

# Operational Study and Analysis of the Alabama Department of Education

## FINAL REPORT

March 13, 2020



**PUBLIC**  
CONSULTING GROUP

## **Acknowledgement**

The PCG team thanks the many individuals who contributed to this review of the ALSDE's operations, programs, and services. PCG would specifically like to thank Chief Examiner Rachel Riddle of the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts, who worked tirelessly to ensure a fair and comprehensive review. PCG would also like to thank the ALSDE Deputy State Superintendent Andy Craig for his work on this review. Mr. Craig organized all components of the data collection efforts, provided all the documents and data we needed in order to do our work, answered our numerous questions, and organized all of the logistics for our onsite data collection activities. PCG also thanks the many ALSDE staff stakeholders with whom we met. It is not easy to open your doors to an outside reviewer, and this review would not have been possible without the support of the ALSDE staff. Their commitment to their work in the Department on behalf of Alabama's students was evident through their comments and candid feedback regarding opportunities to serve these students in the best possible manner.

Public Consulting Group, Inc.

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## I. Introduction

Under the direction of the State of Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts, Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) conducted an organizational review and analysis of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). The following research questions guided our analysis:

1. What are the core functions of the ALSDE?
2. How does the current delivery model support the core educational functions of the ALSDE?
3. How can the ALSDE function more efficiently and effectively?
4. Does the ALSDE provide appropriate support to LEAs to improve student outcomes?
5. How does the ALSDE's organizational structure and function compare to the educational systems in top performing states?

PCG developed an understanding of the ALSDE's current state through qualitative data collection through interviews and document review, analyzed current staffing allocations and organizational structures, and performed a comparative analysis with states whose educational systems are considered highly performing on national measures to form the recommendations found in this report. All data collection and analysis occurred between October 2019-March 2020. This report makes recommendations for improvement to the ALSDE's policies, function, programs, funding, and organizational structure. Given the breadth of this scope and ambitious timeline for this work, PCG was not able to review all programs with the same level of intensity. As such, our recommendations highlight specific program areas we believe warrant deeper review.

This review seeks to document the organization and operation of the ALSDE at a moment in time. However, data collection and analysis have occurred alongside daily operations in the Department and the changing education landscape in the state. During our work, the ALSDE continued to make changes in administration and supports provided to LEAs to increase student achievement. Our report endeavors to present the clearest portrait of the Department given this dynamic situation.

## Alabama's Current Context

This organizational review of the ALSDE is timely given several converging factors.

1. **Stable Leadership.** The Department has had unusual turnover in leadership, particularly in the State Superintendent position over the past decade. There have been over a dozen Organizational Charts produced over that time, none of which reflect any real focus on priorities or strategic direction. Leadership instability has contributed to stagnate progress. Dr. Eric Mackey was appointed State Superintendent almost two years ago in April 2018. As the former Executive Director of the School Superintendents of Alabama, Dr. Mackey deeply understands the state's educational context and is respected by school district leaders.
2. **New Standards.** The December 2019 vote by the State Board of Education to approve the new Mathematics Course of Study developed by Alabama's educators is an important action step. These new standards follow the 2016 adoption of the state's Reading Course of Study. New statewide tests will be used to measure student growth to meeting these standards beginning school year 2020-21. These new standards raise expectations for student learning and should be used as a change lever to strengthen accountability.
3. **Proposed Changes to Governance Structures.** The proposed creation of the Alabama Commission on Elementary and Secondary Education signals a significant desire to increase oversight of Alabama's educational system. Currently, Alabama is one of only six states with an elected school board that appoints a superintendent. The proposed change would eliminate the Alabama State School Board, replacing it with a Commission with members who are appointed by the Governor to a six-year term. It is intended that the Commission's appointed members would

reflect the geographical, gender, and racial make-up of Alabama's public schools. Alabama voters will vote on this state constitutional amendment in March 2020 prior to the release of this report. Regardless of the outcome, this action represents a legislative desire for more planful and strategic state level accountability.

4. **Committed Legislature.** The state legislature has demonstrated a strong interest in improving Alabama's educational system through funding, legislation, and other activities. The State Legislature recently passed the largest appropriation in history for Alabama public education. The Alabama Literacy Act of 2019 and proposed upcoming math and student wellness legislation further demonstrate this commitment.

These conditions indicate a clear readiness and commitment to implement the recommendations found in this report.

PCG supports change management through the careful analysis of functions and outcomes. PCG believes this report, and the updates that will hopefully follow, offers the Department a tremendous opportunity to move the state's reform priorities forward, target supports, and align planning efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ALSDE programs. This, in turn, will align with the ultimate goal of improving educational outcomes in districts and schools.

### *Key Recommendations*

PCG saw ample evidence that the ALSDE has a foundation on which to build. As noted throughout this report, the Department has many notable strengths including its willingness to participate in this review as part of a continuous improvement cycle.

However, without a sense of urgency and an unrelenting commitment to implementing the recommendations in this report with fidelity, the ALSDE will stagnate. Enacting change, the kind of change that will fundamentally improve outcomes of all students, requires focus, a strong vision from the State Superintendent enacted by senior leadership staff, an appropriate allocation of resources, mandated professional learning, and clear, non-negotiable accountability measures. This type of reform requires the involvement and commitment of every staff person and a willingness to establish high expectations for districts, schools, and students.

The following are PCG's key, non-negotiable recommendations. Without faithful implementation of these five recommendations, all other organizational recommendations will have limited to no impact. A complete list of PCG's more detailed recommendations is in **VIII. Additional Recommendations** found later in this report. There are 46 additional recommendations.

## **1. Take the lead.**

The ALSDE must take full ownership and accountability for student progress across Alabama. The ALSDE is responsible for both the academic and social/emotional success of students, with the end goal of ensuring all graduates are prepared for life after high school. The ALSDE must establish its proper role as the state educational authority in Alabama and perform accordingly.

The ALSDE leadership must be bold but also collaborative. There are times when the ALSDE must take charge and bear full responsibility for aspects of reform, and other places where the ALSDE must set the conditions for others to assume leadership. Like an expert conductor, the ALSDE may not have the expertise to play all the instruments, but through a combination of the use of outside experts, significantly involving the people in schools and districts that do the hardest work, and partnering with as many involved groups as possible, the Department can and should be able to move the State of Alabama forward in significant ways.

## **2. Develop and implement a strategy to action plan.**

The ALSDE tends to be reactive primarily because it does not have a clear plan of action, leading to inconsistent decision-making. Decisions are in response to external pressure and appear to be quick fixes without regard to long term ramifications or connections to other initiatives within the Department or the State.

The ALSDE must develop a comprehensive, detailed, and transparent *Strategy to Action Plan* with defined steps and activities, financial implications, milestones, deadlines, and results. This *Strategy to Action Plan* should guide the implementation of all recommendations in this report. As a first step, the ALSDE will need to inventory and consolidate all existing plans to ensure all staff are working towards the same goals. To ensure transparency and partnership, the ALSDE must institute routine and public progress updates. An iterative Strategic Communications Plan should be developed and implemented to communicate the *Strategy to Action Plan*. Regular progress updates should be provided to the Governor's Office, the Alabama State Legislature, the State Board of Education, Superintendents, and all of Alabama's citizens.

### 3. Focus first on the priorities.

There is much to address, but beginning with a few clear, critical initiatives is the only way to galvanize the State to move in the right direction. The *Strategy to Action Plan* must drive this prioritization.

**STANDARDS:** For the next year, the core focus must be on the adoption of the Reading and Math Course of Study at the local level. If teachers understand these standards and align their instruction to them, student achievement will improve. The ALSDE must implement a detailed Communications, Professional Learning, and Technical Assistance Plan to support standards adoption. Equally, state testing should be used as an improvement tool to ensure instruction is aligned to the standards. The ALSDE needs to begin immediately to prepare to analyze the results of the new state tests and provide critical data to schools and districts. The ALSDE must ensure local educators have detailed data to examine test results and to connect the test items to the standards. The release of test items will also be an important tool for local educators. The ALSDE should also look for ways to disseminate classroom teaching practices that are working across the state to get results.

**STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM:** The pending PowerSchool implementation has the potential to substantially impact how schools and districts function. For the first time, all systems, schools and teachers across Alabama will have access to the same learning management, student information, reporting and analytics tools. The scale of this initiative is huge. A prioritized focus must be placed on this roll-out to ensure implementation success.

### 4. Hold schools and districts accountable.

Student performance and compliance with state and federal requirements is the responsibility of local schools and districts. The ALSDE must hold all schools and districts accountable for their performance in an actionable way. Current accountability structures do not incite needed urgency at the local level. For example, only 38% of all students and 20% of Black students statewide were considered proficient in Science by Alabama measures in 2019, yet the state received a letter grade of B on the State Report Card. Accountability and assistance must be closely linked to produce continuous and sustainable improvement. Strengthen the ALSDE's ability to provide targeted, coordinated and deep technical assistance for schools and districts that have demonstrated the inability to do it on their own.

### 5. Significantly reorganize the ALSDE internally.

Substantial structural changes must occur at the ALSDE to implement the recommendations in this report. The organizational structure should align with the *Strategy to Action Plan* and the core function of every program must be to improve student outcomes. All staff employed by the ALSDE should have the core skills and competencies needed to do their job well. There needs to be a significant focus on the professionalization of staff, including a deep investment in staff training. The current hiring process also

needs to be revisited in collaboration with the State Personnel Office. Outdated internal systems and paper-based practices are unnecessarily time-consuming and limit productivity. Streamlining procedures and moving to electronic systems across the ALSDE have the potential to significantly improve outputs. More detailed analysis that outlines reorganizational needs is found in **Section VI. Staffing Analysis**.

## Organization of the Report

The report is divided into eight sections plus an Appendix.

- I. Introduction
- II. Methodology
- III. Core Education Functions
- IV. Comparative Analysis with Top NAEP States
- V. Inventory and Review of Programs
- VI. Staffing Analysis
- VII. Priority Recommendations
- VIII. Additional Recommendations

Relevant documents and visuals are included in the Appendix.

## II. Methodology

PCG performed the following analyses per the requirements in the Request for Proposal for the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts:

1. Compare and analyze the ALSDE's functions, programs, policies, funding, and organizational structure to states whose educational systems perform in the top 10% of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP).
2. Conduct an inventory and review the ALSDE's programs.
3. Define the core educational functions of the ALSDE. Determine which programs efficiently and effectively contribute to the stated mission of the ALSDE.
4. Determine if the ALSDE's programs are adequately staffed based on stated functions.
5. Make recommendations for improvements to the ALSDE's policies, function, programs, funding, and organizational structure.

The goals and objectives of the study were accomplished in three phases:

- **Phase 1: Project Launch.** PCG met with project leadership from the Examiners Office and the ALSDE for a work session to establish project expectations. PCG also conducted a kickoff meeting with the ALSDE staff and spent two days onsite to begin interviews and focus groups.
- **Phase 2: Data Collection.** PCG spent an additional two weeks in Montgomery conducting interviews and focus groups with ALSDE stakeholders, collecting documents and data pertaining to the ALSDE's programs, operations, and staffing. PCG also conducted phone interviews with superintendents statewide and education leaders in NAEP states selected for comparison with the ALSDE.
- **Phase 3: Recommendations and Report.** PCG prepared draft and final reports of findings that include recommendations for improvements to the ALSDE's policies, functions, programs, organizational structure, funding, and other areas of note.

Data for the study were collected using a range of methods which are described in more detail below.

### Interviews and Focus Groups

PCG interviewed a variety of stakeholders. These include ALSDE staff in all programs and across all levels, as well as legislators, School Board members, a sample of district superintendents statewide, and commissioners and key staff from eight states selected for closer study due to their success or growth on NAEP. Overall, we spoke with 145 stakeholders. We spoke with many ALSDE staff on more than one occasion to dig deeper into particular topics or programs or seek clarifications from our document review and previous conversations.

**Exhibit 1. Interview and Focus Group Stakeholder Data**

| Stakeholder Group                      | Number of Participants |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|
| ALSDE Staff and Stakeholders           | 103                    |
| District Superintendents               | 16                     |
| NAEP State Education Leaders and Staff | 11                     |
| State Elected Officials and Staff      | 17                     |

| Stakeholder Group  | Number of Participants |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Total Stakeholders | 147                    |

PCG asked a core set of questions among all the ALSDE's stakeholders and then customized questions by roles. In order to encourage candor, participants were guaranteed confidentiality and statements in the report are not be attributed to specific individuals.

PCG took notes during each interview. Those notes were compiled and systematically analyzed to identify themes within and across stakeholder groups and roles.

### *Sample Selection*

**Staff.** ALSDE staff were selected to represent all the programs and functions within the Department. PCG spoke with a wide range of staff of varying reporting levels within the Department. These include the State Superintendent, leadership team members, directors, administrative assistants and other program staff. PCG also interviewed staff within the state government who are in oversight of processes or interact with ALSDE staff.

**Superintendents.** To ensure representation from the diversity of school districts throughout the state, PCG used the following criteria to select the 16 superintendents who participated in focus groups: (1) superintendents representing all regions throughout Alabama; (2) superintendents from urban, rural, and suburban areas; (3) superintendents who were both elected and appointed; and (4) superintendents new to their role as well as veteran leaders.

**NAEP states and leaders.** In collaboration with the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES), PCG identified the five states that scored in the top 10% of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). PCG contacted state commissioners or their designees and conducted phone interviews with each about progress in their state. We also interviewed key participants in each state that could provide a historic perspective on the key reasons for each state's significant increase in NAEP scores. These states were: Massachusetts, New Jersey, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Wyoming. In addition, PCG added three states to our comparative analysis that are geographically close to Alabama and have experienced significant growth on the NAEP: Florida; Mississippi; and Tennessee.

## Documents and Data

In order to develop a baseline understanding of the ALSDE, PCG requested a range of data and documents including:

- ALSDE Strategic Plan, mission/vision statement, goals, and objectives
- Formal and informal relationships to other state agencies
- Annual Report from the previous year
- Recent audits, auditor's management letters, and internal audit management reports
- Previous and current management studies and program evaluations
- Budgets over the past three years
- Staffing levels with organizational charts
- Operating procedures and policy manuals
- Personnel classification and pay plan, and performance evaluation program

A comprehensive list of all data and documents reviewed can be found in the Appendix. PCG's synthesis of this information is presented within the relevant sections in the body of the report and appendices.

### III. Core Education Functions

*Task: Define the core educational functions of the ALSDE. Determine which programs efficiently and effectively contribute to stated mission of ALSDE.*

#### Core Functions

The stated mission of the ALSDE is “Every child a graduate. Every child prepared.” Alabama’s public schools are responsible for the both academic and social/emotional success of their students, with the end goal of ensuring all graduates are prepared for life after high school. It is the responsibility of the state education agency to set the conditions that enable success at the local level.

As such, there are three core educational functions of all state education agencies:

1. Learning Standards for Students
2. Educator Development
3. School and District Accountability

PCG reviewed how the ALSDE as an organization effectively and efficiently contributed to its stated mission and core functions. Specifically, PCG sought to understand the following:

- Does the ALSDE have a **well thought out plan** that ties all the various programs and stakeholders together? Is the plan measurable, timebound, and results-driven?
- Does the ALSDE set **strong standards** and work to assure districts have curriculum materials aligned to those standards? Does the ALSDE assure state assessments properly measure content attainment and hold students to reasonably high standards?
- Does the ALSDE ensure **educators** are well trained coming in and are provided meaningful professional development opportunities that enhance their performance in the classroom and result in student improvement?
- Does the district/school **accountability system** set reasonable but ambitious goals and outcomes? Do report cards highlight the key results on assessments, equity, and improvement rates? Is there structured and targeted support for districts based on accountability outcomes?

#### Key Findings

PCG identified the following findings related to how the ALSDE’s orientation toward the core functions effectively and efficiently contribute to the stated mission of the ALSDE.

- While the ALSDE has many plans and planning documents, the Department lacks a single coherent and actionable strategic plan with measurable outcomes.
- The ALSDE does not have long-term and consistent guiding principles that dictate the work around which all programs coalesce.
- There has been significant effort to update and adopt new Courses of Study in core content areas. Coordinated effort is less evident in the dissemination of these standards in a way that will shift educator practice, including a comprehensive approach to professional learning that is tightly managed by the ALSDE and the creation of supporting curricular materials.
- There is no Department-wide approach to professional learning. All professional learning is optional and is most frequently delivered by external partners with limited quality control from the ALSDE.
- Accountability for non-compliance or poor student outcomes is weak and is often described as having “no teeth.”

- There is not a tight relationship between accountability and assistance. Targeted support is only currently offered to schools identified for Comprehensive or Targeted Support and Improvement (CSI/TSI) as required by ESSA.
- Given the level of change needed, the ALSDE is making many changes at a rapid pace. Based on documents reviewed, PCG questions the intentionality and thoughtful planning behind some of these changes. As one ALSDE staff member aptly stated, “We need to slow down to speed up.”
- There appears to be a focus on adding “inputs” instead of shifting practice.

## Student Outcomes

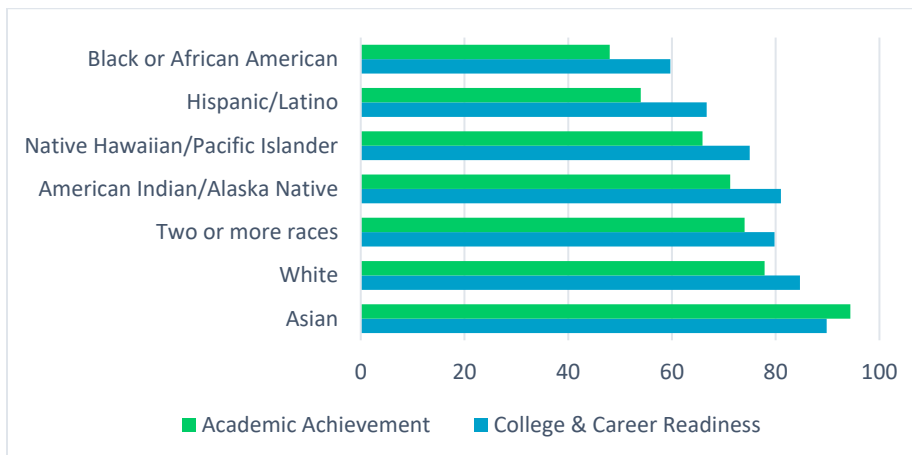
The ALSDE has measures for both Academic Achievement and College and Career Readiness to track outcomes. In 2019, 66% of students met academic achievement goals and 75% of students graduated with at least one College and Career Readiness indicator. Students with Limited English Proficiency, Students with Disabilities, and Students who are Economically Disadvantaged do not see the same rates of success as their peers.

**Exhibit 2. Outcomes for Students by Subgroups**

| Student Type                                     | Academic Achievement | College and Career Readiness |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>All Students</b>                              | <b>66.15</b>         | <b>75.05</b>                 |
| <b>Students with Limited English Proficiency</b> | 44.60                | 26.69                        |
| <b>Students with Disabilities</b>                | 30.34                | 36.40                        |
| <b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>                | 53.02                | 62.96                        |

There is an opportunity gap among Black and Hispanic/Latino students when compared to the academic achievement of their peers. The state’s long-term goal is that 69.6% of students are proficient in reading and 72% of students are proficient in math by 2030.

**Exhibit 3. Student Outcomes by Race and Ethnicity**



Based on Alabama indicators, there is continued work that needs to be done to ensure that “**every** child is prepared.”

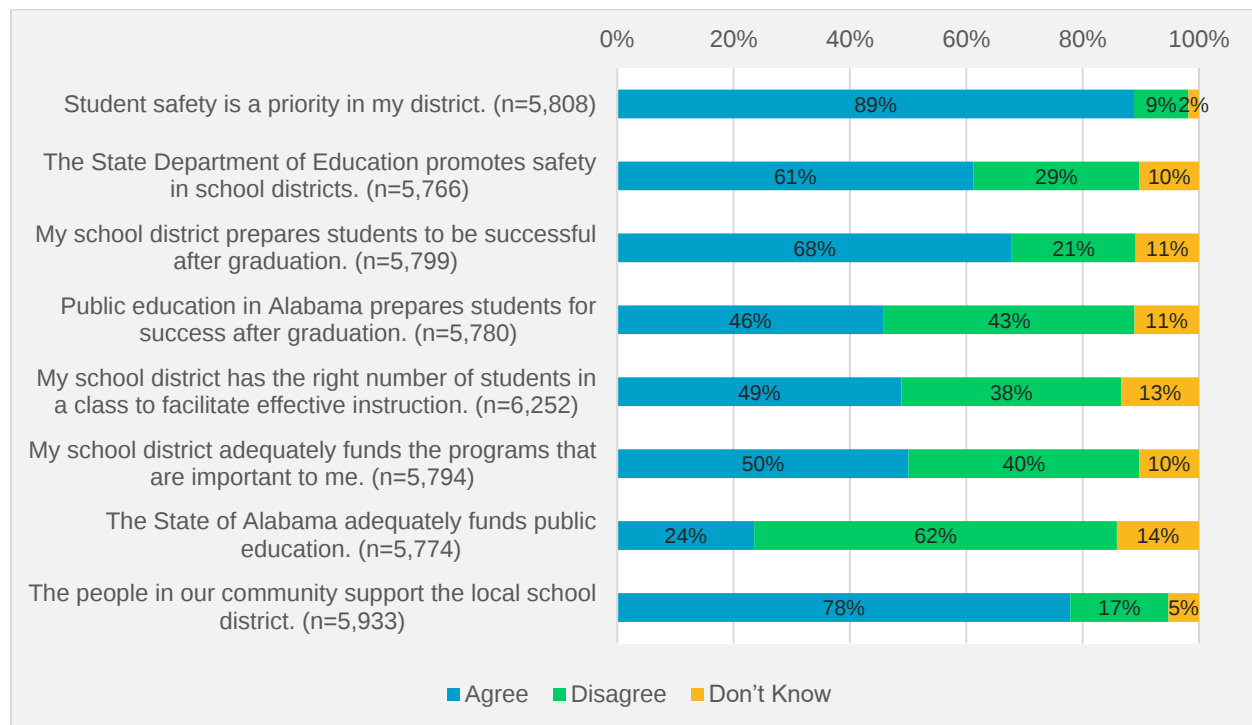
## Strategic Planning and Direction

The ALSDE is responsible for setting the strategic plan and direction for all education programming and improvement across the state. A clear plan of action will carefully define the roles of State Government, the

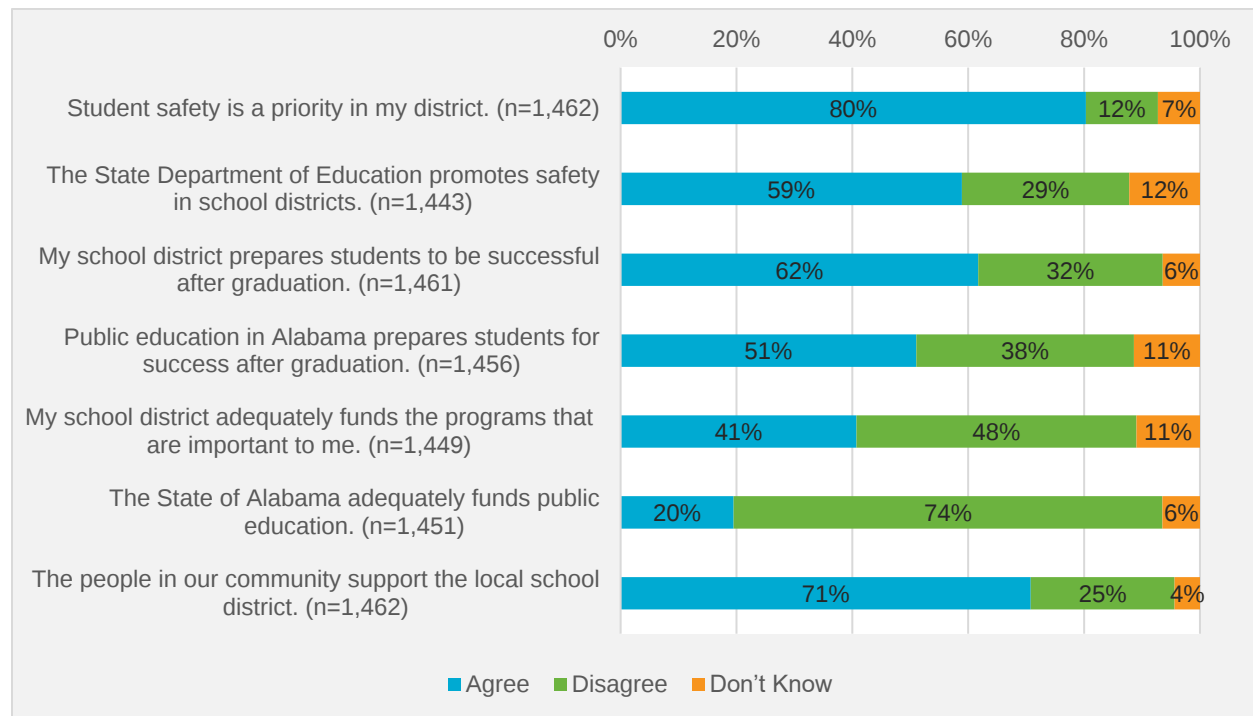
State Board of Education, the ALSDE, systems and schools, and key partners such as parents and business groups. The key responsibility for implementation of that plan rests with the ALSDE.

The State Superintendent is currently leading efforts to publish a new strategic plan for the ALSDE. The Strategic Plan is set to be released late winter 2020. An external consultant is facilitating these efforts. As part of the strategic planning efforts, the ALSDE requested all stakeholders to take 10 minutes to participate in the TAKE 10 FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION SURVEY from September 10, 2019 until October 10, 2019. More than 20,000 respondents expressed their opinions about public education in the state. Respondents included teachers, administrators, students, legislators, parents, and residents. PCG received response data from both Parents and Residents. PCG analyzed the responses most relevant to this study below.

#### Exhibit 4. Take 10 Education Survey Parent Responses



- Parent respondents believe their school district did a better job preparing students to be successful after graduation than the state as a whole (68% to 46% effectively).
- Only half of parents agreed their school district had the right number of students in a class to be successful.
- Only a quarter of parent respondents agreed that the “State of Alabama adequately funds public education.”

**Exhibit 5. Take 10 Education Survey Resident Responses**

- Half of all resident respondents believed that “Alabama prepares students for success after graduation.”
- Only 41% of resident respondents believe their school district funds programs that are important to them.
- Only 20% of resident respondents agreed that the “State of Alabama adequately funds public education.”

The ALSDE program staff expressed a desire to better understand Department priorities and direction and are anxious to learn about the new strategic plan. As one ALSDE staff member stated, “Staff want to support the administration, but we don’t know what they want. We are provided information piece by piece and staff have to stitch it together.”

As part of this study, PCG received and reviewed a large number of strategic plans, task force reports, and other plans for specific initiatives. Other strategic planning documents were found on either the ALSDE or Regional In-Service Center (RIC) websites. Progress appeared to vary on plan implementation, with some having strong implementation success and others with no or limited implementation. There was limited alignment between these plans. A sample of these documents is included below.

