakeholder Focus Group. And the ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group is represented-- We have invited about over 60 different representatives from different organizations, and this is growing by the day. Because as Senator Rice pointed out, we are trying to be cognizant of all the different expertise around and great groups that can be providing input. But sometimes what's been happening is some people have been attending the meeting and identifying a group that we inadvertently did not include. And so we think that we have a pretty good list, but are always looking to make sure that we have included the folks who should be there.

This has been-- We had one meeting and, like I said, we're going to have a few more. And that's really in our targeted feedback -- where we're going to be posing these very key questions. We're particularly interested, for instance, in how ESSA broadens the definition -- or the use of data and the use of the different tools so that we can better identify schools that are struggling. That conversation has been really rich; it started and it will continue with how we're working on those elements of the plan.

And so we-- I couldn't fit it in one slide, even at that font (referring to PowerPoint); and it couldn't fit in two slides. So there is just one running list. This is also posted on our website, which I'll get to later on. And we're very excited; it's been just very powerful to hear from all different representatives.

Did I miss anything? (speaking to colleagues)

SENATOR RICE: I have a couple of questions.

MS. PASCULLI: Sure.

SENATOR RICE: Commissioner Hesper -- has he left yet?

MS. PASCULLI: Yes.

MR. ANGELO: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Okay. Prior to leaving, I spoke to him via telephone. He assured me that the Newark Teachers Union would be reached out to and be a member of the focus group, because they were not on the original list. AFT is on the list; Newark Teachers Union is a member of the AFT group. But Newark Teachers Union is the only local school district that's not in NJEA. And there are differences, oftentimes, with the City of Newark -- because they only represent Newark -- with the City of Newark in terms of education and what the thinking is, based on our experience as the largest school district with the largest immigrant and minority population, and poor population.

So I just need to make sure they're on that list. And that's what I was saying to my colleagues -- to make sure that they look at the list to find out if anyone from the districts or statewide should be a participant. And it's not a question whether they go on the list or not, because the Federal law mandates that they be on the list if, in fact, they want to be stakeholders. That's question number one. Do you know if they are on the list or not? Were they put on, to your knowledge? Who's responsible for maintaining the list?

MS. PASCULLI: Donna Chiera, the head of the AFT, represents all the AFT groups, which is Newark and Perth Amboy.

SENATOR RICE: No, I understand that. But I said the Newark Teachers Union should have been added to the list.

MS. PASCULLI: So we can certainly do that. The way the--

SENATOR RICE: Well, Commissioner Hesper, prior to leaving, told me on the phone that when he hung up, he was going to do it. Do you know if he did that or not?

MS. PASCULLI: No, I don't know if he did that.

SENATOR RICE: Would you make a note to make sure it's done?

MS. PASCULLI: Sure, yes.

SENATOR RICE: I'm not questioning it; I'm asking, telling -- or whatever you want to call it -- that it gets done, and notify this Committee that they have been added.

MS. PASCULLI: Sure.

SENATOR RICE: Because I assured the President of the Newark Teachers Union that someone would be reaching out to them so they would know when these meetings are held, so they can have someone at the table--

MR. ANGELO: Of course.

SENATOR RICE: --and they can start doing their homework on the change in the law--

MS. PASCULLI: Absolutely.

SENATOR RICE: --so they can be knowledgeable.

And I would also hope that -- and you can take this back -- that the members of this Joint Committee, in particular, call the State with stakeholders' names -- they get added -- so we will know that the input is there from the various districts.

The other question I have, as you mentioned -- 5,000 responses. From whom? Was it this group here and others, or did this include community residents? Who was represented in the 5,000?

MS. PASCULLI: It's self-reported; and we do know that we received them from every county and from parents. And we received a lot of responses from parents and educators, and then some broader community members. They had to report on whether or not they had children in the public school system; and so there was some overlap. But again, we don't have all of the final results; I can certainly report back and share that as we compile all of it.

SENATOR RICE: Okay.

And the final question for-- Well, there are two left to get to; we'll get to one, probably later, when other speakers speak. And then maybe we need to get to it while the speakers are up here.

But the other question is: There were 50 meetings, and I never knew -- and I'm pretty active up and down this state -- there were meetings. How do we disseminate -- how did we disseminate, and how are we disseminating the information? Are we assuming that everybody goes online again? Are we still into that "everybody has to be a geek" mentality there at the State? How are we getting this information out? Because I didn't hear anybody running around my District -- Bloomfield, Newark, Glen Ridge, any place -- saying, "We went to these meetings; they have this wonderful thing going, and ESSA is here, and we had some input." I didn't hear that. So who participated at the meetings, and how are we getting -- how are we notifying Joe Public?

MS. PASCULLI: Thank you for highlighting that.

Something I failed to mention was one of my favorite aspects of the conversations that we're having in the ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group -- and that is, as I mentioned, we have heard from our stakeholders about better ways to engage. And so part of what we're doing in our ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group is to be posing questions, and then hearing from all the representatives about how we can better reach their members.

So that's a great point; we recognize that we didn't always -- even with our Listening and Learning sessions -- did not reach the broader audience that we had hoped. And so we hope, though, that by having over 50 people in a room who represent various people from diverse groups and regions over the state that we are better able to hear, kind of, real time about ideas. And through them, also, frankly, have them get to their members and get back to us and provide input. And so I think we always can improve, but I think that that is one of the kind of visions for moving forward as we develop the plan and as it goes out we do want to make sure that a broader group has reached out.

And we recognize that people are not going on our website, and that that's the sole source. And that not everyone is breaking down 13-page summaries and saying, "Oh, I want to go talk about this." However, we recognize when we ask a question like, "What do you care the most about in your schools?" people do want to engage. So we've been working on framing better questions and hearing from the experts. And I view some of the experts as being the members or the representatives of a given association for -- how we can best reach their members. So I think that's very important.

MS. CAMPBELL: Good morning, again. And I neglected to introduce myself. I'm Karen Campbell; I'm the Director of the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs. And we have responsibility for several Federal programs that I feel benefit children who are vulnerable in this educational process. Those programs are Title 1, Part A; Title 3, which is for English language learners; as well as Federal programs for migrant students and homeless students.

And getting back to your question, Senator Rice. Some of the 50 events that we mentioned here have been at the request from organizations. So I just want to put it out there that you are welcome to reach out to us if you have any groups that would be interested, no matter how small. We welcome the opportunity to speak to any of your constituents. I just wanted to put that out there.

Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Finally, a question -- and Senator Thompson has a question -- and this one you may not be able to-- Well, maybe you can; maybe we need to get an answer because the Federal-- Washington is here; not the Federal government, but Washington. And they did a research thing.

You know, just-- I read a lot of this stuff; I had to speak on it, did panels on it. We need to have, at some point in time, a discussion on what it means. Because it's supposed to be for "public school systems," correct? But we have in the public school system what is known as "choice;" in our case, it's called *charter school choice*. And it seems to me that the majority -- unless you're in the KIPP system or something like that where they finagle numbers, and some are doing good, and some are doing

bad -- most of the charter schools aren't doing that well, which means that the idea is that we should be measuring the achievement for all these students and others.

But can you give me the take on -- give us the take on -- and I'm directing this to the Federal side first, to the Washington side first, because I know, hopefully, someone else can answer it too -- what is the law saying about charter schools? Are we restricted to doing certain things? Do we have more flexibility to bring them in line in terms of making sure that the students in the charter schools are not failing -- which many of them are -- and then dumped back to us on the other side of the system? Can someone answer that?

And then Senator Thompson has a question.

DR. MERCER: So thank you, again.

From the ESSA perspective, it's silent on charter schools, with the exception -- they're a part of the traditional public schools. And so, at least from the Federal level, they are expected to be treated the same.

What generally happens -- that state and locals have a different set of rules and sometimes can keep different sets of books. So for example, in Washington D.C., the District itself, they have two separate systems -- accountability systems: one for their charter schools, and one for their traditional public schools; that 75 percent of what's captured in both systems is identical, but there is a small piece that isn't the same. And so they've been running these tandem systems; and I believe even under ESSA they propose to do that.

So it's at the state's discretion -- how they want to hold--

SENATOR RICE: So is the Federal government saying it's up to us, but they are saying it should apply to everybody? But the bill is called Every Student Succeeds Act.

DR. MERCER: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: So if the Federal government is saying if charter schools and a great number of students are failing--

DR. MERCER: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: --that's okay; because okay, we'll just let them fall. See, that to me, you know, doesn't make any sense. It's a contradiction of even the title.

DR. MERCER: Well, the state--

SENATOR RICE: Is that what they're saying? Or are they saying that-- Well, what are they saying?

DR. MERCER: Yes; so I think it's definitely speaking of all public school students in the state, which would include students who attend charter schools. So that's the first thing.

I think it's up to New Jersey or any other state to determine how they want to hold -- or accountability systems they want to create. In most places, they keep one; I just use Washington D.C. as an example of how they have two. But you still have to capture those essential elements -- those five categories that I mentioned have to be reported for both sets of schools. And so if the State has then determined the goals that they want all students to achieve, students who are attending charter schools would be held to the same standards.

SENATOR RICE: So if -- and I'm going to end on this -- so I want clarity, because there are going to be some fights in New Jersey, no doubt in my mind.

So if we say that the school district -- the New Jersey school system, whether you're charter or public -- that everybody is going to do A, okay? That's up to us. And the reason I'm raising that to my colleagues here, and I went on the record for others to read, is because this is a plan that's going to impact student achievement and progress even when we're gone, until they change it again.

DR. MERCER: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: And they don't talk about this so often, if you note.

Which means that there are going to be those who will be saying, "We don't want to do the same things the way others are going to do it." And we just can't have that kind of conversation. You can't tell me that our students aren't going to be at parity when it comes to what we require of them in the system, regardless of what-- It's a big box; we are all inside this box. And in that box, we all have to perform the same way. It can't be, "Well, we are bending the rules over here; and then we recognize these students are failing versus the ones over here." I think that's important; and that's why it's important to have this hearing while you're fast-tracking to get a plan approved for the Federal government. I think that plan should be inclusive, and people should be put on notice that they can come here and now and start raising hell about what they don't want; and we tell them what they are going to get, okay?

Senator.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you.

A question about the task that is facing you. What do we have, 562 school districts? Is that correct; something like that?

MS. PASCULLI: Yes; almost 600, yes.

SENATOR THOMPSON: I believe it's said that you need to work with every school district to develop their plans, and so on -- their goals and targets, etc. -- or evaluate them. And that's to qualify for funding out of ESSA, and so on; there are certain requirements each district would have to meet, and so on.

Considering that, of the total number of school districts we have, how many of them are expected will fall under this, or are all of them under it, or what?

MS. CAMPBELL: Well, actually, when you look at charter schools, we have well over 600. And in this current school year, 646 districts, including charters, receive Title I funding. So it's a large percentage of our districts that will be affected.

SENATOR THOMPSON: What I'm saying-- I see those were high percentages of disadvantaged students, high percentage of ESLs, and so on. Do we have a significant number of districts that will not fall under it? That's really what my question is.

MS. CAMPBELL: Yes.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Do you have any kind of estimate how many districts might -- percentage-wise -- won't?

MS. CAMPBELL: Will not be affected, you're saying?

SENATOR THOMPSON: Yes.

MS. CAMPBELL: I'm hesitant to give you a percentage, but they're in the minority.

SENATOR THOMPSON: They're in the minority.

MS. CAMPBELL: The majority of districts will be affected.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Okay.

My next question is related to your timeline -- that you indicate to follow this year. "Districts will receive initial spending guidance from DOE in November. And then spring and summer 2017 districts continue to receive updated spending guidance from DOE. Districts receive allocations from DOE and apply for grants."

Now, considering the school year begins here in September; and they're getting money in November, and you give them money in the spring, how do you really do anything with your budget? I mean, the school year started, and you're well along. So how does it fit into planning or doing anything?

MS. CAMPBELL: Annually, to assist districts with planning, we advise that they prepare to receive at least 85 percent of what they received in the previous year when it comes to Title I funds. And that's a very conservative estimate. Many end up receiving 100 percent, if not more, than what they received in the previous year.