**Strategic Plans, Task Force Reports or Other Planning Documents:**

- PLAN 2020 Strategic Plan (2012)
- Alabama Ascending Strategic Plan (2017)
- Alabama Strategic Mathematics Planning Committee (2017)
- Strategic Planning Committee for Science (2017)
- Strategic Planning for Reading (2017)
- ALSDE Organization Effectiveness Study (2017)
- ESSA State Plan (2018)

- AMSTI Strategic Plan (September 2019)
- Teacher Shortage Task Force Recommendations (September 2019)
- Alabama Teacher Shortage Taskforce Report/Recommendations (September 2019)
- ALSDE Educators Certification Process Assessment (November 2019)
- A Strategic Plan for STEM Education (November 2019)
- ARI Literacy Act Plan (November 2019)
- Math Coach Plan (December 2019)
- RMC Comprehensive Draft for Logic Models and Planning in Math, Early Literacy, and ELL (December 2019)- Region 7 Comprehensive Centers
- Mental Health Plan (January 2020)
- State Strategic Plan (Spring 2020) – DRAFT

PCG reviewed the goals of both the 2012 and 2017 ALSDE Strategic Plans. In both instances, the goals and identified strategic activities appear to align to the core functions of the Department. The ALSDE website currently has interactive PLAN 2020 Dashboards on several indicators. These dashboards were last updated with 2016 data. PCG did not find any evidence of progress or outcomes tracking for the 2017 Alabama Ascending Strategic Plan.

#### Exhibit 6. ALSDE Strategic Plans

| Plan Name                               | Strategic Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PLAN 2020<br/>(2012)</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Student Growth and Achievement</li> <li>• Close the Achievement Gap</li> <li>• Increase the Graduation Rate</li> <li>• Increase the number of students that are college and career ready and prepared to be successful in our global society</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| <b>Alabama<br/>Ascending<br/>(2017)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A prepared graduate</li> <li>• Multiple Pathways to higher education and careers</li> <li>• Superior education preparation</li> <li>• Continuous improvement of world class educators</li> <li>• Equitable and accountable systems</li> <li>• Healthy and safe systems and schools</li> <li>• Engaged families and communities</li> </ul> |
| <b>Alabama<br/>Achieves<br/>(2020)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In progress</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

#### Alabama State ESSA Plan

The purpose of the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA) is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. ESSA went into effect for the 2017-2018 school year. Alabama submitted their ESSA plan in 2017. Subsequent to the submission, the USDOE has requested changes focused on teacher evaluations. The new teacher evaluation plan will be resubmitted by 2021. The most recent Alabama ESSA State Plan was approved November 15, 2019.

The ALSDE website also notes the 2017 ESSA Plan was aligned to the goals and strategies in Alabama Ascending. Based on conversations with the ALSDE and a review of the working draft, it does not appear that Alabama Achieves will have close alignment to the state's federal plan. Accountability outcomes are tracked per federal requirements. While progress towards specific strategies might be tracked at the program level, based on PCG's interviews, it appears that overall or comprehensive tracking of strategies/implementation is not occurring.

The chart below highlights the focus areas of Alabama's plan. The right column is a high-level overview of the focus areas of the ESSA plan. The ESSA plan has other components that the ALSDE will be required to report progress to the USDOE on an annual basis. The left column includes potential addendums currently under consideration by the ALSDE. These changes have not yet been submitted to the USDOE. PCG agrees these proposed changes would strengthen the current ESSA Plan.

**Exhibit 7. Alabama's ESSA Plan Highlights, 2017 and Addendums under Consideration**

| ESSA COMPONENTS<br>with Considered Addendums by the ALSDE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | PRESENT IN ALABAMA'S 2017 PLAN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Accountability Measures within School Quality/Success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>Chronic absenteeism:</b> Percent of students with 15 or more absences per year.</p> <p><b>College and Career Readiness:</b> Six indicators of college and career readiness currently utilized include achieving a benchmark score on the ACT, scoring a 3, 4, or 5 on an Advanced Placement exam/scoring a 4, 5, 6, or 7 on an International Baccalaureate exam, scoring silver level or above on ACT Work Keys, earning a college credit while still in high school, earning an Industry Credential, or being accepted for enlistment into any branch of the military.</p> <p><b>School Report Cards:</b> School grades will be assigned to each school with a grade from A-F. Report card grades are a combination of many factors focused on College and Career Readiness.</p> |
| <p><b>School Improvement<br/>(Title I Part A Recommendations for Changes to Plan)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Refocus/Refine professional learning opportunities utilizing technology where possible while moving to more regional/local offerings that are aligned to identified needs</i></li> <li><i>Add/Strengthen language for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>All aspects of educating students</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol> | <p>Alabama created the Office of School Improvement and Turnaround (OSIT) in the Division of Teaching and Learning. The structure will allow for differentiated and tiered support and intervention for every school receiving Title I, Part A funds within the state based on multiple performance levels beginning 2018-2019.</p> <p>Title 1 public schools with a graduation rate 10% below the state average will be identified as comprehensive support schools. The OSIT</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

| <b>ESSA COMPONENTS</b><br><b>with Considered Addendums by the ALSDE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>PRESENT IN ALABAMA'S 2017 PLAN</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>with disabilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All aspects of educating students in various at-risk categories and designations</i></li> <li>• <i>The Arts</i></li> <li>• <i>The health and well-being of all students</i></li> <li>• <i>Creating quality assessments through input from a Stakeholder Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Panel</i></li> <li>• <i>Reducing remediation rates for students graduating from high school and attending college</i></li> <li>• <i>Remove any barriers to learning facing students from military families</i></li> </ul> | <p>has identified a number of evidence-based practices to increase graduation rate. Those related to health and wellness include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on attendance data.</li> <li>• Create a culture in high schools where every adult embraces and shares a collective responsibility for the academic success of all students, not just their individual students.</li> <li>• Foster supportive relationships to ease the transition from middle grades to high school.</li> <li>• Assess and refine disciplinary practices.</li> </ul> <p>To address school culture, student behavior and discipline infractions, Alabama will address the following goals (selection):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement alternatives to in-school and out of-school suspensions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create restorative justice practices.</li> <li>• Project Creating Effective School Climates and Cultures (CESCC)- work with LEAs, Parents, and Information Centers to provide professional development to general and special education teachers and staff who work with students with disabilities.</li> <li>• Train LEAs on Positive Behavior Supports philosophy (PBIS).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>School Improvement (cont.)</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and promote activities to address bullying and other negative behaviors. Provide a safe and secure school.</li> <li>• Improve attendance and reduce truancies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in School Attendance Awareness Month, a national effort conducted by Attendance Works.</li> <li>• Discover the latest research on chronic absences.</li> <li>• Glean strategies and tools to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

| ESSA COMPONENTS<br>with Considered Addendums by the ALSDE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | PRESENT IN ALABAMA'S 2017 PLAN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>address chronic absences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to implement what is learned.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of students ranking as chronically absent or truant.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Professional Development<br/>(Recommended Revisions<br/>for Changes to Plan)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Added principals and other leaders</i></li> <li>2. <i>Provide online, face-to-face, job-embedded, and sustained professional learning opportunities, as well as pre-service training, and professional learning. Additionally, focus on educator preparation/program evaluations. State Department of Education personnel and education stakeholder groups will identify needs for the above.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Discontinue the Annual MEGA Conference and refocus resources to move local and regional venues focused on more locally and regionally identified needs</i></li> </ol> | <p>The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will use Title II, Part A state-level activities funds to support the continuous improvement of world class educators. Activities directed for usage with Title II funds will support building capacity and sustainability to improve student achievement by providing resources that focus on delivering high-quality professional learning to educators across the state.</p> <p>Alabama does not intend to use Title II, Part A state-level funds to improve equitable access to effective teachers; however, Alabama promotes equitable access to effective teachers, principals and leaders through the leveraging of other Federal, State, and local funding.</p>                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Well-Rounded Education</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>The ALSDE will use Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 state-level funds to support activities to address behaviors identified through the ALSDE's data collection sources such as Attendance Reports, School Safety Reports, Student Health Reports and Students Incident Reports (discipline). Examples of state activities include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting parent and community involvement.</li> <li>• Providing school-based mental health services and counseling.</li> <li>• Promoting supportive school climates to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and promoting supportive school discipline.</li> <li>• Identifying and utilizing strategies to address chronic absenteeism.</li> <li>• Implementing programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle (nutritional and physical education).</li> </ul> |

| ESSA COMPONENTS<br>with Considered Addendums by the ALSDE | PRESENT IN ALABAMA'S 2017 PLAN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing systems and practices to prevent bullying and harassment.</li> <li>Developing relationship-building skills to help improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse.</li> <li>Establishing community partnerships.</li> </ul> <p>The SEA reserves 5% for administration and state-level activities. State-level activity funds will be used for the Auburn University Truman-Pierce Institute contract. The state-level activity funds will also be used for salaries and benefits for four Technical Advisors who provide statewide technical assistance to grantees.</p> |

## School and District Accountability

The ALSDE is responsible for the educational and fiscal oversight of Alabama's schools and districts. There are currently multiple, but not necessarily aligned, accountability systems in place to hold schools and districts accountable for student success. In addition, compliance monitoring occurs to track district compliance of state and federal requirements. Current accountability systems under the ALSDE are inconsistent and frequently described by ALSDE staff as "lacking teeth."

The section reviews four primary accountability systems and actions employed by the ALSDE. These are:

1. The Education Report Card
2. The Alabama Accountability Act
3. Comprehensive Support and Improvement
4. Intervention

Schools with a D or F Report Card Grade and/or on the "Failing Schools" list do not receive targeted or systemic support from the ALSDE.

### *Education Report Card*

The Education Report Card uses data indicators to inform stakeholders of the quality of education students receive in Alabama.

Alabama Act No. 2012-402 requires the State Superintendent of Education to develop a school grading system reflective of school and district performance. This law requires the state to use state-authorized assessments and other key performance indicators that give a total profile of the school or school district, or both. A school's grade, at a minimum shall be based on a combination of Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Graduation Rate, College and Career Readiness, and Chronic Absenteeism.

Federal requirements under ESSA require a similar accountability system. This Accountability System must include indicators that measure Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Graduation Rate, Progress in English Language Proficiency, and a measure of school quality or student success. Alabama's approved ESSA plan merges the requirements of both state and federal law into one Accountability System that differentiates among the schools and districts within Alabama.

Analysis of the 2019 Education Report Card identified the following grading trends:

- 64% of schools and districts received an A or B.
- 11% of schools and districts received a D or F, with only 2% receiving an F. All 23 Fs are schools, distributed among elementary, middle and high schools.
- No school district received a grade of F. The school districts of Barbour County, Bessemer City and Tarrant City all received Ds.
- While Barbour County received a district grade of D, all schools in the district received a grade of F.

**Exhibit 8. 2019 School District Education Report Card Scores (Total Counts and Distributions)**

| Grade | Count | Distribution |
|-------|-------|--------------|
| A     | 296   | 20%          |
| B     | 636   | 44%          |
| C     | 372   | 26%          |
| D     | 124   | 9%           |
| F     | 23    | 2%           |

Alabama received a grade of B on the State Report Card. The Alabama State Report Card gives the highest weight to graduation rates at 30%. In our review, only 7 out of all 50 states weighted this indicator as 30% or higher. The next two highest indicator weights are academic achievement (20%) and academic growth (25%). Student outcomes by certain subgroups raised questions about how equity and the opportunity gap is presented on the Report Card.

- Only 28% of Black and 28% of Hispanic students were considered proficient in Reading in 2019.
- Only 28% of Black and 37% of Hispanic students were considered proficient in Math in 2019.
- Only 20% of Black and 26% of Hispanic students were considered proficient in Science in 2019.

It is worth noting that on multiple occasions over the course of this project the Report Card link was broken or inaccessible on the ALSDE website.

### ***Alabama Accountability Act (AAA)***

The Alabama Accountability Act (2015-434) identifies “Failing Schools.” “Failing Schools” are the bottom 6% of Alabama public schools annually based on the state’s standardized assessment in reading, English, and math. There are 76 schools on this list each year. 92% of children who attend these schools are Black. There is a school choice option for families who attend these schools. There is no alignment between schools on this list and the Education Report Card.

There is also a provision for Innovation Schools under this law. The goals of Innovation Schools are to allow school systems greater flexibility in meeting the educational needs of a diverse student population and encourage innovation by providing greater control at the local level. Based on the ALSDE website and interviews, it does not appear that any Innovation Plans/Flexibility waivers have been given since 2016.

### ***Comprehensive Support and Improvement***

Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools (CSI) are identified every three years beginning in 2018-19, and are schools that meet any of these criteria:

- **CSI schools:** Title I schools in the bottom 6 percent statewide based on overall summative accountability score (A through F letter grade) or Title I schools with a history of being among the bottom 6 percent statewide, based on overall summative accountability score, for three years
- **CSI high schools:** Any school with a graduation rate more than 10 percentage points below the state average, or with a graduation rate below 67 percent
- **Additional CSI schools:** Title I schools that do not exit additional CSI status after three years
- **CSI-Returning (CSI-R):** Schools that do not exit CSI status after four years

Schools with a D or F Report Card Grade and/or on the “Failing Schools” list do not receive targeted or systemic support from the ALSDE.

The following chart is the total distribution of funds to all school districts that have a school or schools that received CSI dollars in 2019. The Appendix includes a table that displays how CSI designated schools have used those funds. The Appendix also includes a table that displays each CSI school’s academic target attainment on multiple measures.

**Exhibit 9. Districts and Total CSI Allocations, 2019**

| District          | Total Allocation |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Barbour County    | \$123,121.00     |
| Eufaula City      | \$260,041.00     |
| Butler County     | \$288,167.00     |
| Daleville City    | \$212,809.00     |
| Dallas County     | \$396,081.52     |
| Gadsden City      | \$189,989.00     |
| Greene County     | \$164,940.00     |
| Dothan City       | \$492,485.00     |
| Bessemer City     | \$312,049.00     |
| Birmingham City   | \$2,324,445.00   |
| Jefferson County  | \$617,729.00     |
| Lawrence County   | \$60,499.00      |
| Macon County      | \$159,739.00     |
| Huntsville City   | \$881,484.00     |
| Mobile County     | \$289,760.00     |
| Montgomery County | \$3,848,601.00   |
| Sumter County     | \$175,129.00     |
| Tuscaloosa County | \$351,851.00     |

The Office of School Improvement (OSI) provides on the ground support to CSI schools rather than only taking a compliance role. There are six full-time staff on this team. While support to districts is prioritized because of limited staff, no request is denied, but rather support is differentiated based on need and individual requests. Moreover, the Office also monitors improvement based on the school/district plan.

Currently, there are 61 Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI) schools within the state. The OSI helps schools draft their action plans that address indicators on the School Report Card including chronic absence, student achievement, success of English Learner, graduation rate and career readiness. Training and coaching may focus on: using data; scheduling; standards-based grading; evidence-based strategies; formative assessments; teacher and leader professional learning; classroom observations; student

attendance; school climate; and RTI. In addition, OSI staff provide instructional reviews and facilitate the Transformation Academy.

The Transformation Academy provides summer training to cohorts of CSI schools. In the 2019-2020 school year, Cohort IV will begin training and support. The training consists of four sessions in which the schools develop a 90-day short plan to be implemented over 13 weeks. The focus is to rapidly affect change in targeted aspects of instruction. The long-term goal is to implement a continuous improvement cycle as well as implement permanent structures and routines, leading to sustained growth. The four Academy Sessions are focused on:

- Session 1: Establish Practice-Focused Collaboration
- Session 2: Map the Instructional System
- Session 3: See through the Students' Eyes
- Session 4: Internalize and Innovate

Schools are eligible for a “deeper dive” after the initial training. The annual MEGA Conference hosted by the ALSDE provides more opportunities for schools that attended the Transformation Academy to review practices outlined during the four sessions.

The School Improvement Team noted there are trends surfacing for CSI schools. The CSI School trends are: (1) higher teacher and leader turnover; (2) many uncertified staff and long-term substitutes employed by the school; (3) a high level of rigor not present during instruction; (4) low levels of collective efficacy; (5) high chronic absenteeism; (6) little evidence of RTI or MTSS structures; (7) district leaders assuming multiple roles; (8) needed mental health supports; and (9) low parental involvement. To improve overall outcomes, the Office of School Improvement will have to support schools to address the issues in low performing schools.

When analyzing the school improvement strategies implemented at CSI Schools, it was clear that many schools/districts used their allocation to purchase equipment or hire staff, including administrative staff, at both the school and central office level. Many of the expenditures do not address the trends that are being identified by the OSI team. Expecting low performing districts to adhere to evidence-based practices such as implementing curriculum aligned with ALSDE standards and assessments; establishing strong leadership; using data to set goals and drive instruction for all students; developing and retaining a high-quality staff that can improve instruction; and implementing a plan to establish a positive school culture and climate that embraces high academic expectations should be a priority. Too few of the strategies in school plans are focused on evidence-based practices that will have a significant impact on improving student outcomes.

## *Intervention*

In February 2017, the Alabama State Board of Education voted unanimously to intervene into Montgomery Public Schools (MPS). The State Superintendent has intervening authority that covers the entire district for a five-year period. PCG found District and School qualitative reviews from 2017 on the ALSDE website. These reviews were conducted by an external consultant, Class Measures. At that time, MPS was rated as “inadequate” or “requires improvement” on all measures. There is no other indication of intervention activity after 2017 on the ALSDE or Montgomery Public School’s websites for PCG’s reference. The Montgomery Intervention did not emerge as a discussion topic in interviews or focus groups with ALSDE staff. An August 22, 2018 *Montgomery Advertiser* article provided PCG with a detailed description on all activity related to the intervention through Summer 2018. PCG does understand that the ALSDE worked closely to identify and support a Chief Financial Officer who addressed the significant financial concerns facing the district.

A recent February 7, 2020 article in the *Montgomery Advertiser* indicates the ALSDE may remove MPS from intervention status in the coming months due to recent gains in academic performance, improved finances and new leadership. The 2019 qualitative review from Cognia (formerly Class

Measures/AdvancedED) is anticipated to show improvement from the 2017 review. This release from intervention would be two years early, at the three-year mark.

Alabama's approach to intervention is less prescriptive than in some other states. In Massachusetts, for example, if a district is chronically underperforming, the commissioner appoints a new leader, called a receiver, who is granted the powers of the superintendent and school committee. The receiver reports directly to the commissioner and is held accountable for improving the education in every school in the district for the benefit of all students. The receiver is permitted to make changes in district policies and practices through a required turnaround plan. Prior to a full intervention, Massachusetts uses a tiered approach with varying levels of intervention intensity based on district need. About 15% of all schools in state receive either focused or comprehensive support.

## LEA Perception of Accountability and Assistance

PCG interviewed 16 current superintendents serving LEAs across the state. Interviews occurred over seven focus groups. The goal of the interviews was to determine the ALSDE's impact on school district operations and outcomes, the level of satisfaction with ALSDE service among districts, and to identify areas where superintendents believe change is needed to support improved student outcomes within their districts.

To ensure representation from the diversity in school districts throughout the state, PCG used the following criteria to select superintendent focus group participants: (1) superintendents representing all regions throughout Alabama; (2) superintendents from urban, rural, and suburban areas; (3) superintendents who were both elected and appointed; and (4) superintendents new to their role as well as veteran leaders.

During each focus group, superintendents were asked to respond to the same series of questions. Responses were analyzed and then placed into themes for each question. Themes from the data analysis are outlined below.

### *Experience with the ALSDE*

#### **Perceived Strengths**

- **Experienced Leadership:**
  - 100% of superintendents in the focus groups stated that Dr. Mackey's leadership at the ALSDE has been positive for district superintendents. Dr. Mackey and his team's understanding of both urban and rural districts has provided supports in areas that have been a struggle.
  - Dr. Mackey's Core Leadership Team (CLT) is experienced and understands district issues, as they have all held the role of superintendent within Alabama.
- **Communication with Core Leadership Team**
  - Dr. Mackey and his CLT are highly responsive to inquiries made by superintendents. 100% of focus groups stated that they had direct access to the CLT members. This personal access ensures questions are answered quickly and accurately.
- **Hands on Support:**
  - Members of the CLT go directly into districts to help resolve issues that need immediate attention. In addition, CLT members or their program leaders will personally address an issue to ensure it is brought to the attention of the Department member who can provide the supports to address the issue immediately.
- **Relationship and Trust Building:**
  - Dr. Mackey has built trust with the district superintendents. He focuses on relationship building, which has not always been the case with other state superintendents in the past.
  - Superintendents' comments included: "it is nice to have confidence in the state leadership," "they will work with you and help you with your district's problems," and that is "the kind of relationship the Department should have with their districts."

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

- **Communication at the ALSDE:**
  - While communication from the core leadership was deemed very helpful, 100% of focus groups stated that communication within the rest of the ALSDE is a challenge.
  - Superintendents noted that there does not appear to be an overall communications strategy by the ALSDE. One focus group member stated, “When you run a State Department of Education, communication should be a key thing.”
  - Multiple weekly memos from the ALSDE are standard. Superintendents stated that there are so many memos that it is difficult to keep up and read them all. The ALSDE many times will “package the memos,” resulting in 20 memos in one package. Some of the memos contain important information while others may be about “Bike Safety Week.” It appears memos are not prioritized based on critical areas to know.
  - There is a lack of consistency from various departments in the information they provide. Different departments provide different answers to the same question. The mixed messages cause confusion within districts.
- **Expertise and Alignment**
  - The ALSDE is perceived to have a difficult time finding the expertise in the field to lead departments. This lack of deep content knowledge inhibits the ALSDE’s credibility with districts.
- **PowerSchool Rollout**
  - While there are PowerSchool trainings scheduled, there is a fear that there will be glitches when districts transition from Chalkable. More training and support for districts are needed to ensure all LEAs are ready for the change.

### ***Interaction with the ALSDE***

#### ***Perceived Strengths***

- **Support on Compliance Issues**
  - Superintendents interact with the ALSDE on compliance issues more than anything else. They believe their district receives the necessary supports to ensure they are being compliant with state and federal laws.

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

- **ALSDE Directory**
  - Superintendents expressed frustration regarding who they or members of their staff should call at the Department to have their questions answered. Many directly call Dr. Mackey or the Core Leadership Team (CLT) to point them in the right direction. Having a clear directory that is updated regularly would be helpful. With staffing changes at the ALSDE, many Superintendents do not know who is there and which department they lead.
- **Regional Meeting Locations**
  - Alabama is a geographically large state and asking superintendents and their staff to drive 5-6 hours each way for a meeting in Montgomery is not always possible. Moving statewide meetings to different regions throughout the school year would be more equitable for districts located the furthest away.

### ***Supports from the ALSDE***

#### ***Perceived Strengths***

- **Task Force Convenings**
  - The ALSDE has placed a greater emphasis on getting more input from superintendents throughout the state. There has been a strong direction from Dr. Mackey on convening

task forces to provide superintendent voices at the table. Recent Task Forces include: Teacher Evaluation, Teacher Shortage, and Assessment. The Department has been putting together groups to get the perspective from school systems. This is the first time that has occurred, and their inclusion is much appreciated by superintendents.

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

- **Regional In-Service Centers**
  - The quality of regional centers varies across the state. Many superintendents stated they do not use their Regional In-Service Centers (RICs) for professional development because the offerings do not align to their local needs.
  - The creation of professional development from the RICs is not consistently aligned to ALSDE or LEA priorities. In many instances, LEAs have experienced very limited communication from the RICs regarding their districts' professional learning needs. Typically, they receive a menu of professional learning options that do not align to their district goals. As a result, districts often provide training either internally or through an outside vendor.
  - Superintendents from smaller, more rural districts who do not have the resources to pay outside vendors reported using the Regional In-Service Center resources more frequently and found value in the RICs services.

## ***Recognition***

### ***Perceived Strengths***

- **Multiple Opportunities**
  - The ALSDE provides multiple opportunities to recognize teachers and districts. Some of the recognition opportunities came directly from the ALSDE while others came from other professional organizations.

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

- **Provide Better Communication**
  - There was a significant gap in superintendents' knowledge of recognition and awards. Some had extensive information while others had no idea what was available and how to get involved. Providing more structured communication through the ALSDE and other professional organizations will help districts that would like more involvement.

## ***Change Recommendations from Superintendents***

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

- **Consistency**
  - The ALSDE needs to be more consistent in their messaging as well as in their approach to district supports. Superintendents become frustrated when there are different answers from various Department staff, when the ALSDE changes state assessments and LEAs struggle to keep up, and when staff turnover affects the consistency of program implementation.
- **Preparedness**
  - Superintendents stated that the ALSDE frequently rolls out new initiatives before they are fully conceptualized. Superintendents reported they often felt a lack of clarity on how to communicate the purpose and messaging of new statewide initiatives to their district.
- **Focus**
  - There needs to be more focused support targeted to the areas of literacy and numeracy. It should be intentional and provide resources and support for all districts.

- **Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI)**
  - Both programs were heralded by superintendents as difference makers when they began their implementation. However, due to the lack of funding and the inability to service districts as they did before the budget cuts, superintendents are frustrated and would like to see additional supports and resources coming from both groups. The poor NAEP math scores and the Alabama Literacy Law are pressing on the districts to improve student outcomes and they need changes in service delivery and supports to make that happen.

### *Additional Needs*

The following areas were shared as critical district needs that would help improve educational services.

- **Mental Health Services.** There are challenges throughout districts addressing the mental health issues of the youth attending school. Districts cannot fully support students the way they need to without additional resources.
- **Guidance Counselors, Social Workers and School Nurses.** In order to support mental health issues, there need to be school-based staff who focus on prevention and support. Including more of these types of professionals within districts and schools will prevent some of the escalation of student issues that are being addressed in schools throughout the state.
- **Professional Development.** Professional development is perceived as reactionary to new legislation.
- **English Learner (EL) Supports.** The EL population is growing in many districts and there is a need for more ALSDE guidance.
- **Special Education Resources.** Districts are struggling with the increasing numbers and complexity of needs of students receiving special education services. Districts want more technical assistance, additional resources and funding to better serve this population.
- **Certified Teachers.** Superintendents need help recruiting teachers. They reported struggling to fill positions with high quality, certified staff.
- **Pre-K Alignment.** LEAs state a lack of alignment between Pre-K expectations from the Department of Early Childhood Education and guidance from the ALSDE.

## **Educator Quality**

### *Educator Recruitment and Retention*

The Alabama Teacher Shortage Task Force convened in 2019 to develop a comprehensive approach to ensuring every classroom has an excellent, highly qualified teacher. The group met seven times over a six-month period. The Teacher Shortage Task Force Report was published in September 2019. Key findings included:

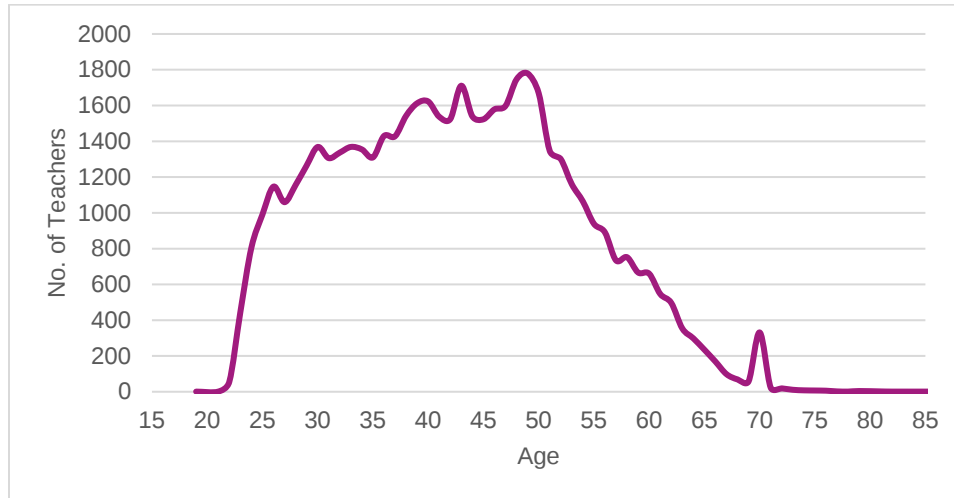
- 30% of all classrooms are being taught by teachers teaching out of field, having neither a major nor a minor in the field.
- Since 2010, there has been a 40% decrease in students entering teacher education programs.
- 8% of teachers leave the profession each year.
- Only 523 secondary first time teaching certificates were issued in Alabama during the 2017-18 school year.

The report includes 33 recommendations—23 for recruiting teachers and 10 for retaining them. As of January 2020, the ALSDE was still working on a comprehensive plan for implementing these recommendations.

There is a new MOU with [Teachers of Tomorrow](#) to explore alternative certification opportunities. As of January 2020, no school districts have elected to form a partnership with them.

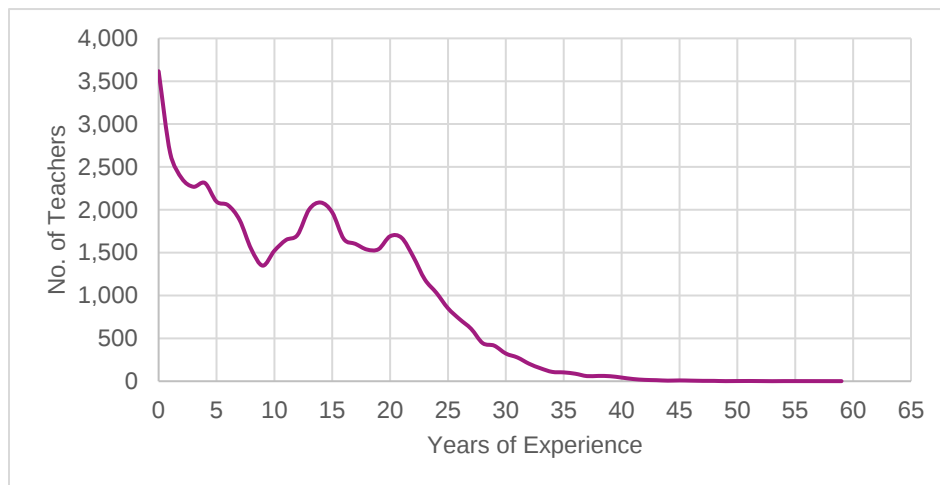
There was noted concern of an aging educator work force in Alabama. The following graph highlights this concern. Statewide, the age of educators ranges between 19 and 87. Teachers between the ages of 35-49 accounted for 46.0% of the educator population. Teachers ages 50+ accounted for 27.3% of the educator population.

**Exhibit 10. Educator Age Distribution**



Years of educator experience ranged from 0 to 59. Teachers with ten or more years of certified public experience accounted for 56.6% of the educator population. Teachers with zero to four years of certified public experience accounted for 25.9% of the overall educator population. Teachers with five to nine years of certified experience accounted for 17.5% of the educator population.

**Exhibit 11. Educator Years of Experience Distribution**

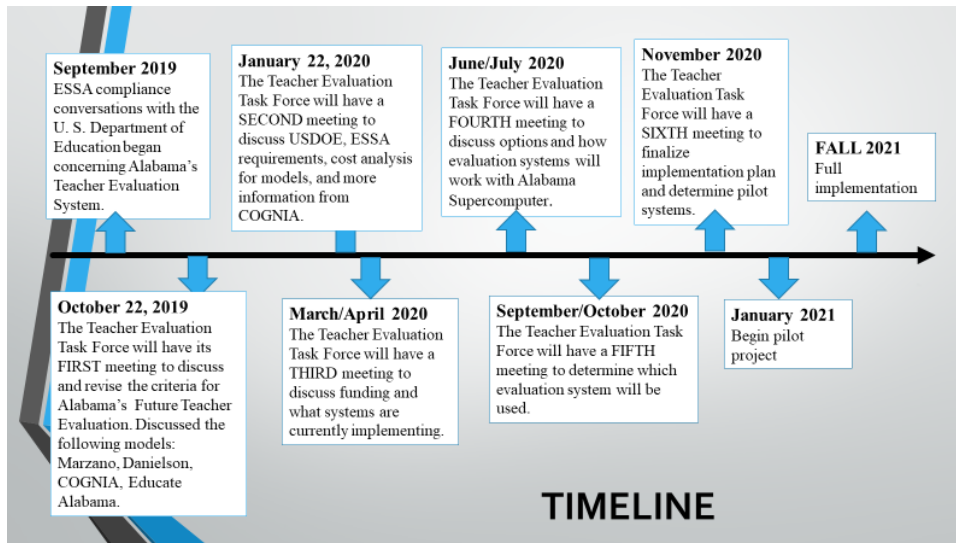


### ***Educator Effectiveness***

The ALSDE is currently in the process of redesigning the Educator Evaluation System to better align to ESSA guidelines per USDOE request. The Teacher Effectiveness Task Force first convened on October 22, 2019 and again on January 22, 2020 to begin this work. The initial timeline assumed recommendations in March 2020 to the SBOE for an August 2020 pilot. The ALSDE was granted an extension to pilot in January 2021.

To support the Educator Evaluation taskforce process, Alabama Super Computer (contractor) is working on a demo that may potentially be used with the new evaluation system once the taskforce and the ALSDE have decided what system is deemed appropriate for the state. The mock demo will denote the data collection process for evaluators, which will be representative of a full evaluation of educators that meet the guidelines of ESSA.

#### **Educator Evaluation Timeline:**



#### **Educator Learning**

##### **ALSDE MEGA Conference**

The Alabama State Department of Education's MEGA Conference is a week-long professional development conference in which local, state, and nationally known presenters from all facets of education provide learning experiences to teachers and administrators. 3,600 educators attended the conference in 2019. The conference goal is to increase student learning and achievement.

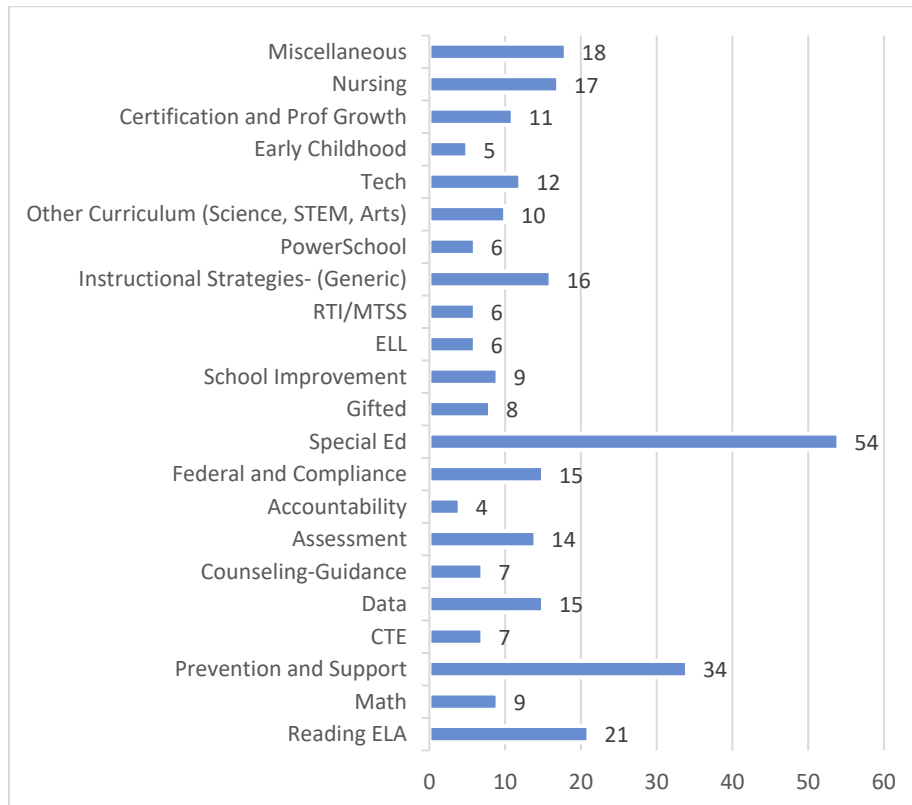
The MEGA Conference Committee represents each department in the ALSDE. The ALSDE Mega Conference Committee is responsible for all components of planning including arranging hotel accommodations, vendors, registration procedures, equipment, contracts, and transportation. The Conference Committee also maintains the conference website, an app for participants to utilize, registration procedures, and provides surveys for attendees to rate the various sessions at the close of the conference. There is a significant level of effort to plan and execute a conference of this size. The conference is funded through use of Title II and special education funds, vendor sponsorship, and nominal participant registration fees.

In July 2019, there were total of 304 sessions offered. Session topics were diverse, highlighting many aspects of education. Sessions included various content areas, and included technical assistance, professional learning, and ALSDE updates. Session length was either 90 minutes, half day, or full day. For the purpose of the analysis, sessions were grouped into 22 discrete categories, with the final category entitled '*Miscellaneous*,' which included sessions that did not fit within the parameters of the other categories.

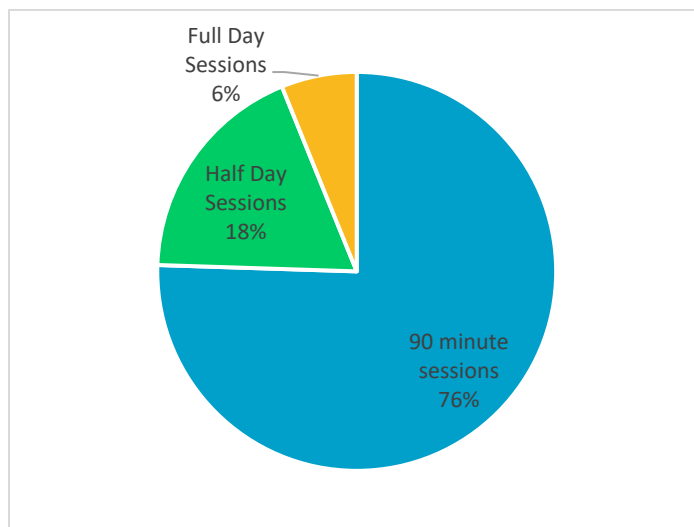
- Accountability had the lowest representation with 1% of the sessions while Special Education had the highest percentage of sessions at 18%.
- Most session categories (17 out of 22) were represented 5% or less during the week-long conference.

- Sessions offered least frequently included Math (3%), School Improvement (3%), and Assessment (5%).
- Most sessions (74%) were 90 minutes in length. 8% of the sessions were full-day and 6 hours in length.

**Exhibit 12. Number of MEGA Conference Sessions by Category**



**Exhibit 13. Length of MEGA Conference Sessions**



Research shows that most professional development offered to educators does not have the desired outcomes. Professional development is considered ineffective because it neither changes practice nor

improves student learning. However, research suggests that effective professional development is possible by following these best practices:

- Ensure the duration of professional development is significant and ongoing, allowing time for educators to learn a new strategy and work through any implementation problems;
- Provide on-going support during the implementation stage that addresses the specific challenges of changing classroom practice;
- Create engaging activities during educators' early exposure to a concept during initial professional development. The professional learning should provide various opportunities for educators to experience the new learning; and
- Use modeling whenever possible as it has been found to be a highly effective strategy to introduce a new concept and help educators understand new practices. Modeling can be face to face or through video exemplars.<sup>1</sup>

If the goal of the MEGA Conference is to increase student learning and achievement for all in attendance, based on the research cited above, 90-minute sessions will not be an effective means for attaining those outcomes.

When reviewing statewide professional development practices of other NAEP sample states, it does not appear any employ a professional development model similar to the MEGA Conference. Most professional learning is geared toward specific groups (i.e., special education, school improvement, federal programs) to ensure the sessions are highly focused and align with the Department's goals. Many of the convenings are geared to school or district teams often in a multi-day format to ensure the learning is truly collaborative and shared within LEAs.

The MEGA Conference's model is similar to a national conference model where there are hundreds of sessions and thousands of attendees. However, with that model in mind, well-regarded national conferences have a theme, such as *Innovate for Impact* or *Personalization of Education*, in which sessions and keynote speakers align their content. Therefore, there is more of a cohesive offering of professional learning throughout the conference sessions.

### **Alabama Regional In-Service Center Summary**

The Alabama Regional In-Service Centers (RICs) were established by the legislature in 1984. The RICs were created to serve and support public school educators with high quality professional learning and support. There are eleven (11) Regional In-Service Centers in Alabama, which are located in higher education institutions throughout the state. They represent a partnership between higher education, local districts, and the ALSDE. State law (Act 87-714) asserts that each RIC's operational schedule, programming, and budget allocations are subject to the authority and oversight of an independent governing board made up of representation from regional LEAs, the affiliated higher education institution, and the ALSDE. As outlined in legislation, the governing board's role includes:

- In cooperation with the ALSDE, determine policies for the operation of the RICs including days and hours of operation;
- Approve programs and activities that address needs as identified by needs assessments and/or student achievement data;
- Approve the RIC's annual budget;
- Approve consultants as requested by LEAs;

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<sup>1</sup> Gulamhussein, A. (2013). Effective Professional Development in an Era of High Stakes Accountability. Alexandria, VA. The Center of Public Education. Retrieved from: <http://conference.ohioschoolboards.org/2017/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2016/07/1pm111317A114Job-embedPD.pdf>

- Delegate the RIC director the authority and responsibility for the daily operation, including the development and maintenance of records (i.e., financial, programmatic) and the coordination of programs and activities; and
- Approve the annual report of the RIC's programs and activities.

In 2017, the "ARIC Subcommittee of the SJR86 Committee" reviewed, refined, and added additional standards and responsibilities for all Regional In-Service Centers. In 2019, the State Board of Education reviewed and approved the 2019 Regional In-Service Center Accountability Standards. As of January 2020, the 2019 RIC Accountability Standards have not been publicized. They are not located on any Regional In-Service Center website or the ALSDE's website. In one instance, a RIC posted a notice under Accountability Standards that read, "Coming soon—the recently revised accountability standards for Alabama's Regional In-Service Centers." No other Regional In-Service Center references the Accountability Standards on their websites.

During the review of each Regional In-Service Center website, it was noted that there was a high level of variability of each site especially considering the regional support centers were created from the same legislation. The analysis of the RICs' websites and professional learning offerings showed the following:

- Professional Development offered at the RICs vary in depth and breadth. There is only one program area in which all centers (11 out of 11) align, that is the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) programs. RICs not only provide professional development, they also provide space to house science kits belonging to the program. AMSTI programs also include Alabama Science in Motion (ASIM) and Alabama Technology in Motion (TIM).
- Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) professional development is offered at 5 out of the 11 centers, less than 50%.
- Popular offerings at RICs include National Board-Certified Teacher (NBCT) training, PowerSchool training, book studies, and lending libraries.
- There are only 3 out of 11 RICs (27%) that have easily accessible professional development calendars located on their website displaying each month's trainings. Other sites use various formats to display their professional development offerings including lists created on Word documents, offerings embedded into their website, or drop-down menus. Some sites (3 out of 11) have no information posted regarding upcoming sessions. 4 out of 7 have outdated sessions listed, on one site going back to 2015.

## Educational Standards

The ALSDE works closely with educators to establish Courses of Study (COS) for each content area. Courses of Study are educational standards that demonstrate what students should know and should be able to do at each grade level. An ALSDE Course of Study is not meant to be used as a district's curriculum, but rather as a resource to develop and align their own curriculum.

The ALSDE engages in a process when reviewing and creating new Courses of Study that includes collaboration with the Instructional Services Section and additional sections as needed. In addition, the ALSDE invites other stakeholders (i.e. teachers, leaders, parents) from around the state to apply to serve on the Study Committee.

Information is lacking regarding the COS development process on the ALSDE website. Below is the most current list of the Courses of Study, but there is no timeline or schedule for the review process for each content area.

**Exhibit 14. Course of Study List**

| Alabama Course of Study/Standards                                                                                                                         | Year of Approval | Additional Information/Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alabama Course of Study: Driver and Traffic Safety Education                                                                                              | 2007             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Alabama Course of Study: Career and Technical Education                                                                                                   | 2008             | There is a Study Committee being formed to update the CTE Course of Study during the 2020-2021 school year.                                                                                                                             |
| Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies                                                                                                                   | 2010             | It has been ten (10) years since the last time the Social Studies Course of Study was updated. The content has been delayed due to other course of studies that were prioritized.                                                       |
| Alabama Course of Study: Science                                                                                                                          | 2015             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Revised Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts                                                                                                    | 2016             | There is a Study Committee being formed to update the ELA Course of Study during the 2020-2021 school year.                                                                                                                             |
| Alabama Course of Study: Arts Education                                                                                                                   | 2017             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Alabama Course of Study: Languages Other than English                                                                                                     | 2017             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Alabama Course of Study: Digital Literacy and Computer Science                                                                                            | 2018             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics                                                                                                                      | 2019             | The new Mathematics Course of Study was approved in December 2019 by the State Board of Education. Roll out of the standards to districts will begin in 2020.                                                                           |
| Alabama Course of Study: Physical Education                                                                                                               | 2019             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Alabama Course of Study: Health                                                                                                                           | 2019             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Curriculum Guides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELA</li> <li>• Math</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Algebra</li> </ul> |                  | <p>The Curriculum Guides, developed under the supervision of Special Education Services, may be used to support intervention and tutoring.</p> <p>The Guides are not a substitute for the standards in the Course of Study document</p> |

**Mathematics Course of Study**

The ALSDE adopted a new Mathematics Course of Study in December 2019. Successful adoption of new math standards and the necessary instructional strategies for success will require deliberate and decisive efforts to change professional practices. It is insufficient to primarily disseminate information through statewide regional meetings and hope that LEAs adopt the standards and change long-standing practices

teaching mathematics. Successful adoption requires defining explicit strategies in various school settings, such as elementary vs. secondary or urban vs. rural to adopt the new math standards, support their effective implementation through professional development and coaching, and subsequently change practices within math classrooms throughout Alabama.

## Stakeholder Communications

Communication to all stakeholders is a critical function of state education agencies. There are currently several ways stakeholders receive information from the ALSDE. These include:

**Alabama Education News (AEN).** AEN is a monthly publication providing the latest information for Alabama educators from the ALSDE. The newsletter is detailed, easy to read and provides a wealth of information.

**News Releases.** The ALSDE distributes news releases on a very frequent basis. PCG tried to sign up for these news releases via the website but the weblink is broken.

**Weekly Memos:** The ALSDE communicates policy and other changes to Superintendents through weekly electronic memos. In the past, these memos went out on an ad hoc basis. To streamline the process, all memos are now sent on Wednesdays. They are sent to the Superintendent and others who are relevant to that specific memo. Superintendents reported they appreciated that all memos are distributed on the same day and that other relevant staff also receive the memos.

**Website:** The ALSDE is currently in the process of updating its website, with an anticipated launch of June 2020. This work is contracted with Emgage, the same vendor who created the new School and District Report Cards. Emgage conducted discovery interviews to determine the new design.

PCG spent a significant amount of time on the current website for this review and found it to be incredibly challenging to navigate. In many instances, information is outdated, incomplete or leads to dead webpages. There are references to former State Superintendents and numerous programs that are now defunct. The website is not mobile friendly. In comparison to the many other State Education Agency websites PCG navigates (which are known to be clunky), the ALSDE website is particularly problematic.

**Peachjar:** The ALSDE recently implemented a new electronic flyer delivery tool called Peachjar. Peachjar provides an innovative flyer management system that sends ALSDE-approved E-flyers directly to teachers/administrators via email. Recipients can easily find and view flyers and take immediate action with links to additional information. Peachjar is used in school districts nationally.

**Share the Good News Campaign:** There is currently a Share the Good News Campaign that aims to collect positive news stories from the field.

**Social Media:** The ALSDE has a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, and YouTube.

## IV. Comparative Analysis with Top NAEP States

*Task: Compare and analyze the ALSDE's functions, programs, policies, funding, and organizational structure of ALSDE to states whose educational systems perform in the top 10% of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).*

Part of the requested scope of the study was to compare the organizational structure and other major aspects of the Alabama Department of Education (ALSDE) to states who have demonstrated success on the NAEP that scored in the top 10% of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

### Key Findings

Overall, we identified five broad lessons from the interviews based on decades of experiences shared with us.

- The political and educational leadership of the state agreed upon higher standards for students and a set of mechanisms to hold schools and districts accountable.
- States developed an overall plan for improvement, ways to measure that improvement and stayed with the plan of action over a minimum of a few years.
- States were focused on their own Reading and Math results and used NAEP results as a guide as to whether their standards were rigorous enough.
- The relationship between the state DOE and schools/district was a balance of outright direction from the state in some areas and local flexibility in other areas.
- The DOE was organized to best serve their greater plan for improvement.

### Methodology

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the Nation's Report Card, is the largest nationally representative assessment of student performance. The test is administered annually to a sample of students in each state.

NAEP results serve as the most common performance metric between states. As the assessment remains relatively the same each year, it also serves as an indicator of student academic progress over time. Top performing states often include Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Virginia. Alabama has traditionally performed below the national average on all tests. In the most recent test administration (2019), the number of eighth-grade students in Alabama scoring at or above the proficiency benchmark in both math and science trailed the national average by 12 percentage points.

PCG contacted the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) which is the research agency for NAEP testing. NCES staff performed a statistical analysis (see Appendix B) of the recent results across grades and subjects and determined the top 10% of state performers to be Massachusetts, New Jersey, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Wyoming in that order.

While we anticipated that a great deal could be learned by analyzing these state educational systems, PCG was concerned that they are different from Alabama in major ways such as geography and demographics. PCG suggested that states that have demonstrated significant growth in performance over the past few years could have a more compelling and actionable story to share. Thus, with permission, we added three States that we believed would add value to our comparative analysis.

These additional states are not only geographically close and face similar challenges, but these states (Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee) have also experienced significant improvement on NAEP over the

past few years. PCG felt the very recent success on NAEP by Mississippi in particular, could be more instructive for Alabama.

PCG contacted the eight Departments of Education and obtained relevant **data and documents** related to governance, departmental organization, programs, strategic planning, policies, legislation, funding models, staffing levels, and per pupil expenditures. PCG reviewed each SEA's website, ESSA plan, and other public documents to better understand their organization, programs, and service delivery model.

PCG also **interviewed key participants in each state** including the state's chief state school officer (i.e. Education Commissioner/Superintendent) or a designee. PCG also interviewed key participants in each state that could provide a historic perspective on the key reasons for each state's significant increase in NAEP scores. These interviews were conducted using a standard set of questions during December 2019 and early January 2020. Questions focused on how each state raised student achievement, the relationship of the DOE to districts/schools including any measures taken to ensure LEAs used curricula aligned to the state standards; strategic goals (and whether there is an existing action plan), anything perceived unique to their department's organization, and whether they had any advice for Alabama. Notes from these interviews were analyzed to identify common themes across all comparison states as well as unique features that could inform the work underway in Alabama.

The section first presents key findings related to the comparative analysis of top performing NAEP states. The section then presents a review of demographic and organizational characteristics among sample states used in the comparison, alongside those of Alabama, and a deeper examination of Alabama's performance on NAEP and performance among comparison states. This is followed by findings from the state interviews and then comparisons across the topic areas listed above. Other findings related to top performing NAEP states may also be found within other sections of the report as they pertain to other topics of the review (i.e. School Improvement and Educator Learning).

## NAEP Sample State Characteristics

Exhibit 15 Alabama and Comparison States for Top Performing NAEP States Analysis (2018-2019) presents demographic and organizational characteristics among states selected for the study sample.

**Exhibit 15. Alabama and Comparison States for Top Performing NAEP States Analysis (2018-2019)<sup>2</sup>**

| State         | 2019 NAEP<br>Aggregate<br>Ranking <sup>3</sup> | #Students<br>K-12 | #<br>School<br>Districts | #<br>Schools | % Free/<br>Reduced<br>Price<br>Lunch | % IEP | % EL | % Non-<br>White |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|-------|------|-----------------|
| Alabama       | 52                                             | 739,464           | 139                      | 1,339        | 52%                                  | 14%   | 4%   | 41%             |
| Massachusetts | 2                                              | 951,631           | 406                      | 1,846        | 33%                                  | 18%   | 11%  | 42%             |
| New Jersey    | 3                                              | 1,404,592         | 584                      | 2,516        | 37%                                  | 17%   | 7%   | 57%             |
| Minnesota     | 4                                              | 862,971           | 554                      | 2,064        | 38%                                  | 16%   | 8%   | 32%             |
| Wyoming       | 6                                              | 93,029            | 60                       | 349          | 36%                                  | 14%   | 2%   | 22%             |

<sup>2</sup> Data drawn from state report cards as indicated: Alabama (2018-2019): <https://www.alsde.edu/dept/erc/Pages/home.aspx>; Massachusetts (2018-2019) <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/staterc/?fyCode=2019>; New Jersey (2017-2018): <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/report.aspx?type=state&lang=english&SY=1718&schoolyear=2017-2018>; Minnesota (2018-2019): <https://public.education.mn.gov/MDEAnalytics/Summary.jsp> (district includes charter schools); Wyoming (2018-2019): <https://reporting.education.wyo.gov/>; New Hampshire (2018-2019): <https://my.doe.nh.gov/profiles/> and <https://ireport.education.nh.gov/>; Florida (2018-2019): <https://edudata.fldoe.org/ReportCards/Schools.html?school=0000&district=00>; Tennessee (2018-2019): <https://reportcard.tn.k12.gov/districts/0/page/DistrictProfile>; Mississippi (2018-2019): <https://newreports.mdek12.org/> (Includes Pre-K); other MS data are from 2016-2017 Nations Report Card.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B.

|               |    |           |     |       |     |     |     |     |
|---------------|----|-----------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| New Hampshire | 5  | 177,365   | 301 | 490   | 26% | 18% | 3%  | 15% |
| Florida       | 18 | 2,846,857 | 71  | 4,004 | 63% | 14% | 10% | 63% |
| Tennessee     | 30 | 973,659   | 146 | 1,774 | 35% | 14% | 5%  | 38% |
| Mississippi   | 41 | 470,668   | 140 | 877   | 75% | 15% | 3%  | 56% |

As indicated in the exhibit above, states that had the top or rising performance on NAEP vary significantly in terms of the size of their enrollment, the number of school districts served by the state department of education, the number of schools, the proportion of students in poverty, the proportion of students with IEPs, and the proportion non-white students. The largest enrollment of the eight is Florida with 2.8 million students which also has the largest proportion of non-white students (63%). The smallest enrollment is in Wyoming (93,029 students) which also had the smallest number of LEAs (60). The largest number of school districts served is in New Jersey with 584 LEAs, while the largest number of schools is in Florida (4,004). Among the sample, the state with the highest population of free and reduced-price lunch students is Mississippi (75%), while the state with the smallest proportion is New Hampshire (26%). All states reported the proportion of students with IEPs between 14% and 18%. Wyoming had the smallest proportion of students designated as English learners (2%).

## Findings from State Education Agency Interviews

Our discussions with education leaders from the top performing NAEP states and those that showed great improvement on NAEP provided many insights about their varied approaches to reform as well as change levers. While there were unique aspects in each state's story, we also found several common themes and initiatives which we believe are most important to the ALSDE as it looks to improve student achievement across the state.

**Leadership.** In all eight states, state representatives described establishing a coalition across sectors to accomplish their reforms. In each case, most, if not all key players, including the Governor, legislature, business community, higher education, state school board, state department of education and the general public were brought together around a set of common education goals. The catalyst for building consensus around the need for educational reform varied among states. In each state, an education champion led efforts to cohere stakeholders, build consensus, and develop trust.

**Plan for Improvement.** State education leaders described the important role played by a robust plan for improvement with clear measures. Development of the plans took several forms, but all drew upon a process to collect stakeholder input, from a strategic planning process to the development of plans needed to receive federal funds. All leaders referenced the priority given to the plan and making sure that there was alignment and synergy between plans if there was more than one. With goals in place, state leaders described planning backward and organizing all departmental activity to support the goals in the plan. They also described making sure that there was widespread awareness of the goals. One state leader explained that in her SEA, "you could ask anyone in the building, and they could tell you about their portion of the plan and how it affected their daily work."

**Set high expectations.** In every case, state leaders described a process of setting a higher bar for students as well as for teachers. Establishing more rigorous academic standards was accomplished through a slightly different process in each case. Education leaders described detailed plans to roll out standards to ensure widespread awareness and understanding.