But what we encourage districts to do throughout the year is to evaluate the needs of their students and staff, because that really determines how the funds are used. So if they've done that comprehensive needs assessment, they know where the gaps are in professional development, the gaps in student learning. I think it's safe to say that the funds can be used to address those needs and to fill in those gaps.

So we just tell them, "Evaluate what you're doing this year; plan to receive at least 85 percent; and then you'll be able to move forward, once the funds actually are available."

SENATOR THOMPSON: So you're saying come September you act like you got the money, although you don't know it. So you start spending then, or you don't start spending until November or December or so.

MS. CAMPBELL: They will know in May -- usually in May we're able to give pretty firm allocations. So districts know the previous May what they're allocation is.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Well, here you're speaking of them learning in November; I mean, the dates are just very-- I have a problem correlating your dates in your calendar.

MS. CAMPBELL: Right now, the calendar we put together is our best estimate. There's a lot of moving parts, but we're trying to plan accordingly, as we've done in the past. But the 85 percent estimate has been pretty safe over the years.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Diegnan, and then Assemblywoman Oliver.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: I want to follow up on Sam's point about process.

So ultimately these plans will be adopted by the State Board? I mean, how is this going to be implemented? How is this going to become a policy of the State of New Jersey after you get all of this input?

MS. PASCULLI: So the State plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Can you-- Is your-- (referring to PA microphone)

MS. PASCULLI: Yes, I'm sorry.

The State-- Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Charmaine, can you turn yours off? That will help. Thank you.

MS. PASCULLI: So great question.

The State plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in the spring of 2017. And that plan--

SENATOR DIEGNAN: By whom?

MS. PASCULLI: By the New Jersey Department of Education.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: And how will the Department of Education adopt that plan? Will it go through the State Board?

MS. PASCULLI: No, it goes directly -- first to the public for public comment -- although they will be quite involved as we develop it -- and then, for a minimum of 30 days, it needs to be holistically out there for public comment. And then it will go to the U.S. Department of Education.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: So identified persons within the State Department of Education will be developing this plan?

MS. PASCULLI: Yes.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: And do we know who those people are?

MS. PASCULLI: Yes, we have -- it's quite a team of over 20 to 30 people working on it, with leadership being the Assistant Commissioner and Commissioner -- Acting Commissioner.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: And when will they start developing this plan, and when will they disseminate it for public review?

MS. PASCULLI: So we are currently developing the plan, right now; and, as I mentioned, going back and forth with stakeholders as we develop different pieces. And then we hope to publish the plan this winter and allow a minimum of 30 days for public reaction to the total plan. But we do hope to get that out earlier than that.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: And after you receive the public input -- So this will not ever go before the State Board. It will all be done internally within the Department of Education.

MS. PASCULLI: The State Board is provided updates and, actually, is considered a stakeholder to help advise us and provide input and feedback as well. But, no--

SENATOR DIEGNAN: So if this 20- or 30-person group gets public input and decides to ignore the public input, they can still submit it to the Federal government for approval?

MS. PASCULLI: We can; but I hope-- I think that our theory of action with our stakeholder engagement -- which is meant to be iterative and having back-and-forths-- And I think that we have a pretty good system, where folks in the field will hold us accountable.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: Based on our experience with PARCC, I disagree with that.

But anyhow, where will PARCC-- Is PARCC going to be part of this process, part of this evaluation process?

MS. PASCULLI: An assessment is required. So as mentioned, we are required to annually assess our students on their progress towards our State Learning Standards. And so, at this time, we do use PARCC in New Jersey; and so that will continue. But there are converse-- There are questions that are part of -- where we have some discretion that we are asking and speaking with folks about.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: And last, but not least, effective-- You know, this is to be put in place next September. The January after that, we're going to have a new Governor. So let's say the new Governor and the Department of Education -- the support team that he or she adopts -- has a different view. How can this -- can this be amended on an annual basis? Is this plan-- How long will the State of New Jersey be obligated to follow this plan?

MS. PASCULLI: Well, we can-- We do submit it every -- resubmit it every four years. And so we will be obligated to follow our plan for about four years.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: Can we get an extension? I mean, I really think this is important -- that our new Governor and the team be part of this deliberation process. A Governor that is on his way out the door is going to be making recommendations. And we all know everybody's leaving the Department; Commissioner Hespe, whom I have great respect for, is gone. I'm not even sure who the Commissioner is now; does anybody know?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Harrington.

SENATOR DIEGNAN: I don't think it should be -- I don't think this team should be doing it. So can we go for an extension?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: I think we could let our Federal rep answer that question.

Thank you.

DR. MERCER: Yes; so I will add that the-- Two things: So there are two deadlines -- two submission deadlines that have been stated, which are March and July of 2017. The current Secretary is actually thinking about whether or not those timelines, or due dates, will be changed because they're connected to lots of other things that are proving to be a little bit challenging. But as of today, it's still March and July. But with that said, again, one of the biggest changes in ESSA is the continuous improvement, right? So when you learn something new or some things change, and that should have an impact on your system, states just resubmit; that's it. So the process isn't one, like under NCLB, that had their fixed date, and it was a fixed plan, and you lived under that until the reauth. This one is -- if states find, for better or worse, reasons that they need to go back and revisit their plans, they can resubmit. But I don't think you can get an extension from the initial one until the Secretary changes it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you; I appreciate that.

Assemblyman Wolfe.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Yes. I said in my opening remarks I think our role here is just basically to listen. And we've been listening now for almost two hours. And there is a lot of stuff to digest.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Not quite.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: But I was very impressed by what you're saying -- you have a 30-person panel looking at the proposal from the State?

MS. PASCULLI: Within the Department, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Okay. I would certainly hope that you have a contingency plan to work as closely as possible with all the stakeholders. Because as a Legislature, this is something that we will not really have that much input with. And we will really get all the guff, to put it mildly, once the plan is adopted. Whether it's good or bad, we're going to hear about that.

And I think the Senator -- I've never called him *Senator* before; I mean, this is an honor. (laughter) I mean, the Senator brought up a pretty good point. I mean, we're going to have a political change in the Administration in this State, and also a Federal change of Administration. So are we really spinning our wheels now doing all this? I think that there needs to be some contingency for tweaking, as you were implying. But I just would hope that as you get the input from the groups, that you try as best you can to accommodate their concerns. Because all I know is, for the last three years we've been having -- pulling back the dam for PARCC. I mean, PARCC, I guess, is going to be gone, or modified, or something; I mean, no one has kind of clued us in there to what is really happening with that.

So again, like, plans are developed and then we're the ones the people complain to. And we have these hearings, but it's like hearings with a big behemoth -- behemoth? Behemoth? (indicating pronunciation)

Whatever it is (laughter) -- "Sorry; the train is already moving down the track; you know, there's nothing that can be done."

So I do appreciate this opportunity to listen. It's a lot of stuff that you're talking about. So I want to wish you good luck. But we'll listen.

Thank you.

MS. PASCULLI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Are you listening? (laughter)  
Okay.

Thank you.

MS. PASCULLI: May I thank some people in the room, though? I just want to highlight that, as part of those conversations and ongoing dialogue, something that has become very clear to us is the need to see what we're doing with that information. And I really respect that and value that input that we've been receiving. And as mentioned, I didn't quite go over the October and November outreach efforts; I know there are more questions. But this, again, has been informed by representatives. And so what we're doing is trying to go into different communities. We have tentatively scheduled some in Jersey City, Newark, Camden, and Paterson this week, actually. And those are co-hosted with community members, again, who are inviting us to speak and are giving us real-time feedback on, "Okay; well, we spoke with you. We had these conversations. Now what are you doing with this information?" And those are really good questions that we've been hearing, and want to honor. So we continue to encourage and appreciate feedback on how we can best reflect the input we've received.

And just, also, I want to highlight that similarly we're cohosting, with all different organizations -- including both of our major teachers unions in the state, both AFT and NJEA -- and those ideas, again, have come from those memberships. And we're cohosting and conducting roundtable conversations to best hear from educators.

So I really am very appreciative of the deep collaboration with people in this room, and outside of that (*sic*) room.

SENATOR RICE: But you are going to add Newark Teachers Union. (laughter)

MS. PASCULLI: Yes, definitely.

SENATOR RICE: They are a member of AFT.

MS. PASCULLI: Absolutely.

SENATOR RICE: AFT deals pretty much with colleges.

MS. PASCULLI: Absolutely.

SENATOR RICE: The only local education group they have is Newark. And NJEA works with them, but doesn't speak for them. So I say they have to be at the table.

You didn't know that, did you?

MS. PASCULLI: I've been working very closely, again, with AFT; so, no.

SENATOR RICE: Okay; I just want to be clear. I expect someone to tell me sometime today that they are added to the list. Because now I'm getting nervous, okay?

MS. PASCULLI: I will. And we have a tentative-- Senator, we have a tentatively scheduled community meeting in Newark on

November 10. So once that's absolutely firm, I would like to offer that to you and all the members to join us.

SENATOR RICE: I want them on the State's stakeholder list.

MS. PASCULLI: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Like the NAACP is there--

MS. PASCULLI: Oh, that was an *and*; I apologize.

SENATOR RICE: -- and all these other folks.

MS. PASCULLI: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Okay; am I clear?

MS. PASCULLI: Yes, very.

SENATOR RICE: Okay, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Senator.

Before we hear from Speaker Oliver and Assemblyman Wimberly, I'd like to -- I am cognizant of the time. So what I'm going to ask is that you keep your questions or comments brief so that we can hear all the other speakers. And when the other speakers come up, I'm going to ask you to cover something new. If you have written testimony, submit it so that we can read it, but just highlight it for us.

And with that, Speaker Oliver.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Yes, thank you.

I just have several quick questions.

I heard you say that, as this process evolves, when you identify school districts that have schools that have shortfalls -- that you will "support those schools." In which way will the Department extend support to those schools or those districts?

MS. CAMPBELL: Right now we are evaluating our current support system -- the Regional Achievement Centers -- and looking at different delivery models. We have not finalized how we're going to provide support. My Assistant Commissioner, Susan Martz, who is heading that working group -- we have different groups -- she is spearheading the Intervention Working Group. But we're right now in the phase of looking at the data, trying to see the effectiveness of our current intervention system, and adjusting things accordingly. So we don't have a defined intervention system.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Because I think I've read -- if my memory serves me correctly -- that those Regional Achievement Centers have not been that successful.

MS. CAMPBELL: I do not work directly with School Improvement; but we are looking at the effectiveness and, going forward, how we're going to define our delivery system.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Yes, because we need to improve that.

The other thing I heard you say is that you've been conducting technical assistance sessions. What goes on at these technical assistance sessions?

MS. CAMPBELL: It really varies. In some of the technical assistance sessions, people have prepared questions in advance and we will go and answer questions. In some of them, it's more formal, with a PowerPoint -- where we talk about the new legislation, how it has changed, what we can expect for implementation. But it really varies depending upon the constituent group.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Okay.

And, you know, something that piqued my interest is when it was described that elementary and secondary Federal policy was first established in 1965 and this is the first demonstrative rewrite. And I find that very interesting, because if we think about some of the conditions that existed in our country in 1965, we all know that it was an impetus of social change; desegregation of school districts was going on; there was a lot of lack of parity in the appropriation of resources. And so now we've lived with that since 1965, and the Federal government is now revamping.

Title I, which you represent, is of particular interest to me because we hear a lot from parents of special needs children; we hear a lot about school districts reporting that they don't have adequate resources to address the needs of those parents and those children. And several months ago the Joint Committee on the Public Schools -- we traveled to Paterson and we conducted a day-long hearing in Paterson. And I was mesmerized by some of the demographics that were presented to us. And in Paterson, New Jersey, 66 percent of the current school enrollment is children who come from families where English is not necessarily the primary language. And when I think about resources, and we heard that Title I and these Federal resources only represent approximately 10 percent of the budgets of these school system -- as we roll out Every Student Shall Succeed (*sic*), what are we, as a State Department of Education, doing in terms of recognizing these demographics in the state and, accordingly, making our State resources targeted to address those issues?