States also sought to implement aligned assessments. Some worked with outside vendors, others brought the development of standards-aligned assessments "in house" and relied on local educators in the development process. School districts had autonomy to make local curriculum selections, but new assessments applied some pressure to select or develop curriculum that was aligned.

In most states, high school graduation requirements were also made more rigorous. In Massachusetts, Florida, and later in Minnesota, new requirements for students included passing a state test to demonstrate mastery of the state's standards.

Setting new standards for teachers was identified as another critical feature of improvement efforts.

- In Massachusetts, state law determined that all new teachers had to pass a certification test.
- In Tennessee, a new teacher evaluation system used a value-add measure based on student outcomes and teaching observations with data collection centralized at the state level. As part of this work, Tennessee also focused attention on credentialing institutions of higher education and created a report card system to validate high quality teacher preparation.
- In Minnesota, the legislature passed the "World's Best Workforce (WBWF)" which requires that local school boards adopt long-term strategic plans to improve teaching and learning to support a range of student outcomes including access to excellent teachers. the equitable distribution of their teachers.

**Increase accountability.** As part of improvement efforts, states also rolled out new accountability systems to make student performance data public. Equipped with data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, by socioeconomic status, stakeholders could see and compare how well all students were performing statewide. States developed public rating systems for schools and districts using two primary models: an A-F grading system or performance tiers. Additional accountability strategies used in Florida and Mississippi were laws enacted to prevent student promotion from third to fourth grade without demonstrating grade-level proficiency.

Minnesota's WBWF law also required annual reports and a public meeting to review districts' progress towards goals and the strategies and initiatives used to get there. In the majority of states, the stakes were increased for districts and schools that failed to make "adequate yearly progress" on performance measures and could now be threatened with takeover.

NAEP results served as a guide, and sometimes a wake-up call, but not a goal in and of themselves for states in the sample. For example, in Tennessee in 2007, a comparison between state assessment results and national expectations presented a stark contrast. While the state rated 87 percent of eighth graders as proficient or above in math, NAEP results indicated that only 23 percent had achieved that benchmark.<sup>4</sup> Tennessee subsequently saw significant gains on NAEP as a result of statewide reforms and support that aligned with higher standards and increased accountability.

**Funding for underserved schools and districts.** Leaders from sample states described making changes in funding that allowed state resources to flow more equitably to districts. Changes were enacted through court decisions or revised funding formulas to add funds for at-risk students including high poverty students, English learners, or districts determined to have high need. Significant special appropriations were another route taken in many states to ensure the appropriate level of resources to support improvement work within LEAs.

**Organize the DOE to support the goals.** In each state, education leaders described reorganizing their departments to maximize support for LEAs to accomplish the stated goals. A review of the organization charts for each DOE reflects the very different paths taken toward this end. Education leaders described a number of strategies including creating cross functional teams, bringing statewide resource centers under closer leadership, and integrating federal programs into teams (rather than maintaining them as their own "program"). They also described reviewing staffing to ensure that positions and people were appropriately

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<sup>4</sup> National Assessment Governing Board. (n.d.) Tennessee NAEP Results Inspire Statewide Effort to Improve Schools. Retrieved from: <https://www.nagb.gov/content/nagb/assets/documents/publications/achievement/Tennessee%20Narrative%206.8%20508%20compliance.pdf>

aligned to departmental needs. In some cases, state hiring policies were seen as a potential barrier to the process. In Mississippi, the DOE was granted a two-year waiver from state personnel rules for the purpose of reviewing staffing and bringing in the right professionals at an appropriate salary to recruit and keep them.

**Research and Strategy Team.** One departmental structure that leaders in several states highlighted was the important role played by their Strategy and Research Team (each state calls this group something different). Leaders described the role the teams played in sharing data and feedback with staff across the department to support data-based decision-making and researching best practices and particular topics related to their strategic plan. Tennessee referenced this unit as a key change lever their work.

**Regional Centers.** Another state structure that multiple state leaders described as a crucial support for districts was their system of regional centers. In some states these were existing support structures that needed to be refocused on the state's ambitious goals with some room to tailor activities to local needs. In Tennessee this materialized as a 70-30 split; 70 percent of activity in the regional center, staffed with a team of specialists in math and literacy, Response to Intervention, and data analysis, who delivered priority trainings, coaching, and other support as determined by the state and 30% was offered to LEAs to support self-identified opportunities for improvement.

**Set the conditions.** In each state, leaders described extensive supports provided to LEAs to help them realize the goals set by the state. Support offered included professional development, planning support, support looking at data, and additional resources. But leaders also described packaging the supports with an expectation that LEAs would perform at much higher levels. If they did, LEAs understood that they would earn some freedom from scrutiny. Each leader discussed the challenge of balancing state and local control: on the one hand offering carrots in the form of supports and resources, but on the other using sticks, as available, to enforce expectations.

**Early Childhood.** Several states described making significant investments in early childhood education as a priority area in their reform agendas. In New Jersey and Mississippi, higher standards and support offered to LEAs acknowledged the need for a long-term solution to third grade achievement. In both states, this resulted in establishing higher standards and quality control mechanisms including requirements related to certification, significant training and support, developing model programs, and partnership with higher education institutions.

**Secondary Education Focus.** In addition to more rigorous graduation requirements, several state leaders described prioritizing secondary education as an important change lever for reform. In Tennessee and Florida, state departments created opportunities for advanced or accelerated course work in high school such as dual enrollment, AP and IB. State leaders also described creating opportunities for deeper student engagement through connections with Career and Technical Education, and other workforce initiatives.

**Stay the course.** It is worth noting that in most cases we asked leaders to look back over an extended period of time. We asked them to reflect on pivotal moments such as approved legislation, reports released demanding better results, or court decisions that served as catalysts for reform, but also the extensive groundwork laid over time to accomplish their goals.

One education leader summed up the need to pick a plan and follow it over the long term stating that education reform “doesn’t happen by accident and doesn’t happen overnight.” Once the difficult work of setting higher academic standards and increasing state accountability was put in place, in each case, leaders described pushback from local school systems and communities. While some states made modifications in response to critics, overall state leaders staunchly defended new standards, accountability measures, and programs to give them time to work.

## Comparison with NAEP Sample States

PCG conducted comparisons between NAEP sample states and Alabama on selected topics of school improvement, education governance, state funding, departmental organization, and accountability.

### *School Improvement*

During the review of the NAEP sample states' approach to school improvement, it was noted that there are far more available resources and supports both at the state and regional level. Below are practices from NAEP sample states:

- **Florida's** School Improvement Program falls under the Bureau of School Improvement. This Bureau hires and places regional teams of school improvement specialists, each led by an executive director, in four offices across the state to provide on-the-ground support to district administrators, instructional coaches, and school leadership teams of low-performing schools. The teams are focused on the differentiated needs of each school. There are 34+ staff in the Bureau of School Improvement.
- **Massachusetts** has multiple teams that address school improvement under the Department of the Statewide System of Support. That support includes teams such as Office of Effective Practices in Turnaround, District and School Turnaround, and Center for District Support. There are staff located both at the state department but also at the regional level focused on low performing schools. There are 50+ staff members working on these teams to support districts throughout the state. In addition, the Department compiles a list of "Priority Partners" who are vendors that have been screened by the state to support a variety of school and district needs. The Priority Partner list is updated on a bi-annual basis to ensure quality control.
- **Minnesota** focuses School Improvement support at the Regional Centers of Excellence (RCE). The RCE provide differentiated supports to identified districts and schools through a statewide regional delivery system that is equitable, effective, and efficient. Districts are identified by Minnesota World's Best Work Force (WBWF) criteria. Schools are identified by ESSA criteria. By law, the Department of Education must assist the Regional Centers of Excellence to meet staff, facilities, and technical needs, provide the centers with programmatic support, and work with the centers to establish a coherent statewide system of regional support, including consulting, training, and technical support. There are six (6) Regional Centers of Excellence with staff between 15-20 focused on School Improvement. In addition, there are two (2) staff at the DOE who focus on supporting the REC.
- **Mississippi's** Department of Education identifies schools for additional assistance and support, which includes professional development, leadership coaching, additional funding, and assistance to support the schools' transformation goals. The MDE identifies the schools that need the most assistance for their students to have the same opportunities for growth and success that exist for students in other schools. The Office of School Improvement (OSI) is responsible for supporting the systemic improvement and turnaround efforts of the lowest-performing schools. Currently, there is 11+ full time staff housed in the MDE supporting this initiative.
- **New Hampshire** has a small internal staff to address the school improvement needs of districts throughout the state. Therefore, they determined it would be beneficial to contract with outside partners to work shoulder to shoulder with all CSI schools. Currently, WestEd and Demonstrated Success support schools through a comprehensive needs assessment, school plan development, data analysis, on-site coaching, and professional development.
- **New Jersey** has twenty-one (21) county offices of education that are coordinated by the Office of Field Services. The offices are staffed with multiple teams to support schools and differentiate that support by grouping districts into three levels. The Office of Comprehensive Support provides Level 3 support, which is defined as on-site support for districts with Comprehensive and Targeted schools. This is achieved primarily by deploying field support teams with expertise in instructional leadership, data-driven action planning, and cycles of continuous improvement guided by a growth

mindset to schools and districts statewide. The Office of Intervention and Support is primarily responsible for support to districts by identifying and securing NJDOE teams of subject matter experts to provide onsite assistance. The office proactively uses data to analyze needs and to coordinate the support to all schools, in collaboration with all NJDOE field and program offices.

- **Tennessee's** approach to school improvement is focused on its Achievement School Districts (ASD). Tennessee has been using the model since 2011. The Achievement School District was created to improve student achievement in the bottom 5% of schools in the state. To support the ASD schools, Tennessee includes both internal staff numbering 14+ as well as contracting with 11 different education operators to oversee school improvement efforts in the schools within the ASD.
- **Wyoming's** Wyoming Statute §21-2-204(h) directs the development of a "progressive multi-tiered system of support and intervention to assist schools." The DOE identifies appropriate tiered levels of support and intervention for each Wyoming school based on a comprehensive screening protocol. The WDE administers five pillars of support, wherein the agency can take an increasingly active support role with districts and schools demonstrating the most intense and persistent needs. The WDE contracts with outside partners to provide the districts with professional development and coaching. The DOE provides the partners' programs with oversight. There are fourteen (14) staff members in the Statewide System of Support. That does not include partners who work directly with districts.

The NAEP sample states describe a system of school improvement that meets the various needs of their struggling schools. While most states have a regionally based system of support, they all have leadership at the Department of Education. Moreover, they have teams ready to be deployed to schools and districts to provide guidance and direction when needed to change the trajectory of student outcomes. Using the NAEP sample states as a comparison to Alabama, there is an evident discrepancy in how resources are deployed, which may be a contributing factor leading to the slow improvement of struggling schools.

Changing practices, improving curriculum and instruction, and promoting a school culture that is welcoming and respectful of all students is very challenging work. When schools are mired in low student outcomes and a culture of failure, they need support, not just nibbling around the edges, but sustained wrap-around services that promoted academic optimism and changed practice.

## Governance

The governance structure of K-12 education provides an important perspective on how education priorities are set, decided on and implemented. This section examines the primary education governance models used across the country, the models used in the NAEP sample states, and education governance as currently practiced in Alabama and how each form frames education authority and accountability.<sup>5</sup> Models of education governance among these states are varied, and sometimes unique.

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) has developed a typology of education governance models which are presented in Exhibit 20. As noted in the table, in the current model used in Alabama (Model IV) education governance flows from the electorate to an elected state board of education which then appoints a Chief State School Officer. Nationally, this model is used in six states including Alabama, and in no other states in our sample. As described by ECS, "Model IV provides the governor the least amount of direct authority over education governance. The state board of education is directly accountable to voters; however, the board's ability to reshape policy is often limited by statutory constraints." This dynamic, they note, can also produce a circumstance where education leaders are empowered to shape policy and

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<sup>5</sup> Information in this section is drawn from Railey, H. (2017). *50-State Review. State Education Governance Structures: 2017 update*. Denver CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved from: <https://www.ecs.org/state-education-governance-structures-2017-update/>

exercise flexibility at the state level, but may have limited ability to press for expansive policy changes that require significant funding or substantial policies changes.<sup>6</sup>

Among NAEP sample states, the model employed in three comparison states (Tennessee, New Hampshire, and New Jersey) is Model I, in which the electorate choose the governor, who then appoints both the members of the state board of education, as well as the chief state school officer.

As described by ECS, power in this model is centralized in the executive branch. The governor is at the helm and in “the strongest position of all four models.” The governor’s ability to select both groups means they are able to “shape the key venue for education policy debates (the state board) as well as the administrative agency tasked with implementing and administering those policies (the state education agency, led by the appointed chief state school officer.” The descriptions of educational change and reform in those three sample states, as described by current and former commissioners, and the crucial role they attributed to their governor’s leadership, illustrates the model. ECS also notes that “the structure of Model I means that the success of education policies is tied to the policy priorities of the governor’s office.”

Two sample states, Florida and Massachusetts, use Model II wherein voters elect the governor, who then appoints members of the state board of education (all or some of the positions). The state board then appoints the chief state school officer.

In Model II the governor’s role is still strong, but less so than in Model I. ECS notes that having the power to appoint the state board may offer governors incentive to take an active interest in education policy and voters have a mechanism to hold the governor accountable. They also observe that because chief state school officers are directly accountable to the state school board, and not the governor, the model provides some flexibility to the CSSO in interpretation of policy priorities of the governor. And while governors can shape the direction of education policy and incentives to support board/CSSO priorities in the legislature, they lack the ability to oversee implementation or administration of policies and practices.

**Exhibit 16. K-12 Governance Models, Alabama, and NAEP Sample States<sup>7</sup>**

| STATE         | MODEL I<br>Governor<br>Appoints Board<br>and Chief | MODEL II<br>Governor Appoints<br>Board, Board<br>Appoints Chief | MODEL III<br>Appointed<br>Board, Elected<br>Chief | MODEL IV<br>Elected Board,<br>Board Appoints<br>Chief | OTHER |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Alabama       |                                                    |                                                                 |                                                   | ■                                                     |       |
| Florida       |                                                    | ■                                                               |                                                   |                                                       |       |
| Massachusetts |                                                    | ■                                                               |                                                   |                                                       |       |
| Minnesota     |                                                    |                                                                 |                                                   |                                                       | ■     |
| Mississippi   |                                                    |                                                                 |                                                   |                                                       | ■     |
| New Hampshire | ■                                                  |                                                                 |                                                   |                                                       |       |
| New Jersey    | ■                                                  |                                                                 |                                                   |                                                       |       |
| Tennessee     | ■                                                  |                                                                 |                                                   |                                                       |       |
| Wyoming       |                                                    |                                                                 | ■                                                 |                                                       |       |

Wyoming’s education governance is organized using Model III, where voters elect both the governor and the chief state school officer. In this model, the governor’s role is weaker than in the other two models and the CSSO may have more authority. Here, ECS notes, voters “may distinguish the policy aims of the governor from the chief state school officer.” The resulting policy environment can be complex: in cases where the governor and CSSO are aligned, both may have greater ability to influence policy outcomes, but

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, page 4.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Education Commission of the States, August 2017, *50-State Review State Education Governance Structures: 2017 Update*

where their goals are not aligned, they “may struggle to pursue their separate education policy priorities, given that they are both accountable to voters.”

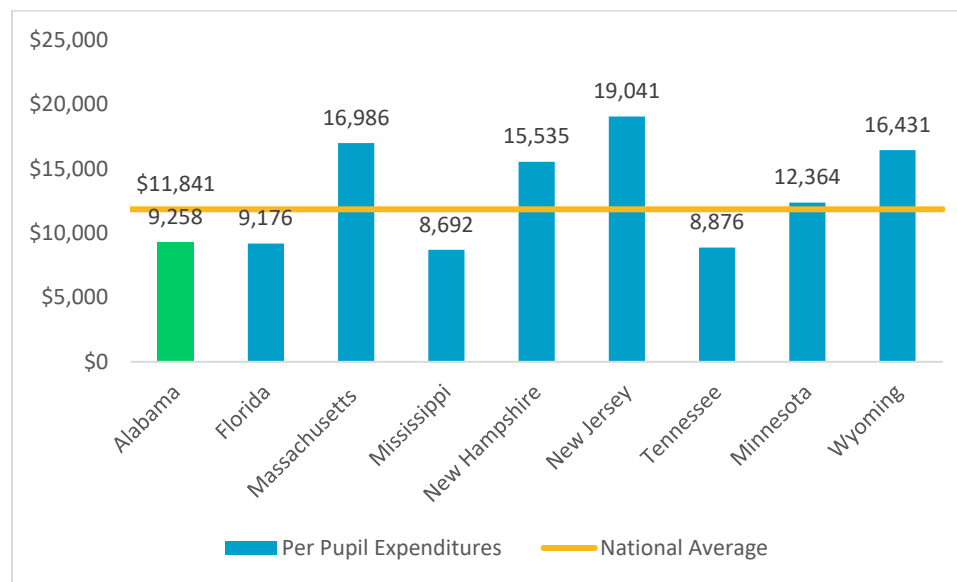
Two other states in the sample use governance models that are unique to their state. In Mississippi, the governor, lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house appoint members to the state school board, and then the board appoints the chief state school officer. In Minnesota, there is no state-level board and Minnesota’s governor is responsible to appoint the chief.

### State Funding for Education

Funding in K-12 education is complex and funding patterns vary greatly among states including the expected state and local contribution. Under ESSA, states are required to publish a range of data pertaining to school funding including per pupil expenditures, teacher salaries, and the breakdown of education expenditures by source.<sup>8</sup> PCG compared per pupil expenditure and state funding data across the sample states.

Exhibit 17 presents a comparison of per pupil expenditure between Alabama and top performing NAEP states. Among the sample, Mississippi has the lowest per pupil expenditure (\$8,692) and New Jersey has the highest at \$19,041. Among the four states with per pupil expenditures below the national average of \$11,841, Alabama is the closest at \$9,258.

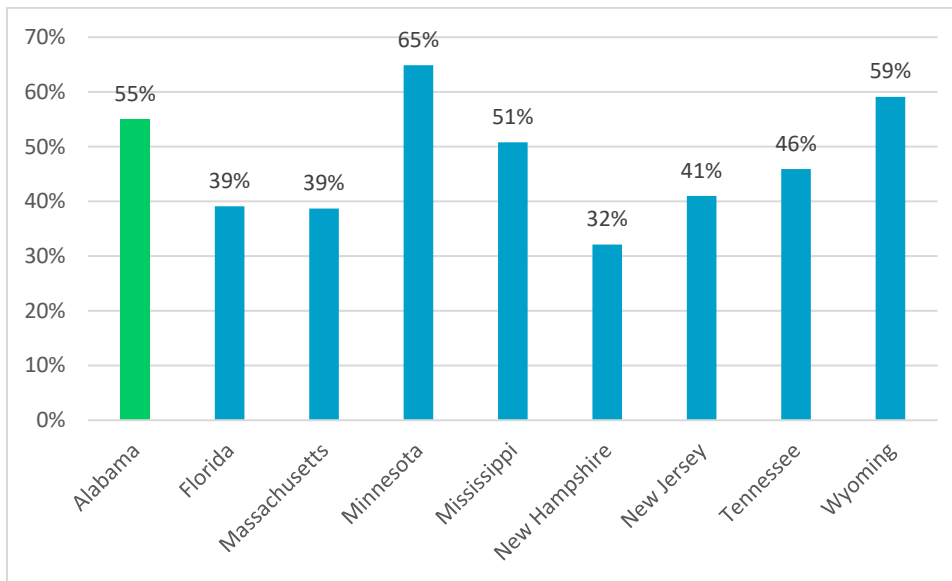
**Exhibit 17. AL Per Pupil Expenditures Compared to Other States (2017)**



### State Funding Allocations

In addition to per pupil expenditure, PCG compared the proportion of state funding provided to school districts. Exhibit 18 presents data from the US Census’ 2017 Annual Survey of School System Finances. Among the sample states, Minnesota (64.9%) contributed the largest state share to LEAs followed by Wyoming (59%) and Alabama (55%). New Hampshire contributed the smallest share (32%).

<sup>8</sup> Burnette, Daarel II. (2018). What is ESSA's New School-Spending Transparency Requirement, and How Will it Work? *Education Week*, August 9, 2018.

**Exhibit 18. State Funding Sources in Alabama and Sample States<sup>9</sup>**

Finally, PCG examined key elements of K-12 funding in Alabama and sample states (Exhibit 23).<sup>10</sup> The exhibit presents information about the general funding formula as well as the funding base per pupil, and if and how funds are allocated for special populations such as special education, English language learners, at-risk students, gifted and talented students, and funding for small schools.

The following are definitions of each of both the Resource Allocation and the Foundation Model to help clarify the below analysis.

- **Resource Allocation Model:** Under a resource allocation model, states distribute resources rather than assigning weights or dollar values based on certain criteria. For example, the state would provide funding for a prescribed number of teaching positions based on student counts.
- **Foundation Model:** Under a foundation formula, districts receive a base amount of funding per student with additional money or weights added to meet the needs of high-need student populations.

Alabama and neighboring Tennessee are the only states in the group that use a **resource allocation model** as their funding mechanism. They are among eight states nationally to use this model. Under a resource allocation model, ECS notes that “states distribute resources rather than assigning weights or dollar values based on certain criteria. For example, the state would provide funding for a prescribed number of teaching positions based on student counts.”

Across all other states in the sample, state education funding is based on a **foundation formula**. Using this model, districts receive a base amount of funding per student from the state (which may or may not be stipulated within statute). Additional money or weights are added to districts’ allocations to meet the needs of high-need student populations.

While Alabama uses the term “Foundation Budget,” the formula used does not fit the typical definition of the foundation formula model. In 2014-2015, APA Consulting conducted a statewide study that reviewed

<sup>9</sup> Source: 2017 Annual Survey of School System Finances, Table 5

<sup>10</sup> Data for this section are derived from Dachelet, K. (2019) *50-State Comparison: K-12 Funding*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, August 5, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://c0arw235.caspio.com/dp/b7f93000fdafa7e7be064fce9c54>

the equity and adequacy of education funding in Alabama. The study found Alabama's funding system to be neither equitable nor adequate. The final report recommended adopting a weighted student-based funding model (foundation formula model) to align to national best practice.

Alabama and other states use different mechanisms to fund particular student populations. For example, Alabama uses a **census-based system** to determine special education funding in which the state assumes the same proportion of students in each district regardless of each district's actual demographics. New Jersey and Massachusetts also use a census-based system. In Massachusetts, it is used in conjunction with **high cost** adjustments to offset the burden for the district.

Other states in the sample use a **multiple weights system** (Florida and Minnesota) which assigns more than one weight or dollar amount based on certain factors such as severity of disability. This approach may also use a more generalized weighting based on particular factors. Other systems use a resource allocation model (Mississippi), a **reimbursement system** (Wyoming) in which districts submit actual expenditures to the state and the state reimburses all or a portion of those expenditures. Another mechanism used among sample states to fund special education is a **flat weight system**, as is used in New Hampshire, wherein districts receive allocations for each student that meets identification criteria, but the amount is the same regardless of students' particular characteristics.

Funding for English language learners in Alabama is determined through a multiple weight system. School systems are provided an appropriation based on a per student basis, with an additional allocation if enrollment exceeds 10% of the total enrollment. Other states use different methods to provide additional funding for this population as illustrated in the table.

According to data compiled by ECS, Alabama does not provide specific additional allocations to districts for at-risk students, gifted and talented students, or for small or isolated schools and systems. Among states in the sample, seven out of eight have an additional allocation for at-risk students, five of eight states provide funds for gifted and talented students, and three of eight have mechanisms to determine additional funding for small or isolated schools and systems.

**Exhibit 19. K-12 Funding: Alabama and Sample State Comparison<sup>11</sup>**

| State Education Agency | Funding Mechanism         | Base Amount (if found in Statute) <sup>12</sup> | Special Education Funding (Y/N)                  | English Language Learner Funding (Y/N)    | At Risk Funding for Low-Income Students (Y/N) <sup>13</sup> | Gifted and Talented Funding (Y/N) | Small Size or Isolated Adjustment (Y/N) <sup>14</sup> |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Alabama</b>         | Resource-Allocation Model | none                                            | Yes<br><br>Census-Based System                   | Yes<br><br>Multiple Weights <sup>15</sup> | None                                                        | None                              | none                                                  |
| <b>Florida</b>         | Foundation Formula        | \$4,279 (2019-2020)                             | Yes<br><br>Multiple Weights System and High-Cost | Yes<br><br>Flat Weight System             | None                                                        | Yes<br><br>Block Grant            | Yes <sup>15</sup><br><br>Flat Weight System           |

<sup>11</sup> Citations in law provided in original table: <https://c0arw235.caspio.com/dp/b7f93000fdafa7e7be064fce9c54>

<sup>12</sup> Figures rounded to the nearest dollar.

<sup>13</sup> Uses National School Lunch Program as At-risk identifier.

<sup>14</sup> Uses student count as small size/isolated identifier; FL uses with distance; MN uses with distance and density.

<sup>15</sup> Information provided by ALSDE

| State Education Agency | Funding Mechanism         | Base Amount (if found in Statute) <sup>12</sup>                                                                                           | Special Education Funding (Y/N)                             | English Language Learner Funding (Y/N) | At Risk Funding for Low-Income Students (Y/N) <sup>13</sup> | Gifted and Talented Funding (Y/N)    | Small Size or Isolated Adjustment (Y/N) <sup>14</sup> |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Massachusetts</b>   | Foundation Formula        | Student's base funding number: derived by both their enrollment category (i.e. grade level) and then by 11 different cost function areas. | Yes<br><br>Census-Based System and High-Cost                | Yes<br><br>Multiple Weights System     | Yes <sup>14</sup><br><br>Flat Weight System                 | None                                 | none                                                  |
| <b>Minnesota</b>       | Foundation Formula        | \$6,312 (2019-2020)<br>\$6,343 (2020-2021)                                                                                                | Yes<br><br>Multiple Weights System and Reimbursement System | Yes<br><br>Multiple Weights System     | Yes <sup>14</sup><br><br>Multiple Weights System            | Yes<br><br>Flat Weight System        | Yes <sup>15</sup><br><br>Multiple Weights System      |
| <b>Mississippi</b>     | Foundation Formula        | none                                                                                                                                      | Yes<br><br>Resource-Allocation Model                        | none                                   | Yes <sup>14</sup><br><br>Flat Weight System                 | Yes<br><br>Resource-Allocation Model | none                                                  |
| <b>New Hampshire</b>   | Foundation Formula        | \$3,561<br><br>Beginning July 2017 and every biennium thereafter, adjusted every two years base on Consumer Price Index.                  | Yes<br><br>Flat Weight System                               | Yes<br><br>Flat Weight System          | Yes <sup>14</sup><br><br>Flat Weight System                 | none                                 | none                                                  |
| <b>New Jersey</b>      | Foundation Formula        | none                                                                                                                                      | Yes<br><br>Census-Based System                              | Yes<br><br>Flat Weight System          | Yes <sup>14</sup><br><br>Multiple Weights System            | none                                 | none                                                  |
| <b>Tennessee</b>       | Resource-Allocation Model | none                                                                                                                                      | Yes<br><br>Resource-Allocation Model                        | Yes<br><br>Resource-Allocation Model   | Yes <sup>14</sup><br><br>Resource-Allocation Model          | Yes<br><br>Resource-Allocation Model | none                                                  |
| <b>Wyoming</b>         | Foundation Formula        | none                                                                                                                                      | Yes<br><br>Reimbursement System                             | Yes<br><br>Flat Weight System          | Yes <sup>14</sup><br><br>Flat Weight System                 | Yes<br><br>Flat Weight System        | Yes <sup>15</sup><br><br>Resource-Allocation Model    |

### Organization of State Education Agencies

An area of inquiry for the review of NAEP top performing state departments of education was to take a closer look at how the departments are organized to achieve their goals. In addition, PCG was asked to review staffing levels for particular groups or functions within other state departments. However, reconciling staffing assignments within inconsistent organizational structures rendered comparisons uninformative.

## Early Childhood Education

A review of agency websites and organization charts of the states in our sample revealed that governance of early childhood education resides within the state education agency in six of eight states. In Florida, the Office of Early Learning is independent of the K-20 system by law, however the Executive Director is accountable to the Education Commissioner. In Massachusetts, the Department of Early Learning and Care (EEC) is a separate agency from the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE). The Massachusetts Executive Office of Education under the Governor, led by the Education Commissioner, however, oversees three agencies: EEC, DESE and the Department of Higher Education. Among the two states that described prioritizing improvements in early childhood education standards and teaching in order to improve student achievement, noted above, both co-locate early childhood oversight in the state education agency.

**Exhibit 20. Early Childhood Education Oversight, Sample States Compared**

| State Education Agency | Within State Education Agency? | Office/Department Name, Location in State Government                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Alabama</b>         | No                             | Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE), Executive Office, led by Secretary of Early Childhood Education                                                      |
| <b>Florida</b>         | No                             | Office of Early Learning (OEL), State of FL; Executive Director of OEL is “fully accountable to the Commissioner of Education” but “is not part of the P-20 system” |
| <b>Massachusetts</b>   | No                             | Department of Early Education and Care (EEC); Executive Office of Education under the Governor, led by Education Commissioner.                                      |
| <b>Minnesota</b>       | Yes                            | Early Learning Services, Department of Teaching and Learning                                                                                                        |
| <b>Mississippi</b>     | Yes                            | Office of Early Childhood, Elementary Education and Reading                                                                                                         |
| <b>New Hampshire</b>   | Yes                            | Early Childhood Education, Division of Education Improvement (undergoing reorganization)                                                                            |
| <b>New Jersey</b>      | Yes                            | Division of Early Childhood, Department of Education                                                                                                                |
| <b>Tennessee</b>       | Yes                            | Early Learning, Department of Education                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Wyoming</b>         | Yes                            | Early Childhood Readiness (ECR), Department of Education                                                                                                            |

## Research and Strategy

Some states noted the important role played by their research and strategy group to foster the use of data within the department and support data-based discussions among all departments regarding policy, programs, and support.

Staff at the ALSDE described having had a similar office that was recently reorganized and its staff (and some functions) were redistributed to different offices within the ALSDE.

Among the eight sample states, five had separate research and planning offices within the department: Florida, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, and New Jersey. Despite disparate names, these groups fulfill similar functions within each the organization, and in most cases the mission for their office explicitly connects their work with the vision, plans, or goals of the Department. The below table provides a list of the office and their role.

**Exhibit 21. Research and Strategy Division, Sample States Compared**

| State Education Agency | Department Name (and URL)                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Role                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Alabama</b>         | Does not have                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Florida</b>         | Division of Accountability, Research & Measurement<br><a href="http://www.fldoe.org/about-us/division-of-accountability-research-me.shtml">http://www.fldoe.org/about-us/division-of-accountability-research-me.shtml</a> | Supports the Department's mission of increasing the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system by providing them with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents, and communities. Maintains data portal and overall accountability system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Massachusetts</b>   | Office of Planning and Research<br><a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/">http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/</a>                                                                                                      | OPR's mission is to help DESE and the field implement effective policy and programs and make effective resource use decisions to improve student outcomes.<br><br>The mission of research and evaluation (within OPR) is to improve the use of data and research findings to influence program and policy decision-making within the agency and the field, including DESE's goal of preparing all students for success after high school and the agency's five strategies. DESE has a defined research agenda related to the agency's goals and strategies in order to improve their implementation and outcomes. |
| <b>Minnesota</b>       | Does not have                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Mississippi</b>     | Office of Research and Development<br><a href="https://www.mdek12.org/OTS/S/ORD">https://www.mdek12.org/OTS/S/ORD</a>                                                                                                     | Responsible for: producing objective and accurate research to inform decision-making of the MDE leadership. "ORD thereby supports the broader mission of the Mississippi State Board of Education strategic plan, to improve student achievement and opportunities throughout Mississippi's education system."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>New Hampshire</b>   | Does not have                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>New Jersey</b>      | Office of Strategic Operations<br><a href="https://www.state.nj.us/education/about/divisions/stratops.shtml">https://www.state.nj.us/education/about/divisions/stratops.shtml</a>                                         | Responsible for: strategic planning, program evaluation, logistical and operational support, process mapping, data-driven problem solving and analysis, data management, expertise in designing stakeholder outreach and engagement as well as leading and maintaining knowledge management systems and structures. Also responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining the progress monitoring system for tracking progress to goals across the Department                                                                                                                                             |

| State Education Agency | Department Name (and URL)                                                                                        | Role                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tennessee              | Data and Research<br><a href="https://www.tn.gov/education/data.html">https://www.tn.gov/education/data.html</a> | Responsible for: monitoring goals by measuring progress on key indicators; bringing data conversations to programs. |
| Wyoming                | Does not have                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                     |

### Nutrition

A growing body of research has demonstrated the connection between student health and academic performance.<sup>16</sup> Local, state, and federal programs are established to help children eat healthy foods, but their administration is handled differently in each state. In some cases, the majority of these programs are administered within the state department of education, while in others, some or all programs may be administered by different state agencies. The table below illustrates the many federal programs established to prevent hunger and promote healthy eating, and the agency responsible for their administration within each sample state as well as Alabama.

Overall, Alabama and Massachusetts are the most similar in that they administer 11 USDA Food and Nutrition Programs under their departments of education. Other states in the sample administer some, but not all programs. Two state education agencies, New Jersey and Florida do not manage any USDA nutrition programs and coordinate with other state agencies instead to bring food to students. Other agencies that administer food and nutrition services include state departments of agriculture, health, human services, and elder services as indicated after the table.

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<sup>16</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). *Health and Academic Achievement*.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health\\_and\\_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf)

**Exhibit 22. Nutrition Programs and Administration in Alabama and Sample States**

| State/<br>USDA Program                                           | Alabama SDE | Florida DOE | Massachusetts DESE | Minnesota DOE | Mississippi DOE | New Hampshire DOE | New Jersey DOE | Tennessee DOE | Wyoming DOE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Summer Food Service Program                                      | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               | ✓                 |                |               | ✓           |
| National School Lunch Program<br>(and Afterschool Snack Program) | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               | ✓                 |                | ✓             | ✓           |
| Special Milk Program                                             | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               | ✓                 |                | ✓             | ✓           |
| School Breakfast Program                                         | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               | ✓                 |                | ✓             | ✓           |
| Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program                                | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               | ✓                 |                | ✓             | ✓           |
| Child and Adult Care Food Program                                | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               | ✓                 |                |               | ✓           |
| Community Food Systems                                           | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               | ✓                 |                | n/a           | ✓           |
| Commodity Supplemental Food Program                              | ✓           |             | ✓                  |               |                 |                   |                |               |             |
| Emergency Food Assistance Program                                | ✓           |             | ✓                  |               |                 |                   |                |               |             |
| USDA Foods in Schools                                            | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               |                   |                |               | ✓           |
| USDA Foods                                                       | ✓           |             | ✓                  | ✓             | ✓               |                   |                |               | ✓           |

Source: [USDA FNS, https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts?keywords=&f%5B0%5D=state%3A281](https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts?keywords=&f%5B0%5D=state%3A281)

Programs not administered by State Education Agencies in other states are as follows:

- **Florida:** All programs in Florida are administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services except for Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is administered by both the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the Florida Department of Health.
- **Minnesota:** The two programs not administered by the Department of Education, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program, are administered by the Minnesota Department of Health.
- **Mississippi:** Community Food Systems is also administered by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture. The two other programs, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program, are administered by the Mississippi Department of Human Services.
- **New Hampshire:** The Emergency Food Assistance Program, USDA Foods in Schools, and USDA Foods are all administered by the New Hampshire Department of Administrative Services. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program is under the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services.
- **New Jersey:** The New Jersey Department of Agriculture administers all programs except for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program which is administered by the New Jersey Department of Health.

- **Tennessee:** The Summer Food Service Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program is administered by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program is administered by the Tennessee Department of Health, and the Emergency Food Assistance Program, USDA Foods in Schools, and USDA Foods are administered by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.
- **Wyoming:** The Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program are administered by the Wyoming Department of Family Services.

## Accountability

State accountability systems play an important role in determining school, district, and state progress toward student performance goals. Each state's accountability system is unique but shares a common goal to provide information that can be used to improve student achievement. PCG compared accountability indicators measured for non-high schools and high schools, districts, and states in Alabama, Tennessee, and Massachusetts, as captured in the table below (Exhibit 23).

Looking across the three states, there are several notable differences.

- At the non-high school level, Alabama weighs Chronic Absenteeism 15% of the overall accountability score, compared to 10% in Tennessee and Massachusetts.
- Graduation rate (30%) is weighed more than both academic achievement (20%) and academic growth (25%) to measure accountability at the high school, district, and state levels. In contrast, academic achievement is weighed the most across levels in Tennessee (30-45%) and Massachusetts (40-60%), and the graduation rate indicator is not weighed as highly as in Alabama (5% across levels in TN, 20% across levels in MA).
- In Alabama, progress in English language proficiency (5%) is weighed the least as an accountability indicator across all levels. Both Tennessee and Massachusetts consider progress in English language proficiency as 10% of the total accountability score across levels.

**Exhibit 23. Comparison of Accountability Indicators used in Alabama, Tennessee, and Massachusetts<sup>17 18 19</sup>**

|                                               | Alabama<br>(Fall 2019) | Tennessee<br>(Spring 2019) | Massachusetts<br>(2019) |          |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Non-High Schools / Schools without a Grade 12 |                        |                            |                         |          |
|                                               | With EL **             |                            |                         | No EL ** |
| Academic Achievement (Weighted)               | 40%                    | 45%                        | 60%                     | 67.5%    |
| Academic Growth (Weighted)                    | 40%                    | 35%                        | 20%                     | 22.5%    |
| Progress in English Language Proficiency      | 5%                     | 10%                        | 10%                     | --       |

<sup>17</sup> Sources: [ALSDE Alabama's Accountability System Technical Guide Fall 2019](#); [2019 School Accountability Protocol User Guide, Tennessee Department of Education](#); [School Leader's Guide to the 2019 Accountability Determinations, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(Updated January 6, 2020\)](#); [Massachusetts 2019 Official Accountability Report – State Totals](#).

<sup>18</sup> \*Massachusetts Report Cards measures Chronic Absenteeism, along with Advanced Coursework Completion, as part of the overall category, Additional Indicators.

<sup>19</sup> \*\*Massachusetts uses two weighting columns to measure accountability for Non-High Schools and High Schools. With EL indicates measures for schools that collect data on EL progress, and No EL indicates measures for schools that do not have this data. For the purposes of the three-state comparison, percentages from the With EL column will be considered.

|                                          | Alabama<br>(Fall 2019) | Tennessee<br>(Spring 2019)                                         | Massachusetts<br>(2019)       |                      |                               |                      |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Chronic Absenteeism                      | 15%                    | 10%                                                                | 10%                           |                      | 10%                           |                      |
| High Schools / Schools with a Grade 12   |                        |                                                                    |                               |                      |                               |                      |
|                                          |                        |                                                                    | With EL                       |                      | No EL                         |                      |
| Academic Achievement (Weighted)          | 20%                    | 30%                                                                | 40%                           |                      | 47.5%                         |                      |
| Academic Growth (Weighted)               | 25%                    | 25%                                                                | 20%                           |                      | 22.5%                         |                      |
| Graduation Rate                          | 30%                    | 5%                                                                 | 20%                           |                      | 20%                           |                      |
| Progress in English Language Proficiency | 5%                     | 10%                                                                | 10%                           |                      | --                            |                      |
| College and Career Readiness             | 10%                    | 20%<br>(graduate & meet<br>postsecondary<br>readiness<br>criteria) | --                            |                      | --                            |                      |
| Chronic Absenteeism                      | 10%                    | 10%                                                                | 10%*                          |                      | 10%*                          |                      |
| District                                 |                        |                                                                    |                               |                      |                               |                      |
|                                          |                        |                                                                    | Non-HS                        |                      | HS                            |                      |
|                                          |                        |                                                                    | All                           | Lowest Performing    | All                           | Lowest Performing    |
| Academic Achievement (Weighted)          | 20%                    | 30%                                                                | 60%                           | 67.5%                | 40%                           | 67.5%                |
| Academic Growth (Weighted)               | 25%                    | 25%                                                                | 20%                           | 22.5%                | 20%                           | 22.5%                |
| Graduation Rate                          | 30%                    | 5%                                                                 | --                            | --                   | 20%                           | --                   |
| Progress in English Language Proficiency | 5%                     | 10%                                                                | 10%                           | --                   | 10%                           | --                   |
| College and Career Readiness             | 10%                    | 20% (graduate and meet<br>postsecondary<br>readiness<br>criteria)  | --                            | --                   | --                            | --                   |
| Chronic Absenteeism                      | 10%                    | 10%                                                                | 10%*                          | 10%*                 | 10%*                          | 10%*                 |
|                                          |                        |                                                                    | % of possible points          | % of possible points | % of possible points          | % of possible points |
|                                          |                        |                                                                    | Average Total % (Weight: 70%) |                      | Average Total % (Weight: 30%) |                      |
|                                          |                        |                                                                    | Average Total %               |                      |                               |                      |
| State                                    |                        |                                                                    |                               |                      |                               |                      |
|                                          |                        |                                                                    | Non-HS<br>(all students)      |                      | HS                            |                      |

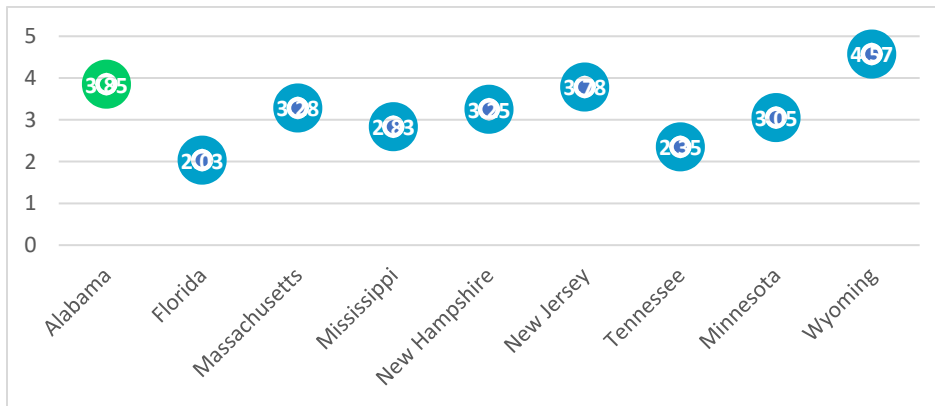
|                                                 | Alabama<br>(Fall 2019) | Tennessee<br>(Spring 2019)                               | Massachusetts<br>(2019) | (all students) |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Academic Achievement (Weighted)</b>          | 20%                    | 30%                                                      | 60%                     | 40%            |
| <b>Academic Growth (Weighted)</b>               | 25%                    | 25%                                                      | 20%                     | 20%            |
| <b>Graduation Rate</b>                          | 30%                    | 5%                                                       | 10%                     | 10%            |
| <b>Progress in English Language Proficiency</b> | 5%                     | 10%                                                      | 10%                     | 10%            |
| <b>College and Career Readiness</b>             | 10%                    | 20% (graduate and meet postsecondary readiness criteria) | --                      | --             |
| <b>Chronic Absenteeism</b>                      | 10%                    | 10%                                                      | 10%*                    | 10%*           |

### *Educator Quality*

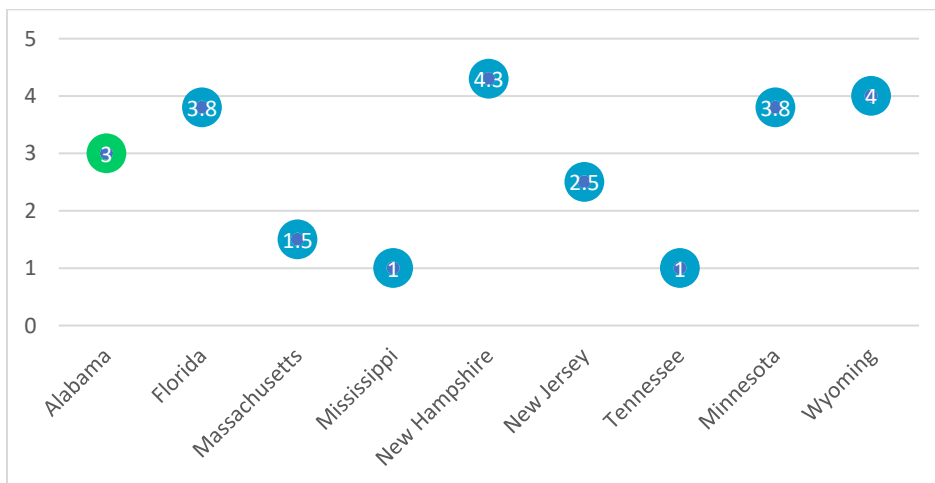
The Learning Policy Institute has identified key factors that reflect and influence teacher supply and attrition and signal whether states are likely to have an adequate supply of qualified teachers to fill their classrooms. Based on these data—which rank compensation, teacher turnover, working conditions, and qualifications—each state is assigned a “teaching attractiveness rating,” indicating how supportive it appears to be of teacher recruitment and retention and a “teacher equity rating,” indicating the extent to which students, in particular students of color, are assigned uncertified or inexperienced teachers. Ratings are on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being the least desirable and 5 being the most desirable.<sup>20</sup> The following is an analysis on how Alabama performs on Teacher Attractiveness and Teacher Equity compared to NAEP sample states.

Alabama received a teaching attractiveness rating of 3.8, the second highest rating across the NAEP sample states. The teaching attractiveness rating indicated how supportive it appears to be of teacher recruitment and retention based on compensation, working conditions, teacher qualifications, and teacher turnover.

<sup>20</sup> <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/understanding-teacher-shortages-interactive>

**Exhibit 24. Teacher Attractiveness Rating**

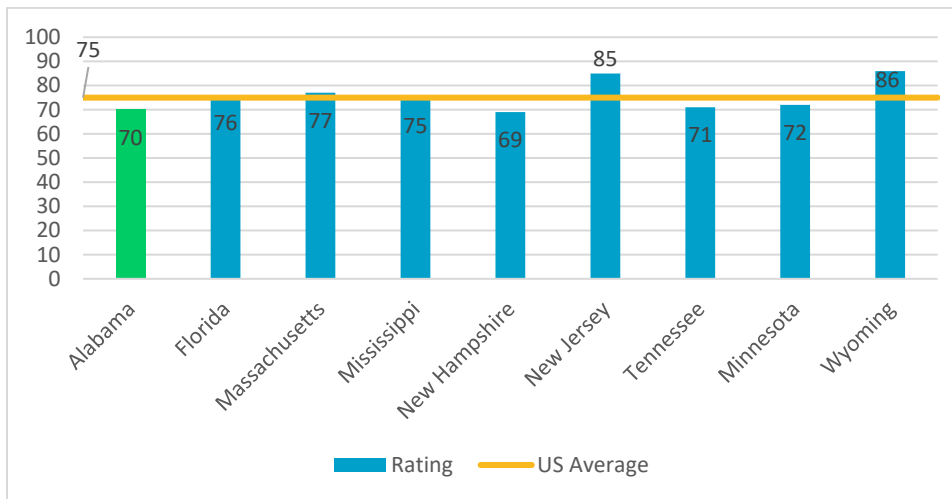
Alabama received a teacher equity rating of 3, the fifth highest ranking out of the group of nine comparable states. Metrics to develop this rating include percentage of inexperienced teachers in high-minority schools compared to low-minority schools, percentage of uncertified teachers to be in high-minority schools compared to low-minority schools, and percentage of teachers of color.

**Exhibit 25. Teacher Equity Rating**

In addition to the above ratings, PCG analyzed data from the following indicators used by The Learning Policy Institute to calculate the Teaching Attractiveness Rating: Wage Competitiveness, Teacher Qualifications, and Teacher Turnover. PCG compared Alabama's indicator data to eight other states and the nation.

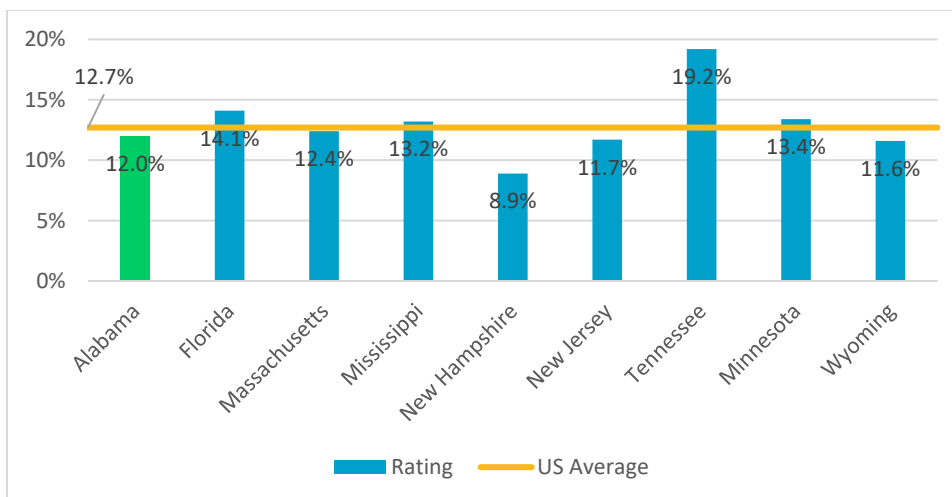
Alabama had a wage competitiveness rating of 70. This rating was below the national average of 75 and was the second lowest rating of the nine comparable states. Wyoming and New Jersey had the highest wage competitiveness rating, 86% and 85% respectively.

**Exhibit 26. Wage Competitiveness Rating<sup>21</sup>**



Out of nine states, Alabama had the fourth lowest percentage of teachers who were inexperienced. Alabama's average of 12.0% was slightly below the national average of 12.7%.

**Exhibit 27. Percentage of Inexperienced Teachers<sup>22</sup>**

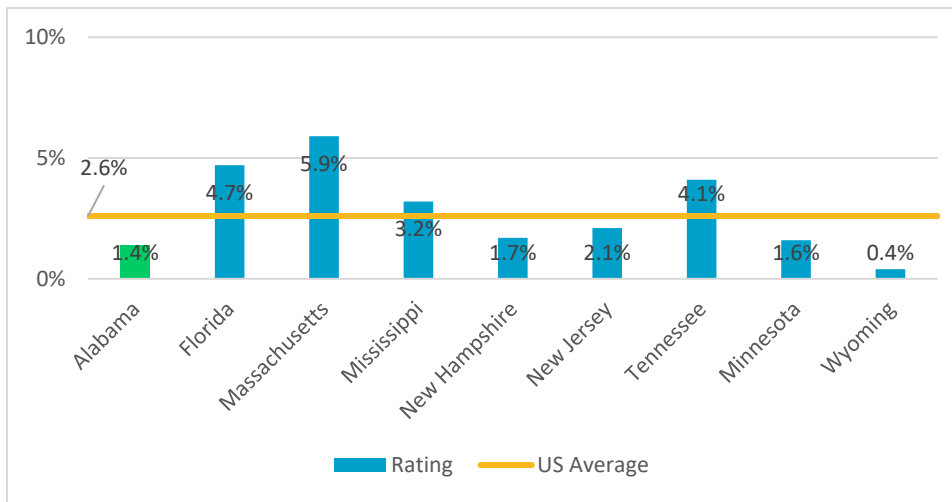


At 1.4%, Alabama had the second lowest percentage of uncertified teachers. Five out of the nine comparable states, including Alabama, were below the national average of 2.6%.

<sup>21</sup> Average estimated teacher wage as percentage of estimated non-teacher wage for college graduates in each state, at comparable age levels, level of education (BA or MA degree), and working hours per week and year (2016 data).

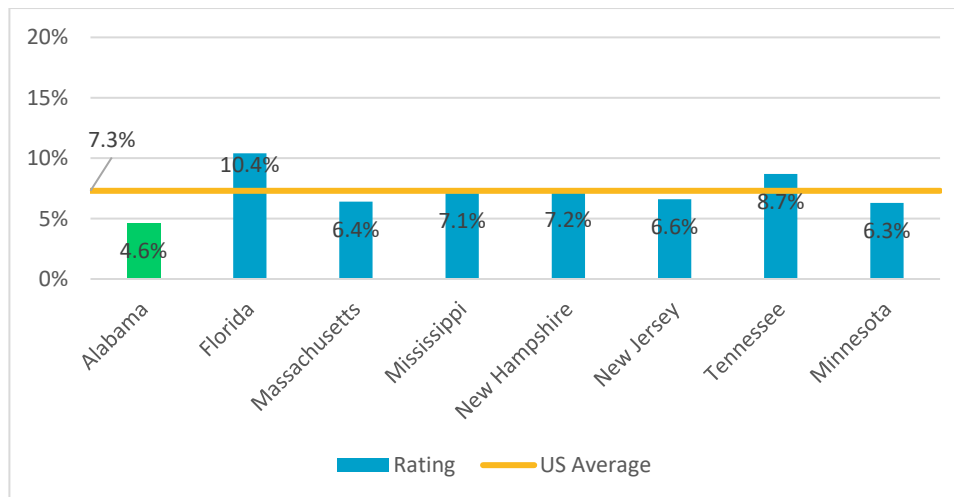
<sup>22</sup> Percentage of first and second-year teachers in 2016.

**Exhibit 28. Percentage of Uncertified Teachers<sup>23</sup>**



Out of nine comparable states, Alabama had the lowest percentage of teachers planning to leave the profession “as soon as possible” (4.6%).

**Exhibit 29. Percentage of Teachers Planning to Leave the Profession<sup>24</sup>**



<sup>23</sup> Percentage of teachers who have not met state certification requirements in 2016, including those teaching while still finishing their preparation, or teaching with an emergency-style credential.

<sup>24</sup> Percentage of teachers planning to leave teaching as soon as possible or as soon as a more desirable job opportunity arises (2016). Data not available for Wyoming.

## V. Inventory and Review of Programs

*Task: Conduct an inventory and review ALSDE's programs.*

PCG conducted a high-level program review of all programs at the ALSDE. This section inventories existing programs and determines each program's efficacy towards the ALSDE's mission.

### Key Findings

PCG identified the following findings that impact the efficacy across all programs at the ALSDE.

1. Across all programs, PCG heard ample examples of departmental planning, pending initiatives or planned future activities. PCG did not see detailed implementation plans, documented best practices or data analysis of program success to the same extent.
2. There is not a consistent culture of data use to drive program decisions, inform program expenditures or set policies.
3. Personnel requirements inhibit the hiring of highly qualified staff in a timely way.
4. Outdated internal systems and paper-based practices are unnecessarily time-consuming and limit productivity.
5. Communication across departments and reporting levels is not a core expectation and therefore is limited. This leads to siloed practices, redundancies and programming gaps.
6. Program decisions often appear to be driven by external factors (i.e., legislation) rather than internal, proactive subject matter leadership.
7. Program staff do not believe they have to the authority to hold schools and districts accountable for non-compliance.
8. Most staff appear to be dedicated individuals who are invested in the mission of the Department and work hard to improve the education of all of Alabama's students.

### Program Definition

PCG defines the ALSDE educational **programs**, for the purpose of this review, as the Divisions and/or Sections which provide students with equal access to a high-quality education improving student outcomes in academics, as well as positively impacting their social emotional and physical well-being.