I have talked with parents who tell me that their children are placed in districts -- special needs children, I'm speaking of now -- who are

placed in schools where there is not adequate resources or teaching staff to provide the level of educational instruction their children need. We know the whole disaster that exists in Newark with that whole parent enrollment system, which is a travesty. I don't even represent Newark, but I have parents who come to me each year dealing with that.

What are we doing in terms of Title 1? And would you describe to me -- have we seen significant reduction in our State appropriation of Title 1, or have we remained flat?

MS. CAMPBELL: In the past three years, we have seen increases in Title 1. Right now, I believe we're at approximately \$324 million for the State.

When it comes to Title 1, and using funds in districts, I can only speak for my office and the message that we give districts. We're working to dispel some myths, right now, that Title 1 funds cannot be used for certain populations such as students with special needs, such as English language learners. Funds can be used for any low-performing child. So we're working to dispel that myth in districts, and that has really been a barrier to serving some other populations.

Also, another thing that we're working on is helping districts to better identify their needs in using funds more appropriately. Title 1 funds can be used for a variety of needs -- to close gaps in resources, technology, preparing teachers to teach more rigorous course work. So we've been having those conversations with schools. But it takes a while to change the mindset. So I can only speak to what we're doing in my office around Title 1.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: I know that this is above your pay grade, but I want to enter on to the record that we have had previous Administrations within DOE who prioritized appropriation of funding so that districts could do more outreach and engagement of parents. Depending upon what model a sitting Commissioner has pursued in terms of school reform, we've seen fluctuations in that money. There is no doubt that we can't pursue ESSA without prioritizing supports to parents and engagement of parents; and our dollars need to follow and prioritize that. If a child's first role model, in terms of educational instruction, is the parent, then we've got to do more to engage and support parents. And from my travels around New Jersey, I don't see us doing enough of that. And I just want to enter that onto the record.

MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And then lastly, this whole discussion of stakeholders. About two months ago, I received a letter from one of my local NAACP Presidents who is actively engaged in educational issues within my District. And he was informed, by the Department of Ed, that the NAACP would no longer be able to be part of a stakeholder group as they had been under No Child Left Behind. And how could-- If that is true -- you can let me know if that is true -- if that is true, how in the Creator's name can we exclude an entity like NAACP, which really played an integral role, dating back to 1965, in the establishment of Federal public education policy?

MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

The particular situation you mentioned came about when we reconfigured our Title I Committee of Practitioners. ESSA gave us an

opportunity to more deeply delve into the legislation requiring a Title I Committee of Practitioners. Over the years, that Committee had morphed into something beyond Title I. So we reconfigured it to include people who worked directly with the program, either at the district or school level. We did, however, initiate the ESSA Stakeholder Focus Group, which Diana Pasculli mentioned, and that will be the venue for organizations to be at the table to provide input.

The gentleman you mentioned was asked to join that particular group -- the ESSA Stakeholder Group. So he is still at the table, and we welcome his opinion. He's been a very valuable stakeholder.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And, you know, I'm glad to hear that, but I just want to end on this note.

We get the best public policy when there is the opportunity for every voice to be at the table, whether or not we agree with that voice or not. That's why we're in this abyss that we have in our country today. Everyone has the opportunity to express an opinion, a point of view; and personally I believe that it doesn't behoove the New Jersey Department of Education well if there is someone at the table who doesn't agree with them, has a different point of view -- that they're blocked at the door.

But I know that that is not a decision that some of you sitting at that table make; but as a legislator, I feel very strongly about it. I know that I have other colleagues in the Legislature with me. And, you know, this whole environment and climate that -- if you don't agree with the direction we're marking in. The people of this state pay for the schools, they pay for the education that is in their districts, and they need to have the opportunity to be engaged. Because it's their children, their schools in

their neighborhoods that are affected. You know, a man told me a long time ago, "In government, you see them coming, you see them go." Those of you who are sitting at that table won't be there, but these people living in these communities will. And the implications for their children are long-ranging.

So, you know, be a little more open-minded, in terms of people who sit in rooms with you, or who knock on your door, or who ask to meet with you. You'll get a much better outcome, as a Department of Education, if you permit the inclusion of all voices.

MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Assemblyman, you're good?

SENATOR DIEGNAN: Great question.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: And then we're going to move on because, as I said, I want everyone who came to testify today to have the opportunity.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: Just two brief questions.

The hearing in Paterson -- the date, and time, and location? Do you have that information?

MS. PASCULLI: It is being cohosted with the Paterson Education Fund on Thursday, and it's-- I don't want to give out the wrong time--

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: This Thursday coming up?

MS. PASCULLI: I can forward it to you; yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: Oh, yes; if you could forward it through our office, that's fine.

MS. PASCULLI: They gathered folks-- But if you would like us to do an additional session, we'd love to come back up.

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: We have a School Board member here with me today, and they weren't aware of it.

MS. PASCULLI: Yes, I apologize.

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: So that was a little alarming.

MS. PASCULLI: We rely on our members, and we can speak with Rosie Grant and Linda Reed, who have been amazing partners.

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: That's fine; we'll reach out to them.

And one additional question about the increased funds in Title 1.

Through the Chairs, if you could provide the amount of increase that Paterson has received during this period of time. Because, obviously, you're very familiar with the draconian cuts we've had in staff, programming -- I mean, things as simple-- You know, you name it, it's been cut -- from security to busing. So I'm just curious to see what type of financial increase Paterson has received.

MS. PASCULLI: I can--

ASSEMBLYMAN WIMBERLY: You don't even have to answer that now, for time's sake. You can provide it through the Co-Chairs.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: So I want to thank you for your testimony. And I am very pleased that the Department came this morning, and we hope that this is just the beginning of a better relationship with the Department.

Thank you very much.

MS. PASCULLI: We agree; thank you. Thank you very much

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you very much.

And while they're leaving, I'm going to call up Wendell Steinhauer, President of NJEA; Melanie Schulz, Director of Government Relations, NJASA.

Oh, you're coming with a group? Okay; so you can follow the gentlemen.

And I'm going to ask you to just give us some highlights of your testimony, for the sake of timing.

Thank you.

**WENDELL STEINHAUER:** Thank you, Assemblywoman.

Wendell Steinhauer, President, NJEA -- 200,000 member organization.

You have the testimony, and I'll draw to the highlights that you asked for, Assemblywoman.

I have four areas I'm going to touch on: stakeholders, decoupling test scores, Student Success Index, and the community schools.

The, actually, third paragraph down on the first page is where I'm talking about the stakeholders. And that's been pretty well saturated so far, at this point. One of the keys that I agree with Assemblywoman Oliver is, that you need all the voices in the room. And Senator Diegnan, you're

correct. Once you have all those voices, who is sifting all that information into the final report? And that's a concern that we have, both in this presidential election coming, where there will be immediate change in the Department of Ed -- both at the Federal level and, again, in the election in 2017.

So I am concerned about the dates, but I think the Federal government's driving the March and July, and perhaps that will be alleviated in this November election. I'm hoping for it, because the current Secretary of Education -- it doesn't look like the regulations are very nice towards us, at this point.

The decoupling of scores -- if I go down to the next-to-the-last paragraph on that front page -- that is in ESSA that we are going to separate student test scores from teacher evaluations. It's very clear; it's one of the main points on that. We're going to need your help on that because that's nice that the Federal government said that; but now we have to come down to the State of New Jersey, and that will require one of two things: either amending the NJ Teach Law that was passed, which requires that coupling; and the Commissioner-- Either we have to amend that out, or the Commissioner of Education would have to guarantee that it's going to be a 0 percent, rather than going from 10 to 30 percent, as it just did recently. ESSA has been in place since December; and I guess the news didn't filter down to our Department of Education, where they tripled that rather than zeroing it out.

The third thing is Student Success Index, which talks to the indicators. I didn't hear a lot of talk about that; everybody thinks it's a good idea. But what are the actual things that we can use? And don't get

me wrong; test scores should be part in there. But they shouldn't have the high stakes demand that it's being used as right now.

We all took tests when we were going through school. I remember I had to -- I was prepped a day or two before -- it was like, "Underline the subject, circle the verb." That was just how to do the process of the test. They weren't actually teaching me, "what's the verb and what's the subject;" I was expected to know that by then.

We need to deemphasize that high-stakes testing, and get students coming back to school to be what they want to be: a well-rounded student.

In that Student Success Index, I have six areas that I would be looking at in there. The first one will be supports and engagements; the second would be academic success; the third would be safe and healthy schools; the fourth would be quality staff; the fifth would be career readiness; and then the last one would be the materials and resources needed. That's what a quality school would look like if we could measure those success areas. And of course, I know you're in a time crunch here; I'm not going to drill down on those areas. But perhaps you'll invite me back again some time to drill down on them. I just wanted to skim the surface of it.

And then the last thing is, I haven't heard in any of this presentation how we address poverty. And that is the thing that drives the-- Everybody wants to improve the schools; but until they tackle poverty, that's not going to be done. So our answer to that is-- I'm sorry, I didn't keep up with you on the second page, there. The Student Success was the first real paragraph on the second page; and our answer to areas --

schools that are in challenge is to promote community schools. Community schools would be not just the one-size-fits-all; it depends on the community, on what the needs are. And it wouldn't be just wrapping around services to say, "Check off the list that, okay, we've done that, and it's over with." It's real community engagement; it's real community leaders, and services being provided to those students who need that extra help and need those extra resources.

And hopefully I've highlighted the points; and I will stand for questions.

If not, thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: I appreciate that.

Senator.

SENATOR RICE: I just wanted to indicate, based on the comments of the President, that ESSA mandates testing. What they said was -- is that you don't have to do as much, and it cannot be used to evaluate teachers. And one test you can do in one period of time; or you can break it up over a period of time to measure.

So I just want my colleagues to know that when you mention that, it's not like we can eliminate testing; it's just that, "Hold it; the way you've been handling testing is not the way to go. You know, it's been destroying the education system.

So I just want to put that on the record.

MR. STEINHAUER: Actually, as the first speaker said -- she talked about band testing, maybe, in the grades and so on. So students would take tests at different time periods. I think that was the better one, than this every student, every year.

SENATOR RICE: The one thing I would ask, if you can--

MR. STEINHAEUER: So I agree.

SENATOR RICE: --because I'm-- Me personally, but I'm sure many of my colleagues in the Legislature and the community are very much concerned about the indicators. I think indicators are very, very important. We have to revisit QSAC or indicators, and we know that. But if you can elaborate -- not here; but more so in writing -- on each one of those. Why do you feel, thinking of your five -- the list of five, I believe -- on each one, some substantive information. That this should be an indicator for these kinds of reasons; and this is what the end result should look like. And this should be an indicator-- Can you do that for us, with your team?

MR. STEINHAEUER: We are absolutely deep into that right now.

SENATOR RICE: Okay.

MR. STEINHAEUER: We haven't got that final approval yet of where we want to be, so I don't want to lead out on that now. But I'll certainly, as soon as we have that-- And I don't think it's long. We can certainly do that for you. I think that's a great idea, and that's exactly what we decided. Give the broad heading, but then list individually: what things are in it. We touched upon a couple of them in this testimony, but there are certainly more. I would think five from each area would be absolutely easy to do for you, Senator.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you.

Assemblyman Wolfe.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Yes; thank you, Mr. President.

MR. STEINHAEUER: Thank you, Mr. Assemblyman. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Mr. President -- is that what they call you? Okay.

At a recent education meeting, I mentioned the name of Sarah Bluhm, who is the lobbyist for the NJBIA or something. And I said, years ago, she gave all the legislators a printout of the lexicon or the jargon that is used here in Trenton so we could understand really what people are talking about.

So maybe I missed something in an earlier presentation; but I'm reading what you said -- the synopsis you gave, and then what you just said -- and you mentioned the *community schools*.

MR. STEINHAUER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Now, what is a community school? Is it a magnet school? Is it a charter school? Is it a youth center? Is it actually a school? What is it? Do you know?

MR. STEINHAUER: It's actually a school that has other services. There may be things that come in there that-- In other words, there may be a mobile optical. In other words, a lot of students sometimes can't read because they can't even see the board or they have eyesight problems.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Right.

MR. STEINHAUER: But they're not taken to see the eye doctor, as need be.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Okay; right.

MR. STEINHAUER: So that would be -- there are actually mobile centers that could come to that school district and move through that type of thing.

There would be things that -- more dedication to nursing services-- And it depends on the community -- of what strength is there. Every community has different strengths of businesses that could help. If you're living in a community with a hospital, or a college, a medical arts type of thing -- that would be something that helps.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Okay.

MR. STEINHAUER: So it wouldn't be-- In other words, the community school in District *A* may not be the same thing as in District *B*. It depends on what community services are available there.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: So it's up to the community needs -- individual--

MR. STEINHAUER: Correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Okay; thank you.

MR. STEINHAUER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: That's a great question, and I think, perhaps, as a follow up -- if you could give us the current lexicon and definitions, and give it to the Committee, we'll distribute it to all the members.

MR. STEINHAUER: I'm making a note.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Okay; thank you.

Assemblyman Rible, did you have anything? No?

Speaker Oliver.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Yes, I just wanted to share with Assemblyman Wolfe that I attended, several months ago, the opening of a community school. And in Newark, the Newark Education Trust -- which is a philanthropic organization, and they've been working with other

foundations around the country -- they opened a community school. And the community school -- the concept is, the doors don't close at 2:30 in the afternoon; they have a longer length school day. Outside organizations come in to support the work within the school; a local nonprofit arts organization might come in and do theatre, or drama, or dance. They ran yoga classes for parents, Zumba -- which is a way of getting parents into the building. And I think, as Wendell pointed out, they'll get the local optometrist association to come in and do eye screenings.

But it is a way of addressing some of the issues that plague disadvantaged school populations. And we can't have an expectation that the teacher is able to deal with that wide range. And you will hear from teachers all the time, "So much of my day is taken up dealing with these other issues."

But the concept of community schools has been around for decades. And it's a great thing to see that the Newark Education Trust and a lot of the philanthropic organizations are recognizing the legitimacy and validity of them. And I hope that in the future we can see more of that, because that's precisely the direction we need to go into to help support some of these underserved communities.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: So I have a question; pardon me, everybody.

Is that-- Only people who live in the geographic area of that school can utilize those facilities? Or can anybody in a district utilize those facilities?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Anyone in a district, absolutely, could come in.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And let me, for the record, say you can establish a community school anywhere in New Jersey. It does not have to be in a “special needs” district. I represent Montclair. Montclair has the proverbial “community school.”

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: You see so much parent and community engagement in the school system, which is why Montclair has one of the top performing school districts in the state. Everyone’s involved; everyone buys in; everyone helps the students in the district.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Right, yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And that concept needs to be examined. We need to get out of the archaic thought that a school district is a 7:35 in the morning to 2:30 situation. And I think that young people get a better educational experience when we think of education differently.

But there is no doubt -- we have to rethink this way that schools operate.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Good.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And a longer school day is something that I’m totally, totally in favor of. And I think you can do that; and I’m certain that the NJEA, and the AFT, and the other educational interest groups -- if you sit down in a room and talk to educators who are dedicated, they’re willing to work these things out in school districts, because this is what it’s going to take for us to get academically high-performing students.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Sounds like this might be a topic for a future meeting. Thank you for your question.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Did you know about that?

ASSEMBLYMAN RIBLE: No, I just got schooled.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: He just got schooled, he said.  
(laughter)

Wendell, do you want to wrap up? You're good?

MR. STEINHAUER: Thank you. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you; I appreciate it.

Melanie Schulz from the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, with her crew. (laughter) Okay.

Thank you for your patience. This is a huge topic, and I kind of knew it was going to run long. But I appreciate members, and members of the audience who are still with us.

Thank you.

**MELANIE SCHULZ:** Good afternoon, everyone.

It's always a labor of love for me to come to the Joint Committee. (laughter) I spent a lot of good years with all of you; and now it is also a privilege of mine to represent the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. Some of the finest minds in our state are at this table with me today.

I have with me Dr. Jorden Schiff from Hillsborough; Dr. Rob-- Okay, Rob, you're last. Dr. Robert Zywicki from Weehawken; I've got Mr. Kenyon Kummings from Wildwood School District; I've got Dr. Ken Greene from the Newton School District; and Ms. Judith Rattner from

Berkeley Heights School District. They will be giving you some substance in their discussions. I just wanted to make a few remarks.

When Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, it made a dramatic shift from a law that was a Federal plan to a law requiring states to develop their own plans.

Now, in thinking about what we might do, four questions come to my mind. One is, what is in our waiver that we want to keep? What is in our waiver that needs to go? What did we want in our waiver that was not permissible under the No Child left Behind Act? And finally, what State policies did we put in place here in New Jersey -- regulations or guidance or statutes -- to comply with NCLB that we have an opportunity to rescind or modify to support the answers to the questions above?

These answers are likely to surface over the coming months. At the heart of ESSA is the fundamental cycle of setting goals, planning on how to use Federal funds, and measuring outcomes.

NJASA has been and will continue to be a strong advocate for reliable practice and accountability measures.

Now I'd like to turn it over to the people in this room who really make the trains run on time and our schools districts excel.

And we'll start with Dr. Schiff.

**JORDEN SCHIFF, Ed.D.:** Good morning.

I'd like to begin by thanking the Chairs and members of the Committee for inviting our comments on ESSA.

My name is Jordan Schiff, and I'm the proud Superintendent of the Hillsborough Township Public School System. In addition, I also serve

as the President of the Garden State Coalition of Schools; and I chair the NJASA Legislative Committee.

ESSA allows for additional flexibility at the State and local levels in terms of program design, resource allocation, support for struggling schools, and how we measure student growth. Today I will limit my comments to how the teacher evaluation system can be improved by eliminating the use of one of these measures: the median Student Growth percentile.

Assembly Bill 4122, which recently passed the Assembly with bipartisan support, would eliminate -- have the effect of eliminating the median SGP score. I'll argue that its elimination will improve the evaluation system for two fundamental reasons. First, the lack of timeliness in receiving the median SGP from the State needlessly complicates the process and weakens the Teach New Jersey Act.

Second, the median SGP is used for only 15 percent of educators and creates disparate treatment of teachers, and unintentionally disincentivizes educators to teach in grades and subjects that use the median SGP.

To put these two arguments in the proper context, it is necessary to provide some background to the teacher evaluation process. The evaluation process for teachers and administrators is a combination of both professional practice and student achievement. Professional practice being the behaviors of the educators, and student achievement being the academic growth of the children.

The Student Growth Percentile measures student achievement gains within 4th and 8th grade language arts, and 4th and 7th grade

mathematics. Only about 15 percent of the teachers in the State of New Jersey receive this statistic. Using the State's Standardized Assessment, SGPs compare the change in students' achievement from one year to the next to that of all other students in the state who had similar historical results.

For teachers in test grades and subjects, the median SGP counts for 30 percent of the overall evaluation rating. Teachers of non-tested grades and subjects complete Student Growth Objectives, which measure academic growth of students using measures other than the State standardized achievement tests. The SGOs count for 15 percent of the overall evaluation rating of educators.

In summary, if a teacher is one of the 15 percent of the teachers in the state who must use median SGPs, then only 55 percent of his or her evaluation is based upon teaching practice. However, if you are one of the 85 percent of the teachers who are not in tested grades or subjects, then 85 percent of your evaluation is based upon your teaching practice. This type of different treatment is a disincentive to educators to teach in these tested grades and subject areas; and a legitimate question of fundamental fairness could be raised as well.

Our other argument for the elimination of median SGPs as an evaluation measure is due to the delay in receiving the data from the DOE. We received the 2014-2015 data on March 22, 2016. That is nine months after the conclusion of that school year, and almost a year after the PARCC was administered. Each teacher, in the spring, receives his or her annual evaluation. For the 15 percent of the teachers and any administrator who is evaluated upon the median SGP, their annual evaluations are incomplete

until we receive the SGP scores from the State almost nine months later. For some teachers and administrators who must wait for their median SGP scores, the annual evaluation process becomes somewhat dispiriting, not knowing what their completed evaluation would be. I'm not aware of any research on teacher evaluation that would support delaying the final evaluation of that teacher by months and months due to a delay in calculating an evaluation metric. How does this help to improve instruction?

It is due to the lack of timeliness in receiving the SGP data and the fact that only 15 percent of the teachers are impacted by this metric that we strongly urge you and others in the State of New Jersey to decouple -- as our friends from the NJEA indicate -- teacher evaluations from standardized achievement tests.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you.

**ROBERT R. ZYWICKI, Ed.D.:** Good afternoon.

My name is Robert Zywicki, and I am the Superintendent of the Weehawken Township School District in Hudson County.

I greatly appreciate this opportunity to comment on the State's implementation of ESSA. I will be speaking on two topics related to local ESSA implementation as it pertains to the reporting on school and district performance.

My first comment is in regard to the reporting of the adjusted cohort high school graduation rate on the school performance reports that the NJDOE produces annually.

The current adjusted graduation rate reported on the NJDOE school performance reports is a calculation of the number of high school students belonging to a cohort who graduate within four years. This metric has had positive results for New Jersey's students. Schools now have greater incentive to provide dropout prevention strategies, such as Response to Intervention, for students who are at risk of not graduating.

The cohort graduation rate currently reported is considered *adjusted* because it excludes students who have transferred out of state or who are deceased. Student dropouts, unverified transfers, and students in continuing status count against a school's graduation rate.

Oftentimes continuing students are special education students, who are entitled to receive services beyond four years of high school. Additionally, students who take longer than four years to graduate due to medical conditions are counted as continuing status students.

The inclusion of continuing status students produces an artificially low graduation rate that is reported to the public on the school performance reports. For example, in my District in 2015-2016, the attending cohort graduation rate that excludes continuing students is 98 percent; yet the official accountable cohort graduation rate that includes continuing status students is 93 percent.

I respectfully urge the Committee to consider a stipulation in the reporting regulations so that the four-year adjusted cohort graduation reported on the New Jersey school report cards no longer penalizes a school for continuing status students.

My second comment is with respect to the reporting of the post-secondary enrollment rate on the NJDOE school performance reports.

New Jersey school performance reports for high schools currently include this category, post-secondary enrollment rate. This statistic reports the percentage of students who are enrolled in a two- or four-year college 16 months after high school graduation. This statistic has been used by publications, such as *New Jersey Monthly* magazine, as part of their high school ranking methodology.

This statistic fails to take into account high school graduates who may be serving in the military, who may be in trade school, or who may be working to save money to attend college. Further, the use of this statistic implies that attending college is more valuable than one of those other statuses that the students may fall into.

I respectfully urge the Committee to consider a post-secondary plans index that shows the number of graduates who are reported to be enrolled in college or trade school, serving in the military, volunteering with a humanitarian organization, or working in business or industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, and thank you for your written testimony as well.

**J. KENYON KUMMINGS:** Good afternoon. My name is Kenyon Kummings, Superintendent of Wildwood Public Schools in Cape May County.

Again, I would like to thank everyone for letting us have a seat at the table and share our opinions and our concerns.

Our district has a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students and is racially and ethnically diverse. I am here today to testify on two separate, but related, concerns -- the first of which is

the use of free and reduced lunch status as a metric within any school accountability system, and primarily when identifying peer schools for use in the school performance reports. The performance report is the New Jersey Department of Education's main vehicle for communicating with the public regarding the status and performance of our schools. We know from peer-reviewed studies, and over two decades of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, that students on reduced lunch do not score statistically significantly differently than students not eligible for reduced lunch. However, students eligible for free lunch do score significantly lower.

To aggregate the two is to create an inaccurate portrayal of the social conditions that a school is charged with navigating. For example, the composition of our elementary school is 90 percent free and reduced; with 85 percent free and 5 percent reduced. Under the current system, our school could be grouped with a school with the inverse of that distribution, with 5 percent free and 85 percent reduced. Those numbers represent two very different schools within two very different communities.