PCG defines the ALSDE **supporting functions** as the supports that positively impact the success of students but are not primarily focused on learning outcomes or social emotional and physical well-being.

### Program Inventory

The Program Inventory outlines all programs currently administered by various divisions at the ALSDE. Each section lists the name of an overarching program with a short description. Within each overarching program section are specific programs and services that are currently provided. Note there are functions and services provided at the ALSDE such as LEA Accounting, Teacher Certification, Human Resources, etc. that PCG did not consider an ALSDE program per the above definition and therefore were not included in the chart below.

**Exhibit 30. ALSDE Program Inventory**

| Program                         | Overview                                                                       | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AMSTI                           | Administers the Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math Coaching and Support-K-12, PD, resources and support to AMSTI schools</li> <li>Science Coaching and Support-K-12, PD, science kits, and support</li> <li>ASiM- Alabama Science in Motion- 9-12, mobile labs to high schools in all regions including rural districts.</li> <li>DLCS- Digital Literacy and Computer Science- K-12, resources and lesson planning for schools.</li> <li>Regional Center Collaboration</li> <li>Middle and High School Robotics Grant Program</li> </ul>                                |
| ARI                             | Administers the Alabama Reading Initiative                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading Coaching and Support- K-3, embedded PD in schools including the development of all PD used in the LEAs</li> <li>Regional Reading Coaches- trains and supports regional coaches that in turn support LEA reading specialists</li> <li>ECL3- Professional Learning Communities for Leaders</li> <li>Letters Training- cohort-based training focused on the science of reading</li> <li>Dyslexia Labs</li> <li>English Language Learners</li> </ul>                                                                  |
| Instructional Services          | Supports Curriculum and Instruction                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course of Studies- development of and updates to Standards</li> <li>Textbook Adoption- Supports process for LEAs focused on aligned textbooks</li> <li>Guidance and Counseling Services</li> <li>Library Media</li> <li>Dual Enrollment- High school/college</li> <li>Advanced Placement Programs</li> <li>Awards and Scholarship Programs- oversees the process for all awards and scholarships</li> <li>Professional Development- provides training and support to LEAs</li> <li>Student High School Credits</li> </ul> |
| Prevention and Support Services | Provides support to districts related to student's social-emotional well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AL School Health and Nurses- Laws &amp; Policies, Immunization, Health Forms, Curriculum, Safe at Schools (Diabetes)</li> <li>Student Behavior- Student Incident Reports, PBIS training, Restorative Justice Practices</li> <li>Youth Risk Behavior Survey Implementation</li> <li>Graduation Rate- Tracking Data, Drop Out Prevention</li> <li>504 Compliance</li> <li>School Safety-Threat Assessment, Emergency Mgt</li> <li>MTSS/RTI</li> </ul>                                                                       |
| Special Education               | Ensures compliance and support for students with disabilities                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Assistance for LEAs, including IEPs, guidance for Spec Ed Admin, Laws/Policies</li> <li>Technical Assistance- Provide to LEAs, including IEPs, guidance for Special Ed Admin, Laws/Policies</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                      |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      |                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative Assessments</li> <li>• Dispute Resolutions- Mediation, Due Process Hearings</li> <li>• Preschool- Includes Child Find, Least Restrictive Environment, Developmental Programs</li> <li>• Post-Secondary- Transitions, Diploma Pathways, Work Components, Higher Ed</li> <li>• Focused Monitoring- Compliance Monitoring for LEAs on all Special Education components</li> <li>• Preschool-Includes Childfind, Least Restrictive Environment, Development Programs</li> <li>• Post-Secondary- Transitions, Diploma Pathways, Work Components, Higher Education</li> <li>• Focused Monitoring- Compliance Monitoring for LEAs on all Special Ed components</li> <li>• Data/Reporting-State Performance Plan (SPP), Child Count, Set Measurable Goals</li> </ul> |
| Accountability       | Oversees Alabama Accountability System                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Report Card-Letter grades A-F based on data formula</li> <li>• Failing School Determination List (lowest 6%)- Uses data to determine the failing schools</li> <li>• ESSA Accountability- Collects and reports data for the ESSA plan</li> <li>• Research-Reviews best practices in data reporting and analysis from other states</li> <li>• Report on Data-Provides reports on data as requested</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| School Improvement   | Provides services to the lowest 6% of schools in Alabama | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides differentiated services to schools based on need</li> <li>• Supports Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Schools based on data</li> <li>• Splits state in half to provide services</li> <li>• Collaborates with ARI and AMSTI to support schools</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Federal Programs     | Manages all aspects of federal programming and funding   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title I: Services for low income schools</li> <li>• Title I: Migrant Education</li> <li>• Title II: Professional Learning</li> <li>• Title III: English Language Learners</li> <li>• Title V: Rural Schools</li> <li>• 21st Century Schools</li> <li>• McKinney Vento- Homeless Student Support</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Educator Preparation | Liaison to Institutes of Higher Education                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approves new Educator Prep Programs</li> <li>• Completes Program Reviews in Higher Education</li> <li>• Oversees Background Checks</li> <li>• Oversees Teacher Credentialing</li> <li>• Verification of Higher Education degrees</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|                                      |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Education Technology                 | Supports LEAs in technology planning and student online courses                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALEX- Alabama Learning Exchange – lesson plans for teachers</li> <li>ACCESS Virtual Learning-Online courses for students that meet the course of study standards</li> <li>ACTC- Provides support the for Alabama Technology Conference</li> <li>Digital Learning Website-Provides resources for K12 schools such as virtual field trips</li> <li>eLearning Alabama- Online learning for educators</li> </ul> |
| Professional Learning                | Supports Internal and External Learning Needs of ALSDE                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Effectiveness</li> <li>Professional Development-PowerSchool Training</li> <li>Internal Book Studies</li> <li>Internal Communication Videos featuring Dr. Mackey</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Child Nutrition Program              | Ensures procurement of high quality and cost-efficient food products for students and adults in Alabama       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Nutrition Programs</li> <li>Food Distribution</li> <li>Summer Food Service</li> <li>Child and Adult Care Food Programs</li> <li>Compliance Monitoring</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Charter and Virtual Schools          | Supporting virtual and charter schools statewide                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversees seven virtual schools in state</li> <li>Compliance monitoring for charter and virtual schools</li> <li>Supports Charter School Authorization</li> <li>Onboards charter schools to ensure they are compliant with all regulations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         |
| DDI                                  | Disability Determination Services                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SS Disabilities Clients- Provides services and processes claims for disabled clients</li> <li>Provide public service to disabled people in Alabama</li> <li>SSI Claims- Federal welfare for disabled child</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Assessment                           | Supervises state testing and reporting                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversees implementation of the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP)</li> <li>Supports NAEP Testing Administration</li> <li>Oversees ACT Testing Administration</li> <li>Oversees implementation of the Alabama Alternative Assessment (AAA) for 1% of students</li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |
| Compliance Monitoring                | Monitors programs in all schools throughout the state to ensure state and federal policies are being followed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates program monitoring either on-site or through a desk audit by department</li> <li>Programs monitored include: Fed programs, Career Tech, Guidance, Safety, Ed Certification, Transcript Audit, Tech, Sped 1 &amp; 2, Transportation 1 &amp; 2 and Food Service</li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |
| Career and Technical Education (CTE) | Career and Technical Education (CTE)                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTE- Career Clusters</li> <li>Workforce Development</li> <li>Compliance Monitoring for CTE</li> <li>Perkins Grant (federal funding for districts)</li> <li>Professional Development</li> <li>Statewide Student Conferences</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                                                 |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                 |                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Readiness Indicators</li> <li>• Mentors CTE District Directors</li> <li>• Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Program</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Regional Inservice Centers (RIC)</b>         | Regionally housed in colleges and universities across the state (11 RICs)          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports AMSTI through professional development and material management</li> <li>• Provides literacy training supporting ARI focus areas</li> <li>• Conducts book studies</li> <li>• Train teachers on Technology in Motion</li> </ul>                           |
| <b>National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT)</b> | National Certification Program for teachers that is recognized on a national level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides extensive training that leads to the NBCT certification</li> <li>• ALSDE provides financial support for teachers to complete the program</li> <li>• Educators receive a \$5,000 stipend to their salary if they obtain a NBCT certification.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Alabama Teacher Mentor Program (ATMP)</b>    | Provides LEAs the structure to support high quality new teachers supports          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides training and technical assistance to LEAs upon request</li> <li>• Disseminates surveys to mentors and mentees to gather perception data used for</li> </ul>                                                                                             |

## Section Descriptions

Divisions at the ALSDE are divided into Sections. Each Section oversees the various programs described above, along with performing several educational functions. The sections are further described below.

**Exhibit 31. ALSDE Section Inventory**

| ALSDE Section Inventory                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Educational Programs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Educational Functions                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>I. <u>Student Learning</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiatives (AMSTI)</li> <li>• Alabama Reading Initiative</li> <li>• Federal Programs</li> <li>• Instructional Services (including Counseling and Guidance)</li> <li>• School Improvement</li> <li>• Special Education Program (including Gifted)</li> </ul> | <b>VI. <u>LEA Auxiliary Support Services</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Nutrition Program</li> <li>• School Facilities</li> <li>• Pupil Transportation</li> </ul> |
| <b>II. <u>Teaching and Leading</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educator Certification</li> <li>• Educator Preparation</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>VII. <u>Information Systems</u></b>                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>III. <u>Career and Technical Education</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTE</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>VIII. <u>SDE Business and Support Services</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting and Reporting (LEA and SDE)</li> </ul>                                          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Procurement and Operations</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>IV. <u>Evaluation, Accountability, and Support</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Compliance Monitoring</li> <li>• Education Technology</li> <li>• Prevention and Support</li> </ul> | <b>IX. <u>Disability Determination Services</u></b>                                                                                   |
| <b>V. <u>Professional Learning</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning section</li> <li>• Regional In-Service Centers</li> </ul>                                                                                       | <b>X. <u>Superintendent Supports</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• General Counsel</li> </ul> |

## Student Learning

### **Alabama Math, Science, Technology Initiatives (AMSTI)**

The Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) is a key program to improve math and science teaching throughout the state. AMSTI's mission is to provide all students in Grades K-12 with the knowledge and skills needed for success in the workforce and/or post-secondary studies.

AMSTI uses a three-pronged approach to support schools and districts throughout the state in the areas of math and science. The approach includes providing professional development and coaching, resources and materials, and follow up supports. Schools that apply to become "AMSTI Schools" agree to send their math and science teachers for training for two consecutive years. AMSTI teachers receive resources and support to implement lessons in their classrooms. Any school K-12 is eligible to apply.

There have been budgetary concerns for the program over the past decade.

- In FY 2009, AMSTI's budget appropriations reached the highest levels since its inception in 2006, with an appropriation of over 40 million dollars. The funding appropriations supported 626 schools statewide.
- In FY 2020, AMSTI received 30 million dollars for 1,153 schools, or 86% of the state's schools.
- AMSTI serves more students with 25% less funding than it received 14 years prior.

The goal of the AMSTI program is to build school-based structures and capacity for sustainability. In 2018, AMSTI math training underwent a revision, which was piloted in the summer of 2018 and is based on the current research of effective mathematics teaching practices. AMSTI's training helps teachers practice and embed formative assessment cycles designed to analyze student work samples and adjust instruction accordingly to advance student thinking and skills.

### **AMSTI Strategic Plan**

AMSTI recently partnered with Cognia, formerly AdvancED-Measured Progress, to develop a three-year, strategic improvement plan. This plan will provide a pathway for the section to move forward as well as provide a road map for the regions to follow as they provide critical support to the improvement effort underway in mathematics. The plan develops an improvement framework for all areas that AMSTI supports including elementary and secondary math, science, digital literacy and computer science, as well as the AMSTI materials operation. The expectation will be that each of the regions will use the improvement plan from Cognia and operationalize it for their region aligning it to AMSTI's Strategic Plan. Each Regional In-Service Center will be expected to track their plan's implementation and be accountable for results. The plan consists of four themes: Student Learning, Educator Effectiveness, Organizational Effectiveness, and

Stakeholder Relations. The plan outlines the critical initiatives, as well as key measures that will be used to indicate success.

This plan appears to provide a foundation for the changes that AMSTI must make to support an increase in student achievement and to provide the transparency requested by stakeholders to ensure a good investment in AMSTI programs. Accountability must be an important component of the plan and building in key metrics will provide the data that has been missing in the past.

### **ALSDE's Math Coaching Plan**

Per January 2020 planning documents, the ALSDE intends to use a math coaching model to embed math professional learning at the school level. The ALSDE's goal is to hire 220 new math coaches ensuring every region and an additional eleven new math coaches throughout the state beginning with a pilot in 2020-2021 and full implementation in the 2021-2022 school year.

PCG has identified the following concerns that will need to be addressed:

- Given the shortage of certified math teachers within the state, employing a new cadre of math coaches in each region will tax the level of high-quality math teachers available to schools and districts.
- For the influx of new math coaches to be successful, the ALSDE must develop a statewide coaching model and create a multi-tiered implementation plan. New work with the Region 7 Comprehensive Center may achieve this goal. The Region 7 Comprehensive Center work was in its infancy at the time of this report. The December 2019 *Region 7 Comprehensive Center (R7CC) Draft Logic Models for 2020* appeared promising.
- The ALSDE will have to set firm expectations of accountability at all levels including Regional In-Service Centers, LEAs, coaches, and AMSTI's staff.
- The ALSDE must stay focused and be consistent in their approach. There will be no benefit to adding more staff without a strong program design, well trained coaches, and firm accountability.
- Leading this initiative will be an important undertaking by the ALSDE that should not be rushed and pushed out to regions before everyone is ready. A successful math coaching initiative will need strong leadership and a commitment from multiple stakeholders including the State Board, LEAs, Regional In-Service Centers, and the ALSDE.

### **AMSTI Team Staffing**

The AMSTI team has two (2) Administrative Support Assistants (ASAs), seven (7) administrator positions (2 may be vacant), and ten (10) education specialist positions (3 may be vacant). In addition, there are 200-220 field specialists hired and supervised by the Regional In-Services Centers.

Core Responsibilities:

- Provide some level of accountability and a measure of oversight of initiatives at the Regional In-Service Centers specific to AMSTI.
- Oversees internal AMSTI staff. Does not have direct oversight of employees at Regional In-Service Centers.
- Works with AMSTI sites in each of 11 regions to ensure the materials at the warehouse for Math and Science are updating science kits for schools for each quarter.
- Supervises Alabama Science in Motion (ASiM) and operates lab delivery system to secondary programs, one van for each region. Provides needed support for rural districts. This year's budget for ASiM is 2.5 million dollars.
- Develops annual implementation plan for accountability.
- Provides annual reports to legislators.
- Creates professional development to support the Course of Study in science and math.
- Provides support to hundreds of staff out in the field.

- Works with Advanced Ed to develop a 3-year improvement plan.
- Partnered with other stakeholders when the Math Course of Study was written. It was the first time being asked to participate with other sections on standards development and alignment.
- Collaborates with Instructional Services, Assessment, CTE, Professional Learning, and Special Education.

### **Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI)**

The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), initially founded as a statewide K-12 initiative, is currently charged with preparing K-3 teachers and local reading coaches with the science of reading knowledge and skills to effectively provide core literacy instruction and reading intervention that will meet the most challenging needs for all students in grades K-3.

Since its inception in 1997, the ARI mission has been to improve literacy statewide, understanding that all components of the science of reading combine to develop all students into skillful readers and writers. The passing of Alabama's Literacy Act in 2019, which takes effect in 2020-21, amplifies the need to support strategies, incentives, and interventions specific to the science of reading for grades K-3. The cornerstone of the legislation is the provision that 3rd grade students not reading at grade level will be retained beginning in the 2021-22 school year. The legislation includes multiple exceptions that prevent a single assessment from being the decisive factor of retention. With the passage of this high-stakes literacy initiative, it is more important than ever that the Alabama Reading Initiative refocus and reestablish fidelity to its goal of having all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

ARI's refocused approach is "boots on the ground" training and support for classroom teachers, school leaders, and district administrators through a network of local, regional, and state support. The ALSDE identified the following to begin the improvement process:

- Integrate Alabama Literacy Act requirements and provide LEA support.
- Restore focus on the original mission and goal to ensure all students in grades K-3 read on grade-level.
- Re-establish singular focus on school-level literacy coaching, to build knowledge, skills, and expertise in early grade reading instruction.
- Re-establish the original ARI training modules and teacher pre-service and in-service training grounded in the science of reading.
- Ensure there is a system of coaching support for K-3 teacher training (pre-service teachers, novice teachers, retooling veteran teachers).
- Align coaching support for *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling* (LETRS) trained educators that will ensure transfer to practice.
- Reinstate support for district and school instructional leadership that supports a strong school reading and literacy plan.
- Implement the state plan of support for dyslexia, English language learners, and summer learning.
- Identify and target personnel, resources, and priority support for districts and schools with the most urgent needs.

### **Alabama Literacy Act**

In order to achieve grade-level reading goals established with the inception of ARI and mandated in the *2019 Alabama Literacy Act*, both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed by the ALSDE to design a plan focused on what support should look like in the regions and how the support would be differentiated for school reading specialists, school administrators, and central office staff who support teachers in schools with grades K, 1, 2, and 3 across the state.

The ALSDE assigned the oversight of the *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling* (LETRS) training to the ARI Section to ensure all literacy training will be coordinated from a single point. The Education Administrator for LETRS oversees coordination with partners from the *Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education* (ADECE) and the *Alabama Commission on Higher Education* (ACHE). The ARI professional learning now includes statewide training in LETRS to PreK-3 educators. Through the fall of 2019, LETRS has been delivered to 2,500 educators, providing them with a deeper understanding in the science of reading that will increase a teacher's ability to identify reading difficulties and implement research-based instruction and intervention strategies that will support all learners, especially those struggling to read grade-level text.

### **ARI Literacy Coaches**

The legislature has appropriated more funding for literacy coaches throughout the regions during the 2019-2020 school year and the State Superintendent has requested additional funding in FY 2020-2021. A Memorandum of Understanding, prescriptive and detailed job descriptions, and a highly focused set of expectations will be coupled with the additional coaching staff in districts throughout the state.

Previously, the ALSDE never collected information on levels of education certification for coaches in LEAs other than that they held a valid teacher certificate and met other requirements outlined in the ARI job description. They were not required to have additional certification in reading unless it was something that local superintendents and/or local boards required. The ALSDE sent job descriptions and LEAs hired accordingly.

Going forward, according to the Alabama's Literacy Act, districts will be required to report to the State Superintendent that local school coaches have the following minimum qualifications:

1. The required Alabama Professional Educator Certificate.
2. A bachelor's degree and advanced coursework or professional development in the science of reading, such as multisensory language instruction, or comparable alternative training approved by the State Board of Education.
3. A minimum of two years of experience as a successful elementary or literacy teacher.
4. A knowledge of scientifically based reading research, special expertise in quality reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data analysis.
5. A strong knowledge base in the science of learning to read and the science of early childhood education.
6. Excellent communication skills with outstanding presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills.

The change towards higher expectations for reading coaches will be difficult for some districts. Over the last few years, coaches were hired to fill in gaps in schools including as building administrators, department heads, or other difficult to fill positions. That will no longer be possible. Under the Alabama Literacy Act, the requirement to increase expectations on the part of the LEAs and expect the ARI to provide professional learning, support, and coaching to regional and local coaches is a game changer that will have greater impact on struggling readers.

With the added accountability, the ALSDE has an opportunity to use data to measure outcomes and make corrections along the way to continually improve the program. Moreover, the ARI staff need to be out in the field monitoring practices and holding everyone accountable, including the Regional In-Service Centers for the work that needs to be done. The legislature has made a large investment in this initiative, however additional funding is not a guarantee of success if the plan is weak or not implemented with a high degree of fidelity.

### **ARI Team Staffing**

For the SY 2019-2020, there are twelve (12) full time staff (including principal/leadership coaches).

**Core Responsibilities:**

- Develops the training that ARI provides to all local reading coaches statewide. The ARI has modules that were developed, duplicated and edited, reflecting the current research on reading. There is no development work with LETRS; that is done by an outside vendor.
- Trains regional staff to go into schools/districts and train regional coaching communities.
- Provides support for regional coaches as they go into classrooms and coach teachers.
- Facilitates multiple trainings since there was a lapse in training due to inconsistency of funding. Currently, there is a gap in what K-3 teachers have been trained on.
- Created a residency in reading for coaches.
- Responsible for implementation of the dyslexia amendment.
- Developed a leadership training program for elementary principals focused on literacy.
- Provides training for coaches through ARI modules that were specifically developed to build coaching skills.

**Federal Programs**

The Federal Programs Section administers all federally funded education programs by providing technical assistance to LEAs, approving applications for funding and monitoring for compliance to federal statutes and regulations.

**Federal Team Staffing**

The Federal Programs Team consists of thirteen (13) Education Specialists, three (3) ASAs; three (3) Administrators.

**Core Responsibilities:**

- Oversees federal programs including:
  - Title I Part A, Part C, Part D; Title II, Title III (English Learners), Title IV Part B; Title VI, Title VII;
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers;
  - McKinney-Vento Homeless Program;
  - Dependent Care Development Grants; and
  - Teacher Loan Forgiveness
- Supports districts when they call. Most times they are looking for assistance to help problem solve within their district. Federal Programs assembles a team and goes into the district to provide on the ground support.
- Provides training and professional development to LEAs based on requests from districts.
- Works with data constantly to address problems.
- Collaborates with other ALSDE sections whose funding is related to professional development. That includes School Improvement, EL, ARI, Teacher Education/Certification, Transportation, IT
- Created organizational meetings for the Federal Programs team. During those meetings establish internal and LEA deadlines.
- Leads compliance monitoring visits for the LEAs.
- Ensures clear communication through documentation.
- Communicates with the USDOE to ensure the ALSDE is keeping abreast of accurate information to share out with LEAs.

**Instructional Services Program**

The Instructional Services Section is responsible for assisting schools with the frameworks/ systems/supports that are needed to provide effective instruction.

**Instructional Services Team Staffing**

There are eleven (11) staff members. Staff consist of content experts, administrators, and ASAs. One (1) administrator position was recently posted.

**Core Responsibilities:**

- Oversees all Courses of Study (COS) development and updates. That includes all core content areas, the arts, and media.
- Provides updates throughout the state on topics related to curriculum and instruction.
- Supervises textbook adoption process. With the adoption of the Math COS, there is a need to update the approved math textbooks and program list. A process and timeline have been outlined by the section. It includes bid forms to be submitted to the ALSDE, samples reviewed by the textbook committee and by Fall 2020 recommendations will be made to the State Board of Education.
- Oversees partnerships such as A-Plus College Ready, Advanced Placement program, International Baccalaureate Program, and dual enrollment with local colleges.
- Designs and facilitates training for various groups out in the field (i.e., administrators, counselors, registrars)
- Oversees the PowerSchool changes that fall under the section. A big task was to renumber all the course of studies to align with PowerSchool's national numbering system. There is a new intentional structure of numbering that the LEAs will be working with beginning next year.
- Speaks with parents daily, there are a lot of calls from parents looking for answers regarding issues in their local schools.
- Works with Assessment Services as they roll out the new testing program. In addition, works with the Accountability Section as they build a statewide accountability system from the ground up
- Oversees Teacher of the Year and other recognition programs.
- Supports and answers LEA inquiries.
- Transitioning guidance and counseling services back to Instructional Services from CTE. This includes college and career readiness, statewide advisory program, school facility dogs, and supporting mental health programs.

**School Improvement Program**

The School Improvement Program provides the lowest 6% of schools with additional assistance and support, including professional development, leadership coaching, additional funding, and assistance to support the school's goals. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a federal law, requires that the states identify two types of schools for support and improvement. In Alabama that includes:

- Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)
- Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)

The section provided 761 hours of face to face time in schools/districts during the 2018-2019 school year.

**School Improvement Team Staffing**

There are four (4) full time staff on the team. The rest of the department is made up of retired part-time state employees. sixteen (16) principal coaches, five (5) literacy coaches. The two (2) Regional Coordinators split the state in half to provide services.

**Core Responsibilities:**

- Provides differentiated services depending on the situation of the school/district.
- Coordinates both principal and literacy coaches that provide services to schools.
- Provides technical assistance and professional development to the 61 CSI.
- Oversees Transformation Academy and Deep Dives.
- Supports both CSI and ATSI schools based on level of need.

- Provides Instructional Reviews.
- Focuses on Cycle of School Improvement.
- Supports and monitors School Improvement Plans.
- Collaborates with other sections who can assist in providing additional support throughout the regions. ARI provides additional support to the CSI schools.
- Brings school leaders and teachers together to discuss challenges, effective practices.
- Responds to the needs of schools & districts. The schools/districts know they are reliable and dependable. However, the actions are very reactive rather than proactive.

### **Special Education Services**

Special Education Services seeks to improve the education experience for children with disabilities. The team strives to nurture a dedicated staff support the field through professional development opportunities, field experience, and monitoring. In keeping with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and State law, Special Education helps local schools and districts provide effective educational programs to students with disabilities, ages 3-20, who need special education and related services. Gifted Education and Section 504 are also housed within this section.

### **Special Education Team Staffing**

There are 53 staff members. 1 staff member is assigned to Gifted.

Core Responsibilities:

- Provides technical assistance to LEAs, including related to specific IEPs, guidance for Special Education Administrators, state and federal law.
- Respond to parent questions or complaints.
- Focused Monitoring- Compliance Monitoring for LEAs on all Special Education and components. Run out of this office, not in conjunction with Compliance Monitoring.
- Monitoring for Gifted Education.
- Data/Reporting-State Performance Plan (SPP), Child Count.
- Oversight of Alternative Assessments.
- Dispute Resolutions- Mediation and Due Process Hearings.
- Special Education Preschool- Includes Child Find, Least Restrictive Environment, Developmental Programs.
- Post-Secondary Outcomes.
- Professional Learning.

## **Teaching and Leading**

### **Education Certification**

Educator Certification is responsible for ensuring that academic requirements for certification approaches are met, background clearance requirements for professional and support staff are satisfied, and that all test requirements are met for issuance of certificates.

### **Education Certification Team Staffing**

There are currently thirty-seven (37) staff members on the certification team, including 9 ASAs and 4 clerks. That number includes staff who serve in the Background Check section.

Core Responsibilities:

- Develops, updates, implements, and enforce rules regarding the Educator Certification Chapter of the *Alabama Administrative Code*.
- Develops and implements routes for obtaining professional educator certification.

- Creates certification application forms, guidelines, and other documents to communicate current information to applicants and stakeholders.
- Trains staff to develop forms, correspondence, and documents.
- Ensures that staff adheres to all laws and requirements for criminal history background reviews and certificate issuance.
- Collaborates with the Information Systems Section of the Department regarding all technology functions.
- Collaborates with the Office of General Counsel, Career and Technical Education, Federal Programs, Special Education, Educator Assessment, Educator Preparation, and Curriculum.
- Communicates and collaborates with Certificate Issuing Agencies and institutions of higher education *in other states* regarding certification and background review topics.
- Communicates and collaborates with Alabama local education agencies, nonpublic/private schools, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, and other stakeholders regarding certification and background review topics.
- Communicates with applicants, law enforcement agencies, municipal and district courts, local education agencies, nonpublic/private schools, and institutions of higher education regarding files noting illegal behavior and acts of misconduct regarding certificate and license holders.
- Responds to inquiries from State Certificate Issuing Agencies, media outlets, and upper level management.
- Responds to and resolves applicant complaints.
- Prepares and conducts presentations for the State Board meetings, State Board work sessions; and conferences with stakeholders.
- Ensures that immigration status is verified prior to certificate issuance for all applicants.
- Manages vendor relationships with various entities.
- Collects, analyzes, and interprets certification data.
- Assures that all certification fees are reconciled (over one million dollars annually).
- Participates in the development of guidance related to the Alabama Educator Certification Testing Program and oversee the effective implementation of the program.
- Manages the fingerprint process for all individuals who have unsupervised access to children as indicated by the Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999, as amended, and the Educator Certification Chapter of the *Alabama Administrative Code*. This code only includes employees, not volunteers or field trip chaperones.
- Manages the storage, use procedures, and dissemination of criminal history information
- Makes suitability determinations for applicants based on criminal history information.
- Ensures compliance regarding the management and dissemination of criminal history information during audits conducted by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### **Educator Preparation Programs**

Educator Preparation is tasked with implementing the standards adopted by the State Board of Education for the preparation of well-prepared and effective teachers and instructional support personnel. Staff work with educator preparation programs at Alabama colleges and universities to assure continuous compliance with all standards in the Teacher Education Chapter of the AL Administrative Code.