My request is that the Department look to abandon the use of the percentage of students receiving reduced-cost lunch, and rely on either the free lunch rates exclusively, or the State of New Jersey's direct certification numbers that indicate if students are involved with the School Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Food Distribution Programs, and/or are foster children. This would be a standardized metric that would result in a more accurate portrayal and grouping of schools on reports, such as the school performance report or its next iteration.

The second concern is in regard to standardized testing frequency and accountability structures. With the onset of NCLB in 2001, we began administering standardized tests in grades 3-8 and 11. That has now grown to potentially six compulsory assessments across ELA and math during high school, one of the highest amounts of high school testing in the country. Any opportunity to decrease the frequency and volume of mandated testing will result in more opportunities for learning, as well as a reduction in costs at the school, district, and State levels.

In addition, many states have abandoned the use of a standardized assessment as a graduation requirement, and I have an attached resolution to my testimony which expands upon that.

Any opportunity to reduce the amount of standardized testing assessment at the State level, via pilots within ESSA, should be strongly considered.

The results of standardized assessments are currently used to identify the lowest performing schools for monitoring in an effort to improve student performance. This was originally through the Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement, and most recently via the Regional Achievement Centers -- the RACs -- an idea borrowed from other states.

The implementation of ESSA offers an opportunity to evolve from the current vantage point of monitoring into a new system with a focus on capacity building and support in a more thorough and efficient manner, taking into account protocols that have a proven record of effectiveness. There already exists national school accreditation associations for feedback and growth that have demonstrated track records -- for

example, Middle States Elementary and Secondary School Accreditation, New England Association of Secondary Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Furthermore, given the focus on global competitiveness, it is more appropriate to look at international accreditation agencies that can collaboratively and effectively provide feedback on how well our schools are growing toward offering international educational experiences. Agencies like the Council for International Schools or AdvancED, among others, offer international perspectives for growth. For all their good intentions, the RACs do not have the personnel nor the resources to provide that type and level of support. We need a 21st century model built on growth to replace the current 19th century model built on monitoring. For example, the DOE could facilitate partnerships between schools in New Jersey that share similar demographics and challenges to share best practices that have been successful in areas identified for school improvement, such as the dropout rate or specific achievement gaps. They could also facilitate partnerships with international schools to help create professional learning networks. The DOE would then be in a position to help facilitate customized and collaborative professional development between two or more schools, as opposed to applying the same set of standardized principles to all schools.

By reducing the amount of standardized assessments, and by restructuring the accountability systems, the DOE has an opportunity to decrease the cost of school improvement initiatives and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public education in New Jersey.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you.

And as you were speaking, I actually made a note that we should include you in the future to come and talk, perhaps, to the Ed Committees about changing the way we work together, how we measure success. And I think ESSA may just give us that opportunity to make those kinds of changes.

So I thank you for your testimony.

Next.

MR. KUMMINGS: Thank you. I'd be happy to do that in the future.

**G. KENNEDY GREENE, Ed.D.:** Thank you, Assemblywoman Jasey, and Senator Rice, and members of the Committee.

My name is Ken Greene; I'm the Superintendent of the Newton Public Schools in Sussex County. As an aside, we were just talking about community schools; and I appreciate that. It happens to be a goal -- a District goal of ours this year -- to create a Newton-centric model. So I appreciate Speaker Oliver's comments about the broadness of community schools, and I think it would be a worthy topic for a future meeting. I think it's that important.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: I don't mean to interrupt--

DR. GREENE: That's all right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: But I know that you're -- we have your testimony in writing. So if you want to just highlight something, I think clearly we need to have another meeting, because we have so much information being shared with us.

DR. GREENE: Sure; well, I'll leave the community schools' topic alone. Again, that could take up its own--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: No, I love community schools.  
(laughter)

DR. GREENE: Yes; no, no, and I do as well. And I think we do ourselves well to move toward that model.

I also serve as Secretary of the Administrators Association, and I'm also the Liaison to the Legislative Committee. So I am appreciative of this opportunity.

I have two points to make; I won't read the balance of the remarks, but just comment on them.

The first comment is on assessing school performance thorough the School Performance Reports, and looking at making the participation in dual and concurrent enrollment courses a target -- a performance target.

The participation in dual and concurrent courses has been increasing steadily over the past years. We know its connection to our state's colleges, as well as colleges around the country. And it's a powerful means to help raise student expectations, particularly for students who are at-risk. DOE has recognized this by including it as an indicator, but not yet as a performance target.

And it would be nice to have that, because much of the performance targets are based around standardized testing -- in particular, SAT and PSAT are targets, but those are highly correlated. The same kids take those tests. Why are we measuring that twice?

Dual and concurrent course-taking has some correlation with SAT and PSAT, but much less than they have with one another. And the

aspiration to attend college as measured by an entrance exam may not be a more powerful measure than the earning of postsecondary credit by actually taking the courses. So we'd like to see that become a performance target; and we'd urge that whatever advocacy you can have with DOE on that would be much appreciated. Certainly we're not dismissing the value of SAT and PSAT.

Let me get to my second comment, which is specifically urging the reauthorization of PARCC alternatives as permanent options to meet the high school graduation testing requirement.

As you know, the State Board has recently approved PARCC as the sole graduation requirement for the Class 2021. It's been stated to me in the past by DOE officials that the reason -- the major reason for having that is because PARCC had a different standard; it was a standard of ELA 11 and Algebra II. Well, now the State has agreed that, actually, ELA 10 and Algebra I are the graduation standard, and that matches the college entrance exams that are alternatives, including SAT, PSAT, ACT, ACCUPLACER -- all of those.

An objection might be raised if these tests were not similar and comparable; but we know the results on them are. In fact, the Department tells us so -- that the results on PARCC are very similar to, for instance, SATs' 1550 standard for college and career readiness. So, you know, we have comparable exams.

To bring this closer to home for us, the SAT participation rate across the state is an average of 80 percent. That means that 4 out of 5 of our students show up voluntarily on a Saturday morning, taking a multiple-hour test -- which their parents pay for, and they do it willingly. And yet we

don't see this as the low-hanging fruit that it is. It's accepted, it's normal, we do this. Why wouldn't we consider that to be valid for high school graduation?

And so I think it's a mistake to eliminate testing options for high school students, especially when that's where we have the biggest issue in terms of getting participation and buy-in. And I would urge you to advocate again with DOE to include that -- and the State Board -- to consider that, moving forward, as part of ESSA.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you very much.

**JUDITH A. RATTNER:** Hi, I'm Judy Rattner, Superintendent of Berkeley Heights Public Schools. I'm also a Past President of NJASA, and I am very fortunate this year to be the 2016 Superintendent of the Year for New Jersey.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Congratulations.

MS. RATTNER: Thank you.

I just wanted to reinforce the fact that this ESSA has provided us with a unique opportunity, and it's an opportunity that allows the State and the local districts to drive the decisions that really, really craft the implementation of ESSA. And we really shouldn't lose this opportunity to provide for more flexibility as we work through that implementation.

My colleagues did a great job of identifying many things in ESSA that we need to focus on. I'm going to talk about a couple of others. One is the (indiscernible) size. And we look at subgroups based upon the size that the Department of Education for New Jersey identifies; and, in many cases, it's 30 or less. So when you look at a school's performance, it

may be a subgroup's performance of 30 students in a large school that dictates whether or not that's considered a comprehensive, well-performing school. And I would just ask us to focus in on that.

The other thing I would say is that ESSA still requires the 95 percent participation rate in terms of assessments; and as we look at our graduation pathways -- as some of my colleagues have mentioned -- we need to see how those different pathways impact that in terms of what ESSA dictates.

Also, I always caution anybody from using one rating or one indicator to identify a school's or a district's performance. And so, therefore, it's really important that we look at all aspects of a school in order to identify whether or not they are being successful.

And I also want to stress that ESSA, just like NCLB used to, really focus on a school. Remember our schools are part of a bigger district. And we need to look at how that district can help all of those schools be more effective.

Lastly, we need to make sure that we're supporting all the educators in our state; making sure that the people who are coming into our schools are well-prepared to be effective teachers; supporting administrators as they make that change to make sure that we have good people in charge of districts, in charge of schools, to make things as effective as possible.

And once again, I just want to remind you that ESSA only requires testing at the high school level once. And we in New Jersey currently do it three times.

So just to wrap up -- on behalf of all of us representing NJASA today, I want to say thank you again for your time and your attention. And

know that if there is anything that any of us can do to help you as you sort through this, and help in terms of the ESSA implementation, we would be honored to assist you in any way.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you very much.

I wish we had time to have a conversation about this in detail, but we don't. But we will have you back, I imagine, in the not-too-far future.

Thank you very much for coming and for your testimony.

Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: Yes, before you leave, I'd just want to go on the record that ESSA requires one test, and New Jersey requires three.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: But ESSA also says that New Jersey can go beyond some of the things that they do. So that's going to be, probably, in the planning process one of those contingents that we're going to have to address as to what should we be requiring in that area. And I think that's a very important issue.

And we're going to need data to justify whatever we do, to some reasonable degree. So I think the Department of Education needs to start working on that data.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Senator.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: And if I could--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: And thank you, gentlemen and ladies. (laughter)

MS. RATTNER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: Excellent job.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN OLIVER: I am very proud of my New Jersey Administrators. (laughter)

DR. SCHIFF: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Next up, Sharon Seyler, from the New Jersey School Boards Association; Patricia Wright, Executive Director of New Jersey Principals and Supervisors; and Diane Genco, Executive Director of New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition. And we will add one more -- Betsy Ginsburg, Executive Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools.

And again I would ask that you tell us something new; highlight your testimony. If it's written, submit it.

Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Before you get started, I have a question.

Did the Department of Education leave anyone back here to observe and take notes? (no response) Okay.

And also, for the record, I think some people left -- I wanted to mention this before they left -- some of the issues being raised here I've already asked staff to convert them into question form for me, and to keep a list for the Joint Committee. So as we go through the planning process, we can see what was put in there that was raised here, and what was not. So we can ask the Department, "Well, this is an issue; why is it not in the plan?" And they could probably justify or not justify. I just want the members to know we're going to keep a list of all these questions that need to be raised later on.

And I'm going to ask staff to make certain that whatever notes you do take, and the transcripts get to the Department right away -- they can start paying attention to some of the things that we are saying. So that when they go through the planning, they can look at things that were raised and make sure they are a part of it, in case it doesn't come up at the stakeholders' meeting.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Sharon.

SHARON SEYLER: Thank you.

Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Before I-- You have my testimony; and it's in-depth. So I'm just going to summarize a few things.

But before I do, I just wanted to say that -- I just wanted to commend the Department of Ed, because they've included us in their stakeholder engagement. And actually, we're part of a subcommittee -- that meets, like, biweekly I think we're doing it now -- to go over things, and then we discuss with the Department of Education. So I just wanted you to know that they're-- This has definitely opened the lines of communication with the Department of Ed and with all of us included. So I thought you should definitely know that that's a real priority for us, and we feel that's a real advantage as we implement the law -- as this gets implemented, the plan.

The reauthorization focuses on local control when it comes to low-performing schools and deciding what the best intervention would be. This includes accountability, student indicators, standards and testing,

English language learners, special education students' impact on teachers, and funding.

The New Jersey School Boards Association hopes that local board members will have a say in the interventions needed in school districts, as local stakeholder input is required as the State Department of Education implements the law.

The U.S. Department of Ed still insists on minimum participation on the State testing -- which we talked about the 95 percent participation. When it comes to testing, NJSBA believes that there should be alternatives for testing.

Intervention continues with the bottom 5 percent of low-performing schools, and in high schools where the graduation is 67 percent or less. Currently in New Jersey the Regional Achievement Centers -- the RACs -- are funded by Title 1 funds. Implementing intervention in the lowest-performing 5 and 10 percent schools are categorized as priority in the focus schools.

Funding is a main concern, which pertains to the Title 1 funding formula which remains intact; but there are some changes to Title II, which pertains to funding teacher quality. That will be a benefit to rural districts.

Maintenance of effort will also remain in place, requiring states to keep up their own spending at a particular level in order to tap the Federal funds.

And again, I just want to emphasize the relationships that we all have, and how this has become quite a venture.

And thanks to everybody.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Sharon.

Pat.

**PATRICIA WRIGHT:** Good afternoon; thank you. Thank you for hosting this conversation today.

And you have my testimony, so I'm just going to highlight a few things.

First of all, beyond test scores. So I think you've heard that over and over again, and I think we have an opportunity right now to really focus and include measures such as school climate, social and emotional learning -- things that educators know make a big difference in overall student achievement. So we welcome to continue those conversations.

The second thing -- the impact of the use of student growth on evaluation. I know you've heard it here from both the Superintendents and from NJEA, but I just want to reiterate. In some ways, it has had a negative impact on the very things that we're looking to, now, look for in terms of accountability, like school climate. It's really important that principals and school leaders are allowed to lead in climates that foster continuous improvement. Just as we said ESSA is focused on continuous improvement of our educational system, at the local district we need to be focused on continuous improvement. That means providing feedback -- quality feedback to our educators and really focusing on their growth. Whether or not the use of student growth has added to that or detracted from that, I think that's an important conversation to continue to have.

The other piece that is new that you haven't heard this morning, that we would like to bring up from our members, is a concern, yes, from our members; but it really should be a concern for everyone, all

educational stakeholders. Over the last few years, under the waiver, our school leaders-- We talk a lot about the teachers, and we talk-- We need to think about the leadership in our schools, and we need to understand that they have been trying to look at high-quality, standards-based instruction in all of their classrooms; they have been leading the implementation of our new assessment -- the PARCC; they have been evaluating teachers under brand new frameworks; and they themselves have been evaluated under them.

In order to do the type of work that they're doing now, their jobs have really shifted from management to, really, instructional leadership. And yet they are constantly asked to provide professional learning for educators within the system -- their teachers; but their own professional learning -- we've really ignored that. And for the last decade, our national affiliates, as well as NJPSA, have really been talking to our national leaders about the idea of providing some kind of support for professional learning for leaders. We need to focus on leadership development for schools. And so there is a provision within ESSA that allows the State to provide a real opportunity for leadership development by allowing the states to reserve up to 3 percent of district Title II allotments for statewide school leadership efforts. We really think it's time to focus on leadership, because research shows that school leaders have the second-most significant impact on what goes on within the schools and on student achievement, aside from the teacher standing in front of the room. So we really think that that's an important component to keep talking about.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you. And I think I agree with you totally.

Senator.

SENATOR RICE: Yes, I agree too, because that's something I discussed on my panel at Neptune. The language is there; and in the State you understand the intent of that language. The intent was to do just that -- to make sure that, rather than taking us back, to provide the kind of resources -- financially and human resources -- to make things go forward.

And so, to me, ESSA will not work -- based on this intent for any state -- if we don't look at all of the elements of the intent of the legislation, and use it.

And so we need to make a note as well -- the Joint Committee asks the State -- well, they're not here now -- that that becomes a priority in terms of our thinking within their plan, okay?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Senator.

Diane.

**D I A N E M. G E N C O:** Well, I did not bring a birthday gift for Assemblyman Wolfe (laughter); but one thing I really believe about ESSA is that it is a gift to the State of New Jersey. And we are not a cookie-cutter state; we are not a state that does what everybody else does around the country. We have very unique and different needs and issues; that I really believe that the schools need to be a mirror that you can hold up to that community and it can be reflective of that community. And ESSA will give us that.

I represent the Statewide Afterschool Network. We do not provide afterschool programs; what we do is we provide technical help,

assistance, resources, and guidance in how to improve quality of out-of-school time programs for youth. We're funded by the Charles S. Mott Foundation, the Department of Education. We provide the TA to the 21st Community Learning Centers, which will be under ESSA; and also through the Department of Children and Families, through the TANF dollars for subsidy for quality set-aside.

But I think what we need to remember when we're looking at this wonderful gift is thinking outside of the box, because this is the time. (uses cardboard box as a visual aid)

You know, in the 1960s -- late 1960s, you know, there were community schools; and they disappeared. And now is the time that we can really look at a way -- we can look at a whole community approach.

So first, afterschool has not been forgotten. Title I requires that states need to choose one or more indicators of school quality and student success as part of their accountability system -- such as school climate, chronic absenteeism, or student engagement. Afterschool programs really impact on all of that. Those kids who have a continuum of care and support, and they can go right from that school day into the out-of-school program -- this can all be an indicator.

So whatever measure is selected, we encourage NJDOE to consider how afterschool programs can support schools in improving student success in this selected measure.

Deb Vandell, a researcher from California, has an example where kids who are in afterschool programs miss fewer days of school. Why? They can't go to the afterschool program if they aren't at school. So

one way is to really look at chronic absenteeism, which we're really focusing on.

All right, next is Title II, Part B. I must say, reading this legislation was, like, unbelievable to me. I'm not really schooled like all of you are, but it made me very happy in our organization that afterschool is really contained in it.

*Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation* gives the State opportunities to use afterschool programming to enhance educational success. This section provides grants to "develop or enhance comprehensive literacy instruction" to entities serving children in low-income families. ESSA specifically states that these literacy activities can be "augmented by afterschool and out-of-school time instruction" -- perfect for that community school model; absolutely perfect. We encourage the Department of Education to take advantage of these opportunities to improve literacy in high-need populations by coordinating literacy activities between in-school and out-of-school time partners -- your public library, your afterschool program that's in the school -- all right?

Lastly, in terms of--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: You know what? Pat just raised her hand. (laughter)

MS. GENCO: Oh, okay.

Title IV, A, Student Support and Enrichment grants, provide opportunities at the local education level for expanding opportunities after school with a strong focus on science, technology, engineering, and math. Except in our world, we include A, we include the arts--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Students; right.

MS. GENCO: --because I really believe that, even though they say it's included, we need to be intentional about it.

Afterschool sparks learning by letting children and youth experiment with STEM ideas in real-world situations. Such opportunities we know help ignite curiosity and interest, especially for those kids who may not think of themselves as math or science geeky kids.

My husband's a scientist, and he spent all his out-of-school time blowing things up in his mother's basement. We still have a charred ceiling that we can look at, from his Bunsen burner. (laughter) Kids need the opportunity to be interested in STEM, and it will happen in an afterschool program. STEM learning builds the knowledge and skills needed to reason through tough problems and come up with creative, effective, and reasonable solutions. We need to make sure that every child in the next generation develops the skills demanded by the information age, which is vital in our country's shared and continued prosperity.

We ask that you all consider the positive impact that afterschool programs have on STEM, or *STEM* (indicating pronunciation), learning in your ESSA implementation plan.

And in closing, ESSA provides the State with a wealth of opportunities to help all New Jersey students succeed. Quality afterschool programming is critical for student success; and we hope that NJDOE takes this into consideration in its implementation of ESSA. And that NJDOE and all the stakeholders think out of the box.

And I must say that I just came from a two-day meeting that the Mott Foundation hosted with our 50 national networks. We spent two entire days on ESSA. And our state, compared to some of these other states

-- we are doing a phenomenal job. And if you haven't looked at the ESSA website, I suggest you do. They have an amazing video that-- I never understood all the titles that-- For the first time in my career of many, many years, I finally understand the difference in a lot of the nomenclature, and what Title I, and Title II, and Title IV, A mean.

So I think our State is doing a great job, and I'm very excited. And we are, in our organization, really encouraging afterschool programs, parents, and families to make comments and to be involved.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you. And I loved your out-of-the-box visuals. (laughter) I'll remember that. I'm more of a visual learner.

Betsy Ginsburg.

**E L I Z A B E T H G I N S B U R G:** Good morning; I think it's good afternoon, now, actually.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Yes.

MS. GINSBURG: Chairman Rice, and Chairwoman Jasey, and members of the Committee. I'm Betsy Ginsberg, Executive Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools. And here with me today is Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, and a member of the Garden State Executive Board.

I have one thought before I turn it over to Dr. Aderhold -- which is that we have talked about so many big topics this morning; this ESSA has so many moving parts, all of which are extremely relevant and extremely important.

What I'm worried about most is that timeline. April will be here before any of us know it. And it's going to take a concentrated effort on all parts -- the parts of the stakeholders, the DOE, your part, everyone's part -- to create something that gets it right in this very compressed timeframe. Because we've seen the problems of making something too fast that's not good enough. And we don't want to waste the potential of our students by making that error.

So with that, I will turn it over to Dr. Aderhold.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Red is on. (referring to PA microphone) Is yours not lighting up?

**DAVID M. ADERHOLD, Ed.D.:** Good afternoon.

As Betsy shared, my name is Dave Aderhold, Superintendent of Schools in West-Windsor-Plainsboro. I'm Treasurer for the Garden State Coalition of Schools; I'm also a member of the Legislative Committee for NJASA.

As you know, the Garden State Coalition represents over 90 school districts and over 300,000 students throughout the State of New Jersey. And at our core we believe in advocating for public support for public education for all children.

And I want to thank the Joint Committee on the Public Schools for the opportunity to comment on the State's implementation of ESSA.

Today I'd like to focus my comments very briefly on the opportunities that are presented under and available under ESSA, specifically around the areas of testing and accountability.

So I'd say we have the opportunity with ESSA to reduce the burden of unnecessary testing without diminishing the accountability that's

necessary to assess student progress. And so for example -- and it has been shared before, but it's worth repeating -- ESSA requires students to take only a single exam at the high school level. Under the authority of ESSA, it provides a justification to revisit and reverse the August 3 decision, for the New Jersey School Board of Education, that requires all students, starting with the Class of 2020, to sit for all sections -- not pass, just sit -- for all sections of PARCC; and for all students in grade 8 in the Class of 2021 to sit for all sections, but to pass the LA 10 and Algebra I.

There is limited, to no, guidance from the Department for what that means for our 7th graders taking Algebra and what it means for our 8th graders taking Algebra if they don't pass. There are lots of unanswered questions there that are worth a whole other hearing.

Further, ESSA provides flexibilities in testing requirements that we should be taking full advantage of to benefit as many students as possible. As you may know, on August 3, not only did the School Board of Education adopt PARCC as a graduation requirement, but they also eliminated all the alternative measures for students, starting with our freshmen forward, to pass. That would represent over 50,000 students in the State of New Jersey. Last year, approximately 50 percent of our graduates last year would be in jeopardy for future graduation in four school years. ESSA gives us that opportunity to revisit that.

Further, I urge the New Jersey Department of Education to participate in all aspects of pilots allowed regarding school districts to administer -- *school districts* to administer, not the State to administer -- school districts to administer innovative assessments, instead of statewide

assessments. That's a provision that's allowed under ESSA, but it has to be written into the plan.

Under Title I, Part B, State educational agencies have tremendous flexibility for administering assessments. These include appropriate accommodations for English language learners, developing or improving assessments for children with disabilities, and measuring students' academic achievement using multiple measures of academic achievement, and evaluating students through competency-based models. So it's a movement away from the standardization, and providing flexible opportunities for assessments for some of our most at-risk students.

My request is that that the NJDOE, the New Jersey Board of Education, and the Joint Committee on the Public Schools work to translate the intention of ESSA into a series of constructive measures that minimize the impact -- not only to the cost to public schools, but provide the greatest opportunities for all students to be successful.

I guess my caution-- And it was my colleague at the end of the table who identified ESSA as a *gift*. It's only a gift if it's done well.

SENATOR RICE: That's right.

DR. ADERHOLD: Because if we put the plan together wrong, and we miss aspects, it's a nightmare for public education. And so it's only a gift if done well. My concern -- and to the Assemblywoman who referenced having additional Committee meetings -- this is a compressed timeline. If we just look out at the DOE's timeline for all the community forums and feedbacks, they're going to be going right through the winter season. They're going to then turn in January and February to bunker mentality to write this plan, to submit with very limited to no oversight.

And as, I believe it was, Senator Rice asked -- who do they have to present this to? The reality is, no one. The reality is the Department can simply put a plan together and submit it to the U.S. DOE with no one's input.

And not only that, they don't need to take our input and do anything with it. So that's the caution in all this, and that's the danger, moving forward.

Thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you; I appreciate the cautions. In fact, we're making notes on them because perhaps we need to have another hearing before that plan is released. Because I thought I read somewhere in here that there is supposed to be legislative input.