### **Educator Team Staffing**

There are five (5) staff members including one (1) ASA.

Core Responsibilities:

- Supports Institutes of Higher Education with educational programs when requested.
- Completes education program reviews at colleges and universities throughout the state.

- Collects data from colleges and universities such as program admission by institutions.
- Oversees Educator Certification and Personnel Background Checks sections.
- Drafts rules for review of educator prep programs that prepare students for certification (i.e., Computer Science Education program).
- Provides compliance monitoring at colleges and universities to ensure compliance with all standards in teacher education programs.
- Collaborates with other sections on Praxis Teacher Assessment changes.
- Works internally with Instructional services, Federal Programs, CTE, Special Education, and Legal.
- Provides support to Institutes of Higher Education on meeting educational teaching standards through their program.

## Career and Technical Education

### **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program**

The Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development programs are focused on helping students achieve success through career awareness, leadership development, and academic excellence. These programs also provide services to Alabama's teachers, administrators, and counselors through professional development that works to further K-12 student achievement and project-based learning.

CTE is focused on developing the skills of K-12 students to prepare them for postsecondary learning and workforce opportunities. It also provides them essential leadership skills through participation in student organizations.

CTE's direct communication with teachers in the field is constant and most of their work is field based. Equally, there is frequent contact with thousands of students each year between direct work and interactions at conferences. There has been a recent shift this past year to greater focus on academic standards in CTE classes. For example, this year's annual conference focused on the standards.

### **CTE Team Staffing**

There are forty (40) employees for the sixteen (16) cluster areas. There were nine (9) vacancies at the time of the report. The CTE Director position became vacant over the course of this review.

#### **Core Responsibilities:**

- Provides technical assistance to the LEAs, including superintendents, CTE directors, curriculum coordinators and teachers.
- Visits CTE classrooms to observe content delivery.
- Plans student conferences throughout the state.
- Oversees the CTP-TCT New Teacher Institute, which provides 196 hours of professional development.
- 95% of time is devoted to field work. This includes working with business and industry, working with LEAs setting up new initiative or connecting the two to improve programming.
- Works with Governors' Office on various projects including Governor's Workforce Development Council.
- Oversees various programming such as Workforce Development, Career Cluster Program, and JROTC (currently has 17,000+ students).
- Counseling and Guidance was a part of CTE, but recently was moved to Instructional Services in Fall 2019.

## Evaluation, Accountability, and Support

### **Accountability Program**

The Accountability program works with Alabama's districts, schools, as well as sections within the ALSDE to provide information regarding Alabama's Accountability Models. In addition, the Accountability section assists districts in the use of the data to make research-based decisions that are best suited to meet the needs of students.

Alabama's Accountability System meets the requirements of both the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Alabama Act 2012-402. Federal law mandates the use of various indicators for meaningful differentiation among schools, while Alabama Act 2012-402 requires the State Superintendent to develop a school grading system.

### **Accountability Team Staffing**

There are currently four (4) staff members in the section. There are also three (3) vacancies. Six years ago, the Accountability and Assessment split into separate sections.

#### **Core Responsibilities:**

- Creates the Failing Schools list based on academic outcomes data. Failing Schools are selected when they are the bottom 6% of state test scores.
- Provides the data required for ESSA Accountability.
- Oversees the School Report Card.
- Provides data to determine the letter grades that will differentiate schools based on the ESSA plan.
- Attends CCSSO conference. This national conference for Chief State School Officers provides the latest information from the USDOE on changes to assessment and federal accountability.
- Trains and provides technical assistance, including calls from the field.
- Revamps business rules for ESSA modification and rules, researches how to improve different business rules throughout the Department, runs report to see what the changes would look like.
- Creates time requested reports from senior ALSDE leadership or legislature.
- Researches national trends by investigating and collecting data on NAEP states to stay ahead of best practices.
- Creates 9-month attendance report each spring.
- Looks at seven data sets during the summer to put together data reports.
- Provides training to schools and districts, including training at MEGA Conference.
- Collaborates with the Communications team to create informational material regarding assessment results.

### **Assessment Program**

The Office of Student Assessment is responsible for the coordination, development, and implementation of the state testing program. The goal is to improve academic achievement for all Alabama students. This goal is accomplished by providing administrators, educators, parents, and the community tools and information about student performance in the context of college and career readiness.

### **Assessment Team Staffing**

Currently the team has four (4) education specialists. There are two (2) vacancies for additional education specialists, which should be filled soon.

#### **Core Responsibilities:**

- Ensures that assessments are administered appropriately
- Oversees development and administration of assessments.
- Communicates with district Superintendents about assessment development process.
- Writes items, reviews items for bias, makes sure items are appropriate for student subgroups such as English Learners and Students with Disabilities.

- Handles all logistics of setting up NAEP. The NAEP field staff go into schools and districts to do their work, not the ALSDE staff.
- Collaborates internally with Information Systems, Accountability, and Instructional Services
- Reviews passages; ensures grade-level appropriateness.
- Works with independent third-party vendor to complete an alignment study of assessment items to ensure their alignment to the ALSDE standards.
- Provides training for teachers who serve as item writers.
- Collaborates with vendor to standardize training and provide teachers with a step by step process of item writing.
- Provides training and monthly webinars with system test coordinators. If something new is happening in assessment will travel to districts to provide training. Webcasts have been used as well to provide access to past training sessions.
- Maps assessment items to previous standards and to the new ones.
- Works closely with legal about what to do if there was an impropriety in testing, they provide guidelines.
- Focuses on transparency about the assessments within their section. Districts must have as much data/info as possible to be ready for assessments.

### **Compliance Monitoring**

The Compliance Monitoring program monitors all K-12 school systems in Alabama for compliance with state and federal regulations and State Board of Education mandates. Monitoring is a means of ensuring selected programs under ESSA meet federal guidelines and are implemented with fidelity in order to increase student achievement. Looks specifically at the programmatic regulations, as well as the expenditure of funds.

The Compliance Monitoring Team received a new compliance monitoring technology system this year. There have been three electronic systems in the past seven years. The new system, Cognia, E-Prove System has improved the data collection process.

### **Compliance Team Staffing**

The Compliance Monitoring Team consists of two (2) full time employees, one (1) administrator, and one ASA. Additionally, the team utilizes staff from the various departments being monitored (i.e., Teacher Credentialing, Transportation, Federal Programs).

#### **Core Responsibilities:**

- Sets and coordinates schedule for compliance monitoring, technical assistance and risk assessment. In June, the compliance monitoring schedule is provided to the superintendents during the annual Superintendent Conference. Monitoring is on a five-year schedule.
- Designs compliance monitoring to determine LEA compliance with federal program requirements, while at the same time providing technical assistance with any compliance areas. The purposes of monitoring include: (1) reviewing information from a LEA; (2) determining the need for Corrective Actions; and (3) identifying areas needing technical assistance.
- Provides training and technical assistance at the MEGA Conference that focuses on changes in monitoring practices.
- Travels to schools throughout the state from September to June to participate in the Compliance Monitoring process.

### **Education Technology**

Education Technology's mission is to use technology as a tool to prepare students to become a productive, contributing citizens. The office serves and supports LEAs as a contact in school system technology planning, implementation of the Alabama Technology Plan for K-12 Education, ALEX (a repository/website

for lesson plans), ACCESS Virtual Learning program, and coordinates the Alabama Education Technology Conference.

The ACCESS Virtual Learning (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide) is an education initiative that provides opportunities and options for Alabama public high school students to engage in Advanced Placement (AP), course remediation, electives, and other courses to which they may not otherwise have access or be able to schedule within their school day. The ACCESS Virtual Learning Program continues to grow and has high usage in rural schools where the course selection may be limited for high school students.

### **Education Technology Team Staffing**

The Education Technology Team consists of nine (9) staff members, including both full and part-time employees.

Core Responsibilities:

- Supports the ACCESS virtual learning program for students, which is the third largest in the country, with approximately 7,000 student users. This program is not a virtual school, but rather a program that provides a variety of courses aligned to the Alabama Course of Studies. The program allows students to take courses that may not be available in their district, especially in rural districts. It also provides a forum for credit recovery.
- Oversees programs that include ALEX, ACCESS, E-Learning, E-Rate, Alabama Joint Purchasing (ALJP).
- Updates the ALEX program
- Plans the Alabama Technical Conference which attracts 1,500+ attendees annually.
- Provides training for E-rate, Google Suite, and Google Classroom.
- Ties training to PLUs for administrators.
- Supports LEAs through interaction with their technology coordinators.
- Reviews and manages all the Technology Plans for each LEA as part of compliance monitoring
- Procures or develops e-learning courses that align to Alabama Course of Study for the ACCESS virtual learning program.

### **Prevention and Support Programs**

The Prevention and Support Programs and Services Section focuses its attention on assisting school systems and schools with Alcohol and Drug Prevention, Attendance, Bullying Prevention, Character Education and Positive Behavior Supports, Discipline (School Incident Reports), Dropout Prevention, Graduation Rate, Health Services and School Nursing, and School Safety.

### **Prevention and Support Team Staffing**

The team consists of two (2) RNs, one and a half (1.5) ASAs, four (4) Education Specialists, and three (3) Administrators (1 leading the section). In addition, there are ten (10) grant funded field support staff.

Core Responsibilities:

- Administers the state-wide Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- Supports the Safe Schools Council.
- Provides technical assistance to LEAs who request support or are in a crisis situation
- Forms partnership with University of Alabama and other agencies as there is not enough money in the budget to address all the needs in the LEAs.
- Supports LEAs in PBIS, School Safety, Culture and Climate issues, Bullying Prevention.
- Provides support for 3,000 school nurses through policies, training, compliance reviews.
- Builds relationships with LEAs and communities. Works with Chamber of Commerce.

- Works to change the punitive model of discipline and retool the code of conduct by working with LEAs on their board policies.
- Collects College and Career Ready data, graduation rates, attendance rates.
- Partners with state staff in the areas of Safety, including Law Enforcement, Attorney General, Legislative Groups, Emergency Management, Speaker of House. Partnerships are focused on all types of safety hazards, recently it has been hurricanes.
- Provides follow up from field staff on the Governor's Safe Council including:
  - Threat assessment.
  - Walkthrough of schools for safety.
  - Overview on youth mental health. Schools can ask for school mental health training.
- Coordinates mental health training that comes from different departments including Prevention and Support.
- Secures resources and builds out partnerships to scale to impact the section's effectiveness.
- Analyzes data for the four indicators in College and Career Ready. When the Research and Evaluation Section disbanded, Prevention and Support Services became the hub for data quality. The section does some spot checks with Graduation Cohort for Graduation, College and Career Ready and Drop Out data. The section does a lot of data analytics, which was added on over last few years in addition to the prevention work.

## Professional Learning

### Professional Learning

Professional Learning is a new team created by Dr. Mackey at the beginning of his tenure as State Superintendent. The primary purpose of professional learning is to improve educational practice and increase student achievement.

### **Professional Learning Team Staffing**

There are six (6) staff members, including the ALSDE Chief of Staff. Currently there is no ASA working on this team.

### **Core Responsibilities:**

- Conducts book study for internal staff. The latest book study, Six Secrets of Change by Michael Fullan, included 134 staff signed up to be part of the activity. The book study is an attempt at cross-section learning internally at the ALSDE.
- Produces Dr. Mackey's monthly internal video series updating the ALSDE on happenings within the Department.
- Works with universities on Educator Effectiveness.
- Developing Teacher Evaluation tool as ESSA requires consistent measures and a more comprehensive approach.
- Supports PowerSchool training.
- Surveys internal staff to assess improvement to the culture of the ALSDE.
- Works with Curriculum and Development, Alabama Counsel of Leadership Development and PLU credits state-wide.
- Coordinates new principal mentoring program in partnership with higher education and LEAs
- Bolsters the connection between the ALSDE and the Regional In-Service Centers. There are a lot of changes and accountability happening with the RICs, including new Accountability Standards.
- Oversees leadership development. Meets with providers who provide professional learning for leaders. Professional learning content should be aligned to the leadership standards to be approved for PLU status.
- Receives 'special projects' as assigned by Dr. Mackey.

## LEA Auxiliary Support Services

### **Child Nutrition Program**

The Child Nutrition Program manages and implements United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs operating in Alabama's schools and preschool facilities. Staff interpret federal and state policies and laws, provide technical assistance and complete program audits; allocate USDA donated foods, ensure procurement of high quality and cost-efficient food products are compliant with regulations.

### **Child Nutrition Team Staffing**

There are 37 staff members on the Child Nutrition team. There are 4 vacancies within the section.

Core Responsibilities:

- Oversees the following:
  - National School Lunch Program;
  - School Breakfast Program;
  - Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility;
  - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program;
  - Special Milk Program;
  - Summer Food Program;
  - Afterschool Snack Program;
  - Food Distribution of USDA donated food; and
  - Commodity Supplemental Food Program (for elderly in state);
- Audit responsibilities for all programs under child nutrition.
- Oversees bidding program for food and non-food for state. If districts want to participate as part of the buying group, they are allowed. Also, larger childcare centers, private schools, and residential childcare facilities are members of the buying group to help to lower food costs.
- Supervises compliance with the USDA regulations.
- Works with federal programs and data collection group within the ALSDE.
- Collaborates with Finance. There is a part of SDE Accounting that's just for the Food and Nutrition program. Interaction with SDE Accounting is important to determine the financial viability of each school system's lunch balance.
- Provides training and support to the Alabama School Nutrition Association. Child Nutrition convenes two meetings a year with child nutrition directors to review the new rules and regulations.
- Holds summer training with national school lunch program paired with Child Nutrition Institute. Typically, when training cafeteria managers in the summer there is close to 200 participants.
- The ALSDE Child Nutrition Program is not just for K-12, but for child and adult care feeding programs. With the breastfeeding training program and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, the Child Nutrition Program has the possibility of feeding Alabama residents from birth to end of life.

### **Facilities Programs**

The Facilities Program, led by the School Architect, assists local boards of education and various professionals with the planning, budgeting, design, bidding and construction of school facilities. Activities include approval of plans, A/E agreements and Construction Contracts. Other responsibilities include oversight of Capital Planning, Facility Assessment and the sale or exchange of state-owned property by the county system.

### **Facilities Team Staffing**

There are 2 members of the team, an administrator who also oversees other departments and an ASA.

Core Responsibilities:

- Supports local superintendents and school boards regarding school facilities and building projects.
- Collects and reviews the five-year capital plan for each LEA. Public School Funds cannot be released until the Capital Plan has been received by the ALSDE.
- Oversees the sale or exchange of state-owned property.
- Provides technical assistance and guidance to LEAs when requested.
- Communicates changes in state and federal regulations that are important to LEAs (i.e., clean water, asbestos).
- Participates in compliance monitoring.
- Provides oversight of construction projects such as approval of plans and construction contracts.
- Oversees new charter school facilities to ensure they meet all state regulations.

### **Pupil Transportation Services**

Pupil Transportation provides support and professional development for local transportation departments throughout Alabama. While Driver and Traffic Safety Education places emphasis on making sure that students are safe drivers, School Bus Instructors place emphasis on ensuring that all bus drivers have the knowledge and resources necessary to provide safe transportation for the students each day.

Pupil Transportation is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all students in the public schools of Alabama. With that end in mind, ALSDE conducts on-site monitoring and evaluates pupil transportation in each LEA to ensure the safety of students and compliance with all requirements.

### **Pupil Transportation Team Staffing**

The Transportation Services Dept has a staff of sixteen (16) full time employees. That includes five (5) Inspectors, who inspect 10,000 buses in LEAs per year to be compliant with state law. The section also includes 1 staff member that teaches special education bus driver certification classes.

Core Responsibilities:

- Works in the ALSDE with Human Resources; facilities; special education (buses); federal programs (McKinney-Vento), summer school, LEA accounting, and Accountability.
- Oversees the Driver Education training program. This is a third-party program.
- Supports funding fleet renewal. The fleet renewal program provides local school systems funding for each school bus in their fleet that is ten years old or less. This funding is provided for a maximum of ten years. Approximately 75% of Alabama's school buses are ten years old or less.
- Certifies and recertifies every school bus driver in the state.
- Provides training for all certification classes. First time certification is a 12-hour class. Certification renewals are 4- hour classes.
- Partners with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA).

## **SDE Business and Support Services**

### **LEA Accounting, Accounting, Fiscal Accountability, and SDE Accounting**

LEA Accounting is responsible for reviewing local school system budgets, indirect cost applications, financial statements, program expenditure reports, as well as disbursing state and federal funds. Other activities include preparing financial and statistical reports to various state and federal agencies and calculating major federal formula grant allocation amounts to local school systems.

Fiscal Accountability is responsible for financial administrative and fiscal accountability requirements for school systems as mandated. Activities include: K-12 funding, local education agency audits, certification

and training of school finance and administrative personnel, and technical assistance to local school systems and state offices.

The SDE Accounting Section deals with ALSDE financial matters. A partial list of responsibilities includes budgets, financial reporting, payroll information, travel cost reimbursements, audits, and state/federal law compliance.

### **LEA Accounting, Fiscal Accountability, and SDE Accounting Team Staffing**

LEA Accounting has fifteen (15) staff members; SDE Accounting has twenty-eight (28) staff members; One (1) staff member for Fiscal Accountability. It was noted this section has a very stable staff with little turnover.

#### **Core Responsibilities:**

- Works closely with Federal Projects and Special Education Dept internally.
- Works with school CFOs.
- Review financial statements, amendments.
- Curates resources on the ALSDE website primarily for CFOs.
- Collects financial data from districts and provides state reports with those data. Linked to funding.
- Provides training when requested.
- Works with State Legislature and state laws.
- Writes accounting manuals, procedures – following up with audit standards, reviews audits.
- Helps to write legislation, state board rules.
- Provides financial and administrative training.
- Provides certification for district CSFOs.
- Gives LEAs a fiscal review, before they get audited. It helps LEAs to avoid fines.
- Works with all departments evenly throughout the ALSDE for all different issues such as contracts, purchase orders, etc.

### **Procurement Services**

The Procurement Section provides expertise in the procurement of products and services to department staff ensuring procurement activities are performed within law, rule, policy & procedure.

### **Procurement Service Team Staffing**

There are eight (8) staff members on the team. They currently have openings and are short-handed, but they do not want to hire until there is clarity as to the future of the section. The vacancies have been open for a year.

#### **Core Responsibilities:**

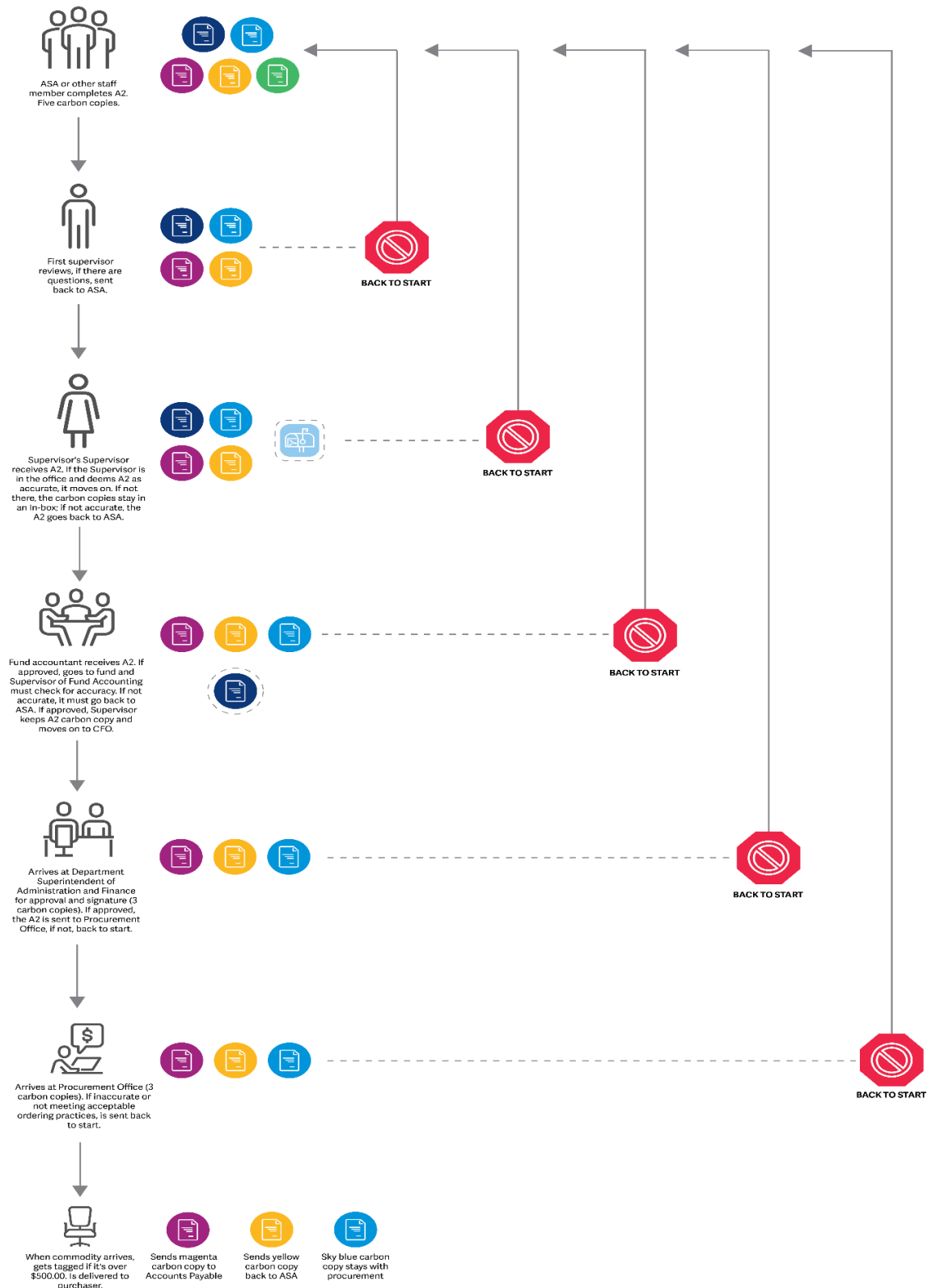
- Oversees the following:
  - Purchasing for all sections within department
  - Mail Services- internal mail and supply delivery
  - Fleet Management for executives (10 automobiles)
  - Property Management including the ALSDE floors
  - Inventory control
  - Office supplies
  - Construction- building offices and cubicles
  - RFP process- adheres to all the laws and regulations
- Receives all commodities ordered in the Department. If the property is over \$500.00, it must be tagged before being delivered to purchaser. Material receipt goes to accounting for payment.
- Tracks all paperwork from A2 (Requisitions) at the ALSDE. This can be a confusing and long process. There are multiple steps to ordering anything using a requisition form, which is a color-

coded carbon paper form with 5 separate copies. All copies are signed by supervisors on up. Since the process is paper based, there are problems with requests sitting on supervisor's desks when they are out of the office or just getting lost in a back log. There is no tracking system for 'requesters' to see how the A2 is progressing or where it is stuck. These purchases are not just commodities, but also services being provided by outside vendors. If there are no glitches, the requisition process could take a week, if there are hold ups such as staff are unavailable for signatures, it could take 3+ weeks to process. See the following exhibit for a step by step overview of the complete requisition process.

- Oversees employee reimbursement. Using Concur to reimburse staff for out of state travel has expedited the process. Concur was brought about because it was too much for the procurement section to manage and ensure staff were paid in a reasonable amount of time. The section still oversees in-state travel, as it is not such a hassle. There are government rates set for in state travel, which simplifies the process.

## Exhibit 32. ALSDE Current Procurement Process Map

### ALSDE Current Procurement Process Map



## Disability Determination Services

### **Department of Disability Determination Services**

Alabama's Disability Determination Services (DDS) is a distinct department that resides within the ALSDE. DDS determines whether a resident residing in the state is disabled, according to Social Security's rules. The DDS processes claims applications for services. There is no DDS office at the ALSDE, but rather there are DDS offices in Mobile and Birmingham. DDS is in the ALSDE for historical reasons. DDS continued to report to the ALSDE after splitting from Vocation Rehabilitation Services in the late 1980's.

### **DDS Staffing**

The program employs 406 staff members who are deployed in offices in Mobile or Birmingham. Additionally, there are 58 doctors who are contracted to provide services to the DDS. All positions are hired through the ALSDE Human Resources Department. All personnel tasks continue to be assigned to the Human Resources Department (i.e., employee annual appraisals, raises, employee conflict resolutions) throughout the employees' tenure with the DDS. The ALSDE also assumes all responsibility for legal and IT support.

### **Core Responsibilities:**

- Provides public service to individuals with disabilities in the state. Even though the services are different from other programs at the ALSDE, they have an opportunity to serve the public in Alabama
- Provides Disability Insurance for adults with disabilities under age 66. The average age of clients is between 40-66.
- Makes financial and medical decisions for clients.
- Review claims on a regular basis for medical client.
- Trains staff on how to process claims to ensure accuracy.

## VI. Staffing Analysis

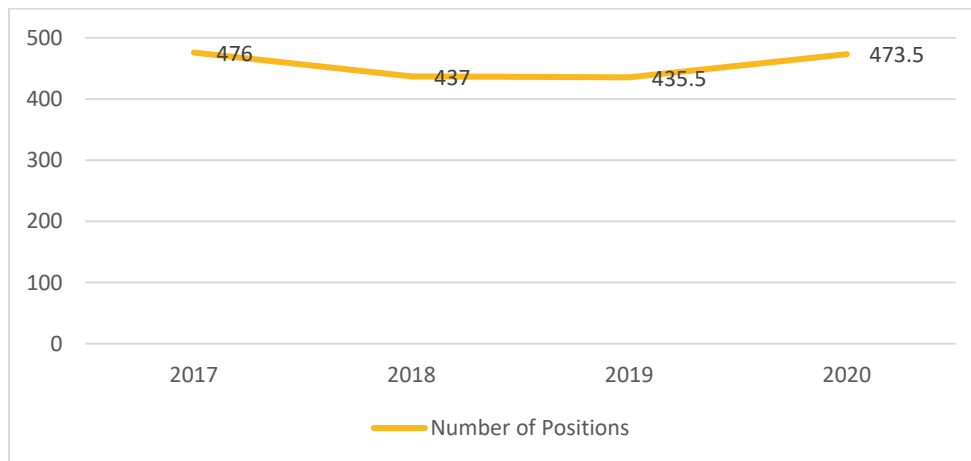
**Task: Determine if the ALSDE's programs are adequately staffed based on stated functions.**

PCG conducted an analysis of the ALSDE's current staffing levels and distributions across functional areas. PCG also reviewed the current organizational structure and identified gaps in staff duties required to successfully perform core functions. This section proposes a forward-looking organizational structure that better aligns staff duties to supporting improved student outcomes.