SENATOR RICE: Yes, there's supposed to be legislative input; you're correct, Madam Chair.

And if I can, you know, there are a couple of issues that arose here. I would ask that the questions that you were raising, that are going unanswered, with PARCC and stuff like that -- give us a series of questions. We need to raise those questions right away. That's important for us, okay? So just connect with them.

And the other thing is, I'm glad to see Ms. Ginsburg from my District here. Because that's important to me, as Co-Chair of the Joint Committee.

MS. GINSBURG: Sure.

SENATOR RICE: I know you pay attention to everything. (laughter) And when you see this timeframe is not moving the way it should be, please pull my coat right away so I can get the members of the

Joint Committee to call folks and to see if we can kick them a little bit and insist that this thing moves. But it moves with substantive input; not, as someone said, just move just to move something, just to have a piece of paper going to Washington with no real meaning.

And then there's a question -- maybe somebody here can answer, since they're not here -- DOE's not here. I don't believe there's a conflict, and maybe we should either go meet with or have the State Board President and others come in here. Because I've told the State Board President before I think the State Board, by way of our mission under State statute, continues to do harm to our kids. And so we need to have some conversations with the State Board about making certain that they have someone to attend all these stakeholders' meetings so they can understand what the stakeholders are saying, not just what the Commissioner -- his team is really saying.

So if you can make a note to remind me to get in touch, and we can send a letter to-- Okay? I think that's important.

Thank you.

Who are the next speakers?

Any members have any quick questions? (no response) We're getting ready to bring other speakers up.

Thank you.

MS. GINSBURG: Thank you.

DR. ADERHOLD: Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Okay; the next four on the list are going to be my sister, Cynthia Rice (laughter); James Harris, who I grew up with and went to grammar school with, and all that -- and kicked him to run cross

country and become the State Champ, because I wasn't going to run; Somebody had to do it. And Patricia Tumulty, the Executive Director of New Jersey Library.

James represents the New Jersey Association of Black Educators, and Cynthia is the Senior Policy Analyst at Advocates for Children of New Jersey. And we can also bring up James Keebler, who is the Director of the Piscataway Public Library. So we said no one could leave the library out, because ESSA speaks to libraries as well. And then libraries go hand-in-hand with the afterschool conversation.

Thank you very much for coming in and being so patient with us.

Once again, you can, kind of, follow the lead of the Co-Chair. And we have testimony from some of you, if not all. But give us something edited, more so than repetitive. I learned that in school, James; okay? (laughter)

And so the Co-Chair is coming back now, so she can figure out who speaks first and who speaks last.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Just put me on the spot like that. (laughter).

Let's see; let's start with Cynthia Rice, Advocates for the Children of New Jersey.

**C Y N T H I A R I C E:** Thank you, Assemblywoman Jasey, Senator Rice, for the opportunity to speak.

I'll try to make it brief, because I know everybody behind me is really hungry. (laughter)

But one of the words that keeps coming up today is *opportunity*. And nowhere is that opportunity more visible than in the area of early childhood education. Because this law allows the opportunity for both the State and individual schools and districts to strengthen the connection between early childhood education and our K-12 system, specifically in three areas.

It provides an opportunity for better data collection and sharing; better coordination and expansion between the two systems; and for expanded and inclusive professional development.

Now, I look at the individuals up here, and I know that you know that we have a very diverse early childhood education system. We have Head Start, we have Early Head Start, we have family childcare, childcare, centers that accept subsidies through the Childcare Development Block Grant; and then we have our State-funded preschool. But except for our public preschools that implement the programs -- sort of a mixed delivery system -- we have systems that very, very infrequently are connected. They spend a great deal of time with no connection to our educational system; and nor do their staffs or their administrators. They're not connected to our K-12 system. And this has a disconnect; this disconnect has a consequence on student school readiness.

But this can change with this opportunity provided by ESSA, whether it's data collection or sharing better coordination on issues like transition. And as the speaker said on family engagement or shared professional development, ESSA provides this opportunity to bring these two very different systems together and strengthen the learning environments of the children in which they're all educating.

I want to mention one specific thing that New Jersey Principals and Supervisors mentioned about leadership. ACNJ, between 2010 and 2013, along with NJPSA and the Department of Education provided -- held the preschool through 3rd grade leadership training series. In those three years, we trained 500 school administrators. And the reason was because many principals and administrators, for example, maybe have the appropriate certifications, and may be responsible for, let's say, an elementary school, but may have no background on how young children learn -- which is very, very different. So in other words, you could have been a high school history teacher, and then you have the appropriate certifications; now you're responsible for an elementary school. And that includes supervision and evaluation of teachers. So this is an opportunity to provide professional develop to our school leaders on ensuring that they have the appropriate skill set for children -- for being the supervisors or administrators in schools with young children. That is a very, very positive thing. This has been on our agenda for a long time and, frankly, hasn't gone anywhere. So this is a wonderful opportunity.

I also want to mention, chronic absenteeism came in before as a part of the State's establishment of an accountability system that measures school performance. Chronic absenteeism, we believe, can be and should be included as one or part of the student success or climate indicators. Just last month, ACNJ put out its second statewide report on chronic absenteeism. This is our third report in a year. In the last 10 days, each of you received a letter, a copy of the report, and how your own schools are doing in your individual legislative districts. If you haven't looked at it, and

you can't find it, please let me know because it's quite an education to see how your schools are doing.

And 136,000 kids of the 1.3 million students in our K-12 system in 2014-2015 were chronically absent. And what we saw in all of the reports that we did -- we also did a third report on chronic absenteeism in the Newark schools, kindergarten through 3rd grade -- was we saw that chronic absenteeism was a gateway to a lot of other problems, whether it's health related, transportation, housing insecurity, safety going to school. The reasons that-- Kids just don't miss school for no reason; there's a reason.

And this problem is exacerbated because students from low-income families and students of color are -- the students who this law is most supposed to help -- have a higher propensity towards chronic absenteeism.

So there's this inextricable link between student attendance and school success. So collecting and understanding -- it's not just collecting the data; it's understanding why. Understanding it, and then doing something about it. This ESSA does provide this opportunity to do that.

So we really believe that chronic absenteeism data should be part of the plan. And it's already collected, so it's not an undue burden to schools and school districts.

Lastly, I just also want to applaud the Department of Education. We are part of the bigger coalition; and just last week we were one of the stakeholder groups that held a forum on early childhood education. We had 50 early childhood stakeholders coming together to say, "What do we recommend that should be part of ESSA?" And we will be

putting that together. And the Department of Education participated in that. So we just want to applaud the DOE; it has been very, very open to the community being part of the conversation. That doesn't always happen, and we really appreciate it. This has been a great team to work with.

So thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you.

We could have a conversation until 5:00 p.m., because you touched on one of my favorite topics, which is early childhood education. But we won't do that. We'll have it offline, perhaps.

But thank you for raising those points, because I do think there's an opportunity to do that.

Next we'd like to hear from James Harris, representing the New Jersey Association of Black Educators.

**J A M E S E. H A R R I S:** Good afternoon, Senator Rice and Assemblywoman Jasey; and happy birthday to Assemblyman Wolfe.

Thank you for the opportunity of coming here this afternoon.

This is a golden opportunity to look at how the law that's been passed at the Federal level will be implemented in the State of New Jersey. And let me say from the outset that, given the experience that we've had with the NAACP, and now with the New Jersey Association of Black Educators, we're extremely concerned about how the Federal law and its intentions will be rolled out in the State of New Jersey, particularly since we have the experience of the last seven years of noncompliance with Supreme Court decisions and the devastation of several of our urban school systems.

So I am so happy to see that the Legislature will take a major role in making sure that the intent of the Every Student Succeeds Act is, in fact, implemented so that it is fair and just to all of the students in the State of New Jersey.

And part of my concern is in looking at the current composition of the State Board of Education, which is noncompliant with the law. There is no African American presence on the New Jersey School Board Association. And if I read the membership correctly, the State Board of Education-- Dr. Dorothy Strickland, who served with distinction -- was a reading specialist and a distinguished professor -- her term has expired and no replacement of an African American.

Furthermore, the law requires the presence of a certain number of women on the State Board, and I believe we're noncompliant on that level too. So we need to make sure that as we move forward, that at least the composition of those individuals who have a primary responsibility for monitoring and providing insight--

And I think that history is there -- that, in the past, we've seen that even though the Federal legislation is very specific and it's focused on students who are disadvantaged, that the resources of the State of New Jersey, in recent years, has not been focused in bringing equality and just treatment. I am -- we're particularly concerned about the fact that New Jersey has been cited by the Federal government and the U.S. Office (*sic*) of Education, Civil Rights Division, for noncompliance with special education requirements. This is a very, very important issue for civil rights because, as you know, in the State of New Jersey there's an overpopulation of African American students who are classified in special education. And so when we

see that the resources are not there, we're looking at -- not at closing of the achievement gap, but in opening up that gap. So we would hope that that will become a major focus as well.

The role of testing is always controversial. We are not in favor of increased testing; however, we are concerned that there be some type of defined process of measuring the relationship between teaching and learning, okay? I mean, if a person stands in front of a classroom for nine months, there ought to be some way of determining whether or not that person has been effective in imparting the knowledge that is implied in that grade level. Obviously, this is an opportunity to make sure that students do not, in fact, get passed from one grade to the other without having the skills that are implied by that grade level.

So we're hoping that this legislation, if it's properly implemented, will closely monitor how students are doing at each grade level, and what type of interventions need to be made so that we don't get to a point that goes back to the very basis of the Abbott decision -- where a person gets a high school diploma, but does not have the skills that are implicit in that diploma, or cannot go out and find a job because they cannot fill out the application properly.

We're hoping, also, as this legislation is put into policy, that it will do a whole lot to make sure that the State will have no business operating school districts; that the local branches of government, our local boards of education will have the democratic rights in all of the school districts to determine school policy implementation. And it seems to me if it's implemented right, the State should be out of the business of running schools, particularly when we look at the failure of the State to do well.

And I'm so happy that Mr. Wimberly is here, because I have no idea how Donnie Evans can run a school district successfully when they're suspending so many students. And then, at the same time, every year, the budget is such that people are getting laid off, and then rehired, and laid off. I don't know anybody who would want to come to work in a school district knowing that next year they may not be there, or that they're going to get the type of nonsupport that is implied.

We are also very, very concerned that all students have academic standards. We have found that low expectations are a sign that there will be low achievement. So I'm hoping that as this legislation is implemented in the State, that there will be some criteria so that we can determine whether everybody has equal expectations of students, not based on their race, gender, or sexual orientation. We have found that to be a major problem in the State of New Jersey.

The accountability piece has to be present at every level -- at every level -- because I think that for some of us who attended urban schools and who constantly interact with urban schools -- the accountability issue is sometimes lost. It is very disturbing to see that sometimes there's a disconnect between what the parents are getting from the school system, what the students are getting from the school system, and the amount of money that's poured into a particular situation.

I'm so glad that Senator Rice raised the issue of the charter schools. Any policy implementation that does not include the charter schools is going to miss a major population in the State of New Jersey, as this Administration -- the current Administration has talked about increasing the number of charter schools. And one of the major complaints

is that charter schools are not held to reporting the data in the same way, so that you can understand specifically what is happening in all of the charter schools versus the traditional public schools.

And let me conclude by saying that I'm hoping that, as educators, that this legislation will allow us to look at multiple intelligences. All of the research suggests that no one test can measure all the things that are implicit in a child's learning. There are different learning styles; there are learning speeds; and there is also different types of emphasis that students have. So this is an opportunity to really focus in and to see whether or not we can frame a better educational process and measurement system.

And finally, there is the opportunity of fully implementing the Supreme Court decision. And by the way, we've spent a lot of time over the last few decades talking about the *thorough and efficient* part of the Constitution. It may be time for this implementation to pay attention to that other phase, or statement in the Constitution that talks about the State's responsibility to provide a racially integrated public school system which, right now, is lacking.

And when we start talking about testing for skills and knowledge, I think it's a good time to take a look at the New Jersey Amistad legislation, which requires all of the school systems to integrate the contributions of African Americans. It is the law; it's not being implemented. So I would think, as we move this new opportunity to implement this law, that that should be part of what is being tested and what is being monitored at the local level.

Thank you very much; and, as you know, we look forward to working with all of you.

And I just want to thank all of you for your commitment to having this conversation. And I was a little bit taken aback by the representatives from the State when they said they had reached out to a lot of communities. We have 41 branches of the NAACP throughout the State of New Jersey, and I don't know of any branch that's been contacted and invited to any type of forum. So I'm hoping that they will put us on the list; but not only put us on the list, but make sure that we're connected.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR RICE: Madam Chair.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Before we go to the next two speakers, I see Ms. -- I believe that's Ms. Mercer still in the back, right? Good; okay.

And by the way, James, you articulated well, coming from my high school. I'm glad we (indiscernible), at least for me. (laughter)

No, seriously -- a couple of things.

Ms. Mercer, if I recall the ESSA, it doesn't really speak to high schools (*sic*); this is public traditional -- this is public schools. Am I correct on that?

DR. MERCER: (off mike) (Indiscernible).

SENATOR RICE: James, let her just sit next to you there.

MR. HARRIS: With pleasure.

SENATOR RICE: This is not a college document; this is a public school document. But the opportunity for the document, if you really read it -- really prepares the students for what is lacking when they

get to college. So indirectly, it's a college document that way. But it seems to me that the Department of Education should be working -- this is where Assemblywoman Jasey could be helpful, along with Senator Cunningham -- getting them to work directly with the colleges -- at least the colleges that are giving out teaching degrees. Because based on what we plan and how we see this, it's going to determine what those coming into the education system in New Jersey, who teach in the schools -- what it should look like -- curriculum -- in those four-year colleges. Do you understand what I'm saying?

So what is being said is that we have folks in place now, and we know that the professionalism piece in the document says that dollars can be used to, kind of, give them what they're lacking to move forward. But I think we can save money in the long-term with this in place by saying, "Okay; as the teachers in our system begin to transition out, those coming in have to have this type -- these criteria. And it seems to me that the Kean colleges and others should be on board now -- at least in this state -- which sends a message to other education institutions outside the state that they should be looking at the kinds of curriculum -- the kinds of elements we need, and professionalism.

And the final thing is that, Title I is a big concern; it's raised in all of our Civil Rights meetings, as you know; it was raised at the Black Issues Convention. It was a big subject with Congressman Pallone and I at the Neptune piece; and I heard it raised here, and I heard the speakers speak on it. So we will be paying attention to that, okay?

But I just wanted to get Ms. Mercer's take to make sure that everybody understands this doesn't impact directly higher education; but

indirectly, there is some intent that we should be working with them. Is that correct?

DR. MERCER: Yes, that is correct. But let me go back a little bit.

It does speak to high schools a bit, because graduation rates are a critical part of the accountability system.

SENATOR RICE: Yes.

DR. MERCER: So how we're preparing kids to graduate. And the other part where it makes a strong connection is, the State standards are supposed to make sure that when students exit high school, they're eligible or prepared to enter into State colleges.

SENATOR RICE: Yes.

DR. MERCER: And so there needs to be, kind of, a little bit of sunlight -- very little sunlight between those two. And so working with your higher education institutions around your standards is a critical piece.

And then to touch upon your last comment about teacher preparation, because that's where-- Another place where higher ed shows up is making sure that teachers who are going through current preparation programs are being prepared to teach in classrooms of the 21st century, which look drastically different than the classrooms that lots of us in this room probably participated in. And that will come in under the Higher Education Act at the Federal level -- that's where we begin to revisit.

And I'll make one last plug for New Jersey. Montclair University is actually a part of a research project that we are doing at LPI that's looking at teacher preparation programs that do, in fact, prepare

students for -- the teachers to teach students in the 21st century. And Montclair is one of the better ones.

SENATOR RICE: Thank you very much.

So Dean, you can go back to your old institution where you retired, or are in the process.

MR. HARRIS: I'm on it. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: And I would like to note that one of the ideas that we've been tossing around is having the Joint Committee go on the road to Montclair State to hear from them about their Urban -- I'm going to get it wrong -- Urban Residency program, I think it's called.

DR. MERCER: Yes, Urban Teacher Residency Program; yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Yes, which is excellent.

DR. MERCER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Yes; thank you. I spent some time there, and I think it might be worth it for us to go back.

Next up, we have Pat Tumulty. Do I-- I always wonder if I say that correctly.

**P A T R I C I A T U M U L T Y:** No, it's Tumulty (indicating pronunciation).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Tumulty. (indicating pronunciation). Tumulty, Tumulty; I'm sorry -- Executive Director of the New Jersey Library Association; and she's here with James Keehler--

MS. TUMULTY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: --Director of the Piscataway Public Library.

Thank you.

MR. TUMULTY: Thank you, and thank you for this opportunity. And I hope we're not keeping -- we're the last people between the cake and Assemblyman Wolfe. (laughter) I'm afraid of this spot. We're going to try-- I know we're the last people. Assemblyman Wolfe, we'll try, because cake is calling; I know, I know.

But we want to thank the Committee for this opportunity to come here.

I'm joined with James Keebler, who is a past President of our Association. But more importantly today, he's here because he has worked extensively on this issue; and he's a Chair of a Committee that we call *Unlocking Student Potential*. And that's what we believe that strong school library programs do, for every student in New Jersey.

So as we've discussed this legislation today, I think that you have heard many points of view. But I think there is no doubt that students live in an information age. So no matter what their career aspirations, they must know how to use and evaluate information. These will be basic skills for the 21st century learning. And the fundamental in acquiring these skills must be a highly effective school library program staffed by certified School Media Specialists. And as we go to Every Student Succeeds -- you look at a school library, it provides a safe learning environment for all students.

But unfortunately, the reality in New Jersey is that we have been losing school librarians at an absolutely alarming rate, and we've provided lots of information in the packets that we've given you. But the last study done was 2007-2008. So this year, under James' leadership, we

replicated that study to see where we were in terms of school media specialists. And we have found that, in the last eight years, there has been a fundamental serious decline.

And I've listed tremendous statistics for you. There are 20 percent fewer School Library Media Specialists than there were in 2007 and 2008; 20 percent of our high schools have no Certified School Media Specialist; less than 50 percent of the schools in the former Abbott Districts have School Media Specialists; 91 school districts have no Media Specialists at all; 33 districts have none at the elementary level; and over 280 elementary school libraries are without Media Specialists.

That's a chronic shame. I mean-- And you may ask why we got to this situation; and I think one of the situations is why we're here today. The previous Federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, did not recognize the important role of school libraries. And I think that connection has led to some of our school districts saying, "If it's not recognized on the Federal level, why should we recognize it on the State level?"

And what we're very pleased to see is that ESSA corrects that. And we have listed many ways where ESSA has included that School Library Media Specialists and their programs should be going into the plan that we're talking about and that's being developed.

And yes, we were one of the groups that had not yet been reached out to, and we did run out after the Department of Education and said, "We have an important component to play in this space. We have an important role to tell you about."

So there are at least five or six specific places in ESSA where School Library Media programs are mentioned. And we want to work with everyone to see that our State plan has those.

But beyond that, we've seen other states that have gone beyond that. Other states have actually required -- either through state regulation or through state legislation -- that there be School Library Media Specialists in every school; or that there is an information curriculum that every student needs to follow. Other states, such as -- we've provided those examples in your packet -- such as Idaho, Maryland, Nevada, Montana -- these states have already gone beyond what is even required by ESSA.

We see different bills going through your legislature, such as bills for digital media and for financial literacy. We believe they should all be together in a comprehensive package of what an information literacy curriculum should look like.

So we have no K-12 information curriculum; yet when we look at the higher ed standards -- the higher ed standards which were just adopted in December -- we see that the Secretary of Higher Education in New Jersey does address needing information literacy. They do address the role of the School Library in providing those kinds of things to the students on the higher ed level. But if we have all these students who haven't even been introduced to it on the K-12 level, how are they going to actually be able to grasp the kind of information that they need? This is a serious issue.

We have asked our academic librarians, and they have given us a very good quote, I think. "We see that many college freshmen are poorly prepared to conduct college-level research, requiring professors and libraries

to spend more time than they should on basic skills. We live with this cause-and-effect, frustrated and knowing that these students could hit the ground running with proper training.”

All educators comprise the continuum of intervention necessary to help students gain essential career skills. And School Media Specialists have a well-regarded place in that continuum.” So it’s our goal to see that our K-12 students get the needs as they go into higher education.

But one of the things that James has been working on is, again, our Unlock Student Potential website, where we’ve gotten stories from School Media Specialists throughout the state and how they are using -- helping their students with information literacy and how they’re working with that. We have examples from all over the state. We have one from Upper Saddle River where the School Media Specialist is working with the public librarian in grades 1-5 to give them these kinds of information skills. We have an example of a high school student (*sic*) in North Bergen who is doing tremendous work in STEM research with her students.

But we do have, obviously, situations that we are concerned about -- and Assemblyman Wimberly is here -- we have just seen a press release from the Paterson Education Fund that noted 500 fewer students read 50 books or less (*sic*); I mean, they have sort of a competition in Paterson to get kids to read 50 books, all through the grades. So 1,900 kids did it two years ago; only 1,400 did it this year. And the Paterson Education Fund kind of directs that to the fact that the number of school librarians had been reduced in those schools. So it is the school librarian who is playing that integral role of connecting the kids with the material.

So we know that New Jersey has been on a downturn like other states. But we, too, see ESSA as an opportunity to take what we need to make School Media Specialists and their programs an integral part of 21st century learning.

And we welcome -- we wish to work with anyone to achieve that goal.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you, Pat.

James, do you want to add anything?

**J A M E S K E E H B L E R:** No; I have no comments.

We put a lot in the packets; there's a lot of information there. If you have any questions, we'd be glad to answer them down the road.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: You did, and I thank you for that.

And I know in my own home school district, we recently had a battle about funding a Media Specialist position.

MS. TUMULTY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: And I think some of it also has to do with the funding -- the lack of funding in districts where it's valued, but the money hasn't been there. So I think it's -- this is a tough one, but one that I'm glad you brought our attention to. And I'm glad you grabbed the Department on their way out, because you should certainly be at that table.

At this point, I would like to ask -- is there is anyone else in the audience who didn't sign up who would like to come up and share anything with us? (no response)

Okay; seeing none, I would ask my members-- I want to thank all of you for your testimony. I especially want to thank our special guests, Charmaine Mercer, and I think -- is that your husband--

DR. MERCER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: --sitting back there? (laughter) Thank you. He's going to drive her home; she came up on the train. That's great; I love to see that. You'll have lots to talk about on the way home, before you have to pick up your two boys. (laughter)

But members, would you like to -- anything in closing?

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: I'd like to thank everybody who was here -- who is still here. But Charmaine, thank you very much.

DR. MERCER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: And thank you to your driver. (laughter) Thanks a lot.

And Cynthia, it's good to see you.

MS. RICE: Good to see you. Happy birthday.

ASSEMBLYMAN WOLFE: Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: I just want to say that I, too, want to thank our guest from Washington. And say to that fine gentleman -- my wife would have known I probably would have gotten another ticket. It's a long drive, man. (laughter)

But seriously, I want to thank all the speakers. A couple more notations: The Co-Chair and I have asked the staff to do two things to back up your request -- from the Library Association people -- to be a stakeholder, And number two, because we're not sure of the answer, we're going to look into it. I'm not sure if the Secretary of Higher Education is

on the stakeholder list. And I believe if she's not, then her people should be there. Yes, it should be run by DOE; they shouldn't be there telling them what to do. But they should be there listening so they will know, as they talk about higher ed, how to connect the--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: The articulation.

SENATOR RICE: You got it, okay? The *articulation*; that's a word we didn't get in Neumeier's (phonetic spelling) class in college English, but you know, I got it now. (laughter)

Thank you.

DR. MERCER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JASEY: Thank you very much.

And on behalf of the Joint Committee, this Committee is adjourned.

**(MEETING CONCLUDED)**