### Overall Staffing Analysis

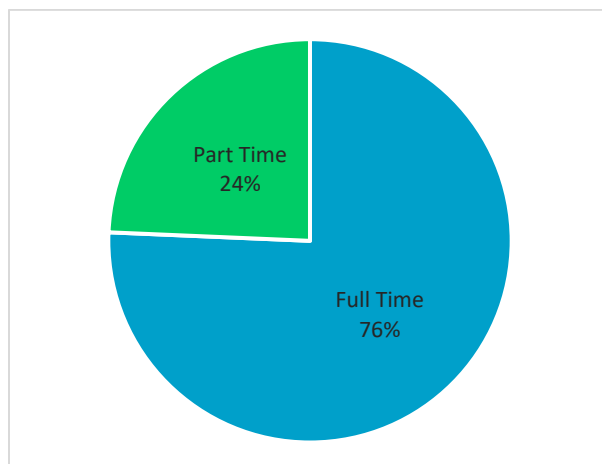
This section analyzes current staff levels by position, cost center, funding source and vacancies. For the purposes of our analysis, PCG did not include DDS staff.

**Exhibit 33. Number of Positions, 2017-20**



The total number of ALSDE staff as of January 2020 is 473.5. This count includes both full and part-time staff members. This number is slightly higher than 476 in 2017. In 2018, staff counts dropped by roughly 40 positions and have risen again over the past year.

**Exhibit 34. Percent of Full and Part Time Staff**



**Exhibit 35. Number of Employees by FTE**

| <.03 FTE | .03-.49 FTE | .5-.9 FTE | 1.0 FTE |
|----------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| 0        | 1           | 80        | 361     |

Three quarters of all staff are full-time employees. The workload of the 25% of employees that work part time is at least 50% with only one exception.

Nearly all part-time staff are classified as “retired state employees.” According to the State of Alabama Personnel Department, a Retired State Employee is a “State retiree currently receiving retirement benefits from the Employees’ Retirement System, the Teachers’ Retirement System, or the Judicial Retirement System. The salary of a person appointed to this classification cannot exceed the hourly rate paid to the employee at the time of his/her retirement. Also, the salary must be an hourly equivalent of a semi-monthly rate in the State Pay Plan. Individuals appointed to this classification do not earn benefits and can be separated from employment at the discretion of the agency. Compensation earned by Retired State Employees cannot exceed the limits established by the Retirement Systems of Alabama.”

**Staffing Analysis by Cost Center and Funding Type**

The following tables look at number of employees by Cost Center, Fund Codes and Funding Source.

- The greatest number of employees, full and part-time, is funded by Special Education Services, with a total of 53 staff members.
- The Child Nutrition Program has the highest number of full-time employees (36) and a total staff member count of 40.
- The School Improvement Cost Center funds the greatest number of part-time employees at 24, along with 6 full-time staff.

**Exhibit 36. Number of Employees by Cost Center**

| Cost Center                  | No. Full Time Employees | No. Part Time Employees | Total |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Special Education Services   | 32                      | 21                      | 53    |
| Child Nutrition Program      | 36                      | 4                       | 40    |
| Educator Certification       | 33                      | 2                       | 35    |
| Federal Programs             | 18                      | 13                      | 31    |
| School Improvement           | 6                       | 24                      | 30    |
| Career Technical Education   | 25                      | 3                       | 28    |
| SDE Accounting               | 24                      | 2                       | 26    |
| Education Technology         | 18                      | 0                       | 18    |
| Pupil Transportation         | 13                      | 5                       | 18    |
| AMSTI                        | 14                      | 1                       | 15    |
| LEA Accounting and Reporting | 15                      | 0                       | 15    |
| Instructional Services       | 12                      | 2                       | 14    |
| Network Operations           | 13                      | 0                       | 13    |
| Prevention & Support         | 11                      | 1                       | 12    |
| Legal                        | 10                      | 0                       | 10    |
| Alabama Reading Initiative   | 10                      | 0                       | 10    |
| Software Development         | 9                       | 0                       | 9     |
| Procurement and Operations   | 8                       | 0                       | 8     |

| Cost Center                            | No. Full Time Employees | No. Part Time Employees | Total      |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| State Superintendent Office            | 4                       | 2                       | 6          |
| Driver Education                       | 3                       | 3                       | 6          |
| Assessment                             | 6                       | 0                       | 6          |
| Teaching and Leading                   | 5                       | 0                       | 5          |
| Human Resources                        | 4                       | 1                       | 5          |
| Communications                         | 5                       | 0                       | 5          |
| Professional Learning                  | 4                       | 1                       | 5          |
| Division of A&F                        | 4                       | 0                       | 4          |
| Evaluation, Accountability and Support | 4                       | 0                       | 4          |
| Educator Preparation                   | 3                       | 0                       | 3          |
| Accountability                         | 3                       | 0                       | 3          |
| Division of Instruction                | 2                       | 0                       | 2          |
| Student Learning                       | 2                       | 0                       | 2          |
| LEA Auxiliary Support Services         | 2                       | 0                       | 2          |
| Compliance Monitoring                  | 2                       | 0                       | 2          |
| School Facilities                      | 1                       | 0                       | 1          |
| SDE Business & Support Services        | 0                       | 0                       | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>361</b>              | <b>85</b>               | <b>446</b> |

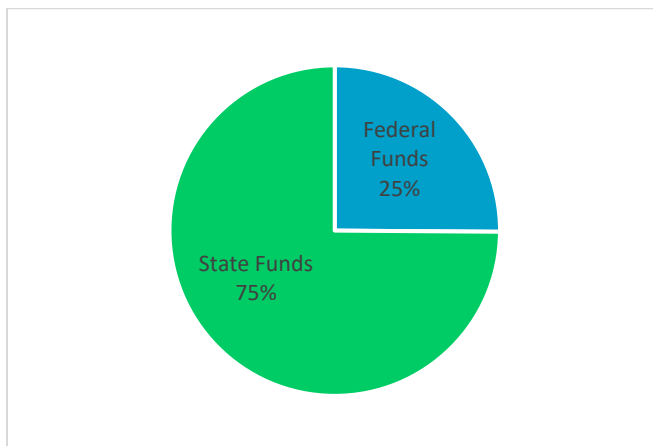
Exhibit 37. Number of Positions by Fund

| Fund                                                   | Positions Funded |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| SDE-O&M                                                | 157              |
| IDEA-Part B                                            | 48               |
| Shared Services                                        | 36               |
| State Admin Expense                                    | 30               |
| Title I, Part A School Improvement                     | 25               |
| Internal Service-Information Systems                   | 22               |
| Title I, Part A                                        | 20               |
| Career Tech Initiative                                 | 18               |
| AL Math, Science, and Tech Initiative                  | 15               |
| Vocational Education - Basic Grant                     | 9                |
| Educator Certificates                                  | 8                |
| Governor's Academic & Financial Improvement            | 8                |
| Distance Learning                                      | 8                |
| Alabama Reading Initiative                             | 8                |
| Audit Expense-Child Adult Care Program                 | 5                |
| Driver Education                                       | 5                |
| Student Assessment                                     | 4                |
| Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Comm. Learning Centers | 4                |
| State Assessment                                       | 3                |

|                                                 |   |
|-------------------------------------------------|---|
| Title I, Part C – Migrant Education             | 2 |
| Title X – Homeless Education                    | 2 |
| Project AWARE (SAMHSA)                          | 2 |
| Advanced Placement                              | 1 |
| English Language Learners Program               | 1 |
| Title I, Part A School Improvement - 1003(g)    | 1 |
| Title II, Part A Teacher and Principal Training | 1 |
| Direct Certification Improvement Grant          | 1 |
| Admin Expense-Summer Food Service Program       | 1 |
| State-Wide Purchasing                           | 1 |

The State Department of Education-Operating & Management funding source funds the most positions at 157. IDEA-Part B is the federal funding source that funds the greatest number of positions at 48.

**Exhibit 38. Percent of Positions Funded by State and Federal Funds**



Three-quarters of the ALSDE positions are paid for with State Funds.

**Exhibit 39. Number of Positions Funded by State Funds**

| Fund                                        | Positions Funded |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| SDE-O&M                                     | 157              |
| Shared Services                             | 36               |
| State Admin Expense                         | 30               |
| Internal Service-Information Systems        | 22               |
| Career Tech Initiative                      | 18               |
| AL Math, Science, and Tech Initiative       | 15               |
| Educator Certificates                       | 8                |
| Governor's Academic & Financial Improvement | 8                |
| Distance Learning                           | 8                |
| Alabama Reading Initiative                  | 8                |
| Audit Expense-Child Adult Care Program      | 5                |

|                                           |            |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| Driver Education                          | 5          |
| Student Assessment                        | 4          |
| State Assessment                          | 3          |
| Project AWARE (SAMHSA)                    | 2          |
| Advanced Placement                        | 1          |
| English Language Learners Program         | 1          |
| Direct Certification Improvement Grant    | 1          |
| Admin Expense-Summer Food Service Program | 1          |
| State-Wide Purchasing                     | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>334</b> |

State-level funds pay for 334 positions at the ALSDE. Apart from the SDE-O&M funding source that pays for 157 positions, the other state-level funds cover a range of 1 position (Advanced Placement, ELL Program, Director Certification Improvement Grant, Admin Expense-Summer Food Service Program, and State-Wide Purchasing) to 36 positions (Share Services Fund).

**Exhibit 40. Number of Positions Funded by Federal Funds**

| Fund                                                   | Positions Funded |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| IDEA-Part B                                            | 48               |
| Title I, Part A School Improvement                     | 25               |
| Title I, Part A                                        | 20               |
| Vocational Education - Basic Grant                     | 9                |
| Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Comm. Learning Centers | 4                |
| Title I, Part C – Migrant Education                    | 2                |
| Title X – Homeless Education                           | 2                |
| Title I, Part A School Improvement - 1003(g)           | 1                |
| Title II, Part A Teacher and Principal Training        | 1                |
| <b>Total</b>                                           | <b>112</b>       |

Federal funds cover 112 positions at ALSDE. Three federal funding sources pay for more than 10 positions: IDEA-Part B (48); Title I, Part A School Improvement (25); and Title I, Part A (20).

**Staffing Analysis by Type**

The Education Specialist I role has the greatest number of both full and part-time employees, at 121 and 123 respectively. There is no Educational Specialist II role. The next largest group is Retired State Employees, with 74 occupied positions. These are part-time positions. It is notable that there are 53 full-time Education Administrator Is, but only 8 full-time Education Administrator IIs.

**Exhibit 41. Number of Employees by Classification**

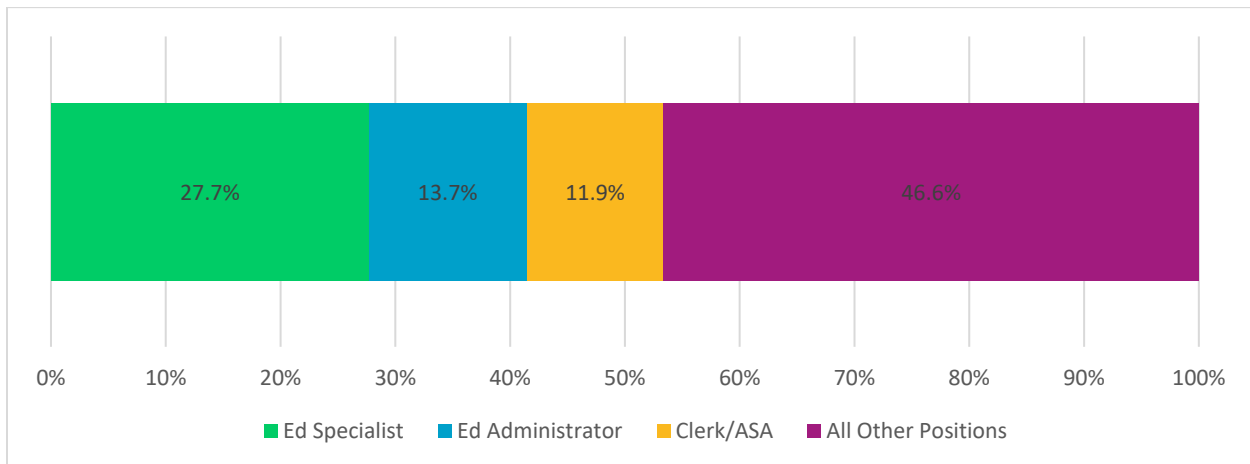
| Classification            | No. Full Time | No. Part Time | Total |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Education Specialist I    | 121           | 2             | 123   |
| Retired State Employee    | 0             | 74            | 74    |
| Education Administrator I | 53            | 0             | 53    |

| Classification                     | No. Full Time | No. Part Time | Total |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| ASA III                            | 29            | 1             | 30    |
| Staff Accountant                   | 15            | 0             | 15    |
| Senior Accountant                  | 13            | 0             | 13    |
| ASA II                             | 11            | 1             | 12    |
| Education Exempt                   | 10            | 0             | 10    |
| Account Clerk                      | 7             | 1             | 8     |
| Accounting Manager                 | 8             | 0             | 8     |
| Clerk                              | 8             | 0             | 8     |
| Education Administrator II         | 8             | 0             | 8     |
| Assistant Superintendent           | 6             | 0             | 6     |
| Accountant                         | 5             | 0             | 5     |
| School Bus Equipment Inspector     | 4             | 0             | 4     |
| ASA I                              | 3             | 0             | 3     |
| Attorney III                       | 3             | 0             | 3     |
| IT Systems Specialist Associate    | 3             | 0             | 3     |
| IT Systems Specialist Senior       | 3             | 0             | 3     |
| IT Systems Technician              | 3             | 0             | 3     |
| Programmer Analyst                 | 3             | 0             | 3     |
| Audit Manager                      | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Clerk Steno IV                     | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Deputy Superintendent              | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Laborer                            | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Personnel Assistant III            | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Program Director                   | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Programmer Analyst Senior          | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Public Information Specialist      | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| State Intern                       | 0             | 2             | 2     |
| Surplus Commodity Administrator    | 2             | 0             | 2     |
| Accounting Director I              | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Accounting Technician              | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Attorney IV                        | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Audiovisual Specialist III         | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Data Processing Specialist         | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Departmental Marketing Specialist  | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Departmental Operations Specialist | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Deputy Attorney General            | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Docket Clerk                       | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Executive Assistant III            | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Executive Secretary                | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| General Services Supervisor        | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Graphic Arts Technician            | 1             | 0             | 1     |
| Human Services Program Coordinator | 1             | 0             | 1     |

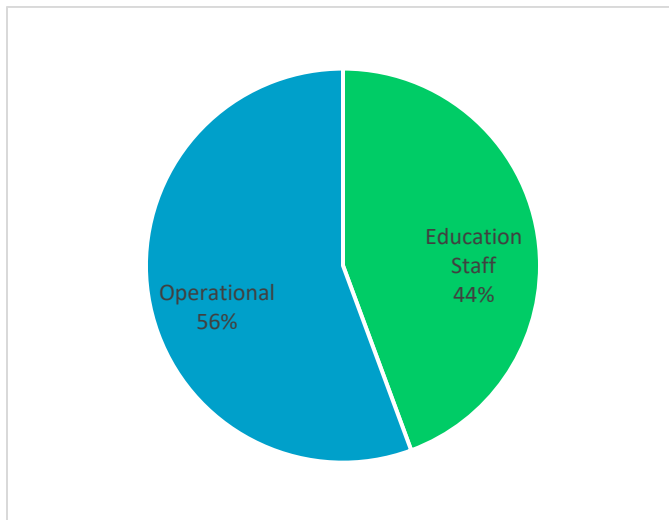
| Classification                  | No. Full Time | No. Part Time | Total       |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| IT Manager II                   | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| IT Operations Technician        | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| IT Systems Specialist           | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| IT Systems Technician Senior    | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Legal Research Assistant        | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Nurse Administrator             | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Nurse Manager                   | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Nutritionist Senior             | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Paralegal                       | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Procurement Officer I           | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Programmer Analyst Associate    | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| School Bus Inspector Supervisor | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Special Investigator            | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| State Superintendent            | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| Stock Clerk I                   | 1             | 0             | 1           |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>363</b>    | <b>81</b>     | <b>444*</b> |

\*Total number of employees by Classification is 444 and by Cost Center is 446. Two employees were funded by 2 different cost centers, and thus counted for each Cost Center.

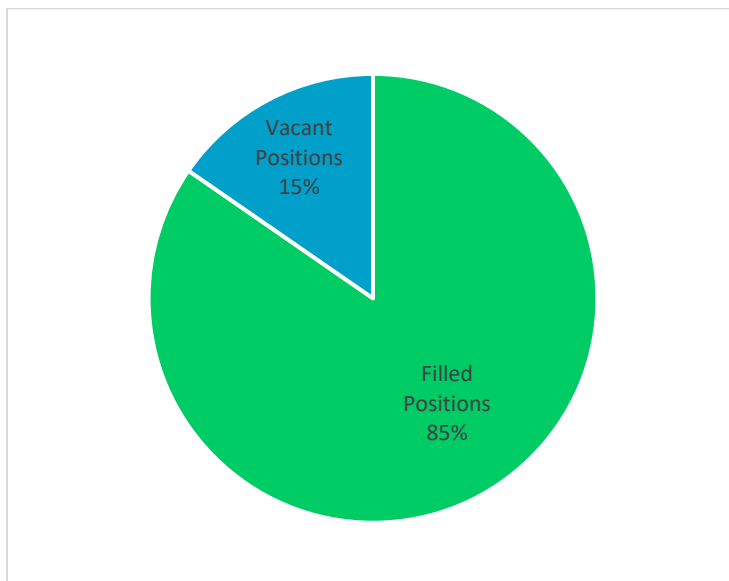
**Exhibit 42. Percent of Staff by Classification, (Ed. Specialist, Ed. Administrator, Clerk/ASA vs. All Other Positions)**



Education Specialists and Education Administrators make up 40% of all employees at the ALSDE. Clerks/ASAs are 12% of the ALSDE workforce.

**Exhibit 43. Education vs. Operational Staff Percentages**

There are more Operational Staff (56%) than Education Staff (44%) that work at the ALSDE. The following positions were included in the Education Staff calculation: Education Specialist I, Education Administrators I and II, Deputy Superintendents, Directors, Assistant Superintendents, and State Superintendent. The remaining positions were included in the Operational staff calculation.

**Exhibit 44. Percentage of Vacant Positions Compared to Budgeted Positions**

Currently, the ALSDE is not operating at capacity with 15% of budgeted positions vacant (81 vacancies). Many of these vacant positions fall under the Education Specialist I (22 vacancies), Education Administrator I (11 vacancies), and Retired State Employee classifications (25 vacancies). The remaining vacancies are operational, with 9 in an ASA role. Many staff cited personnel requirements and the hiring process as the primary reason for these vacancies. Constraints cited included lengthy processing timelines and lack of qualified candidates on the personnel register.

## Staff Training and Development

Staff counts only tell part of the story related to staffing adequacy. PCG's analysis identified the critical need for increased professionalization of staffing, including revised hiring protocols, staff training and greater differentiation in career ladders.

- During focus groups, there was a notable absence of staff who were early in their careers in professional roles. It did not appear that the ALSDE has a strategic approach to hiring and growing more junior staff who may have a long-term commitment to the Department.
- Several focus group members referenced numerous pending retirements and identified ineffective or absent transition planning as a concern.
- Several focus group members highlighted the need for more training on Microsoft Office applications and other technology to ensure staff can perform the core functions of their job. There are many clerical positions that would particularly benefit from this type of training. Any technology training that occurs now is done in an ad hoc manner via IT help desk support.
- Supervision and management skills arose as a significant concern in many conversations. There is no training strategy in place to strengthen these skillsets for individuals in supervisory roles.
- There is no formalized onboarding or new employee training program specific to the ALSDE. Given a staff of 450+ employees, this leads to inconsistent understanding of policies, procedures and expectations.
- The ALSDE Employee Handbook is in the process of being updated.
- A number of job descriptions are in the process of being rewritten.
- There is no clear path for advancement once a staff member reaches the title of ASA III.
- There is a large gap in job duties and required qualifications between Education Specialist I and Education Administrator I.

## Use of Clerical Staff and Other Administrative Support

There are 45 ASAs in total at the ALSDE. PCG held two (2) focus groups of ASA III staff totaling 16 ASA IIIs. The groups represented most sections and ranged in experience from less than a year to 40+ years. The groups were a representative sample of ASA III positions throughout the ALSDE. The following including a summary of key themes across these focus groups.

### ***What roles do you have in your sections?***

- Books and oversees reimbursement of travel expenses
- Writes memos for the section
- Supports staff who work out in the field
- Provides support to members of the section including Administrators and Education Specialists
- Supervises and reviews work of ASA II staff
- Generates A2s to order materials based on section staff requests through the procurement process
- Receives and distributes to the proper staff all paperwork from LEAs
- Works directly with LEAs to support their needs
- Coordinates contracts and proposals for the section
- Supports the contract development process
- Writes letters for administrators
- Disseminates information to LEAs daily
- Maintains database
- Answer calls from the public and tries to redirect to the correct section when needed
- Maintains section's property inventory of materials
- Coordinates all meetings, workshops, and conferences including the MEGA Conference
- Receives all paper applications for programs in section. In one program, there are 130 applications.

- Oversees the daily operations of the office
- “Other duties as needed.” In some instances, with staff vacancies, takes up work from others that needs to be completed even if not included in the Job Description

***What are opportunities for improvement?***

**Communication:**

- Dissemination of information is problematic.
- When changes happen, little information is shared with ASAs
- All staff ALSDE meetings are not informational, and instead feel like team building exercises.
- Routing process for memos is difficult and too cumbersome. Memos must be signed by many supervisors and administrators beginning with the section coordinator. It can take weeks for a memo to complete the routing process because it can be held up for multiple reasons or returned if the wrong letterhead is used.

**Personnel Related:**

- There is no succession or transition planning by HR.
- Once you reach the top level of an ASA III, there is no other step for promotion. There are many people who have worked in the ALSDE for 20+ years that have reached the top of the salary schedule.
- ASAs do not perceive an institutional respect for their role within the ALSDE.
- The ALSDE is the only state office that has no parking close by the office. It may not seem like a big deal, but it adds to the culture of not being valued
- The ALSDE has not had any emergency preparedness training.

**Training:**

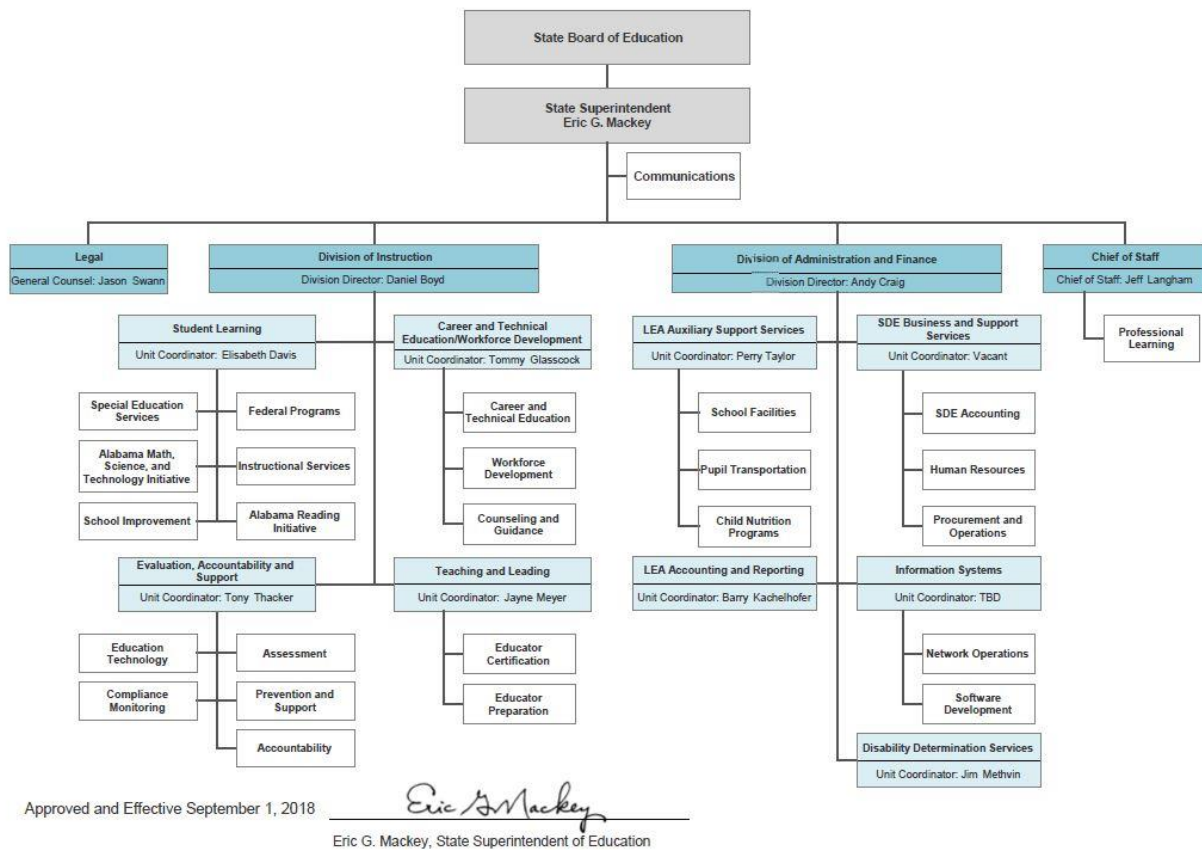
- Training is not available to develop new skills.

**Processes/Operations:**

- Processing travel is very difficult.
- Concur is a new electronic tool to submit out of state travel expenses. Once it is implemented throughout the ALSDE, it will have a big impact. ASAs will no longer be required to submit all travel expenses for the section.
- The A2 procurement process is time-consuming. Everyone must use A2 paper copies for requisitions, printing off five colored carbon copies A2 separately to be routed throughout the Dept. No one knows where the A2 is in the process until it either gets returned to be fixed or the product/service ordered arrives.
- The policies and procedures manual is outdated. It does not always represent the way the Department operates, making it difficult to hold others accountable to a process when it is unclear. There was an attempt to update the manual, but it never was completed.

## **Staffing Analysis: Support of ALSDE Functions**

The current ALSDE Organizational Chart was approved and effective September 1, 2018. The current organization is comprised of two Divisions: 1) the Division of Instruction and 2) the Division of Administration and Finance. Divisions are then divided at the unit level with various programs supporting the work of these units. There is also Legal, Communications and a Chief of Staff. The Professional Learning unit falls under the Chief of Staff.

**Exhibit 45. ALSDE Organizational Chart, effective September 1, 2018**

PCG requested all unit level organizational charts to better understand the staffing and distribution of responsibility related to the administration of specific programs. For some units, written Organizational Charts needed to be created to respond to our request. There is no common format or template for unit level organization charts. The ALSDE Organizational Chart above and all Unit level Organizational Charts can be found in Appendix E.

PCG also conducted an inventory of all merit positions by title and core responsibilities to better understand expectations and distribution of staff in these roles. This inventory can be found in Appendix H. There are 51 distinct position titles included in that inventory.

To understand the context behind the development of the current Organizational chart, PCG requested all Organizational Charts that have been created for or by the ALSDE over the past five years. PCG received nine, and we understand there may be more. Many of these appeared to be the result of leadership changes in the State Superintendent position.

Finally, PCG reviewed the Organizational Charts, department descriptions and staff titles of the states used for the NAEP comparative analysis to identify organizational trends among those states.

### Previous Organizational Studies

In 2017, the State Personnel Office contracted with Kenning Consulting to conduct an *Organization Effectiveness Study*. Recommendations from this study directly impacted current ALSDE reporting structures. Adopted changes were implemented by the ALSDE in April 2018. There are several findings in the report that still hold true. These are:

- There is a lack of clarity in the role of the Regional In-Service Centers. Is the focus a programmatic focus or an accounting focus for the pass-through funding?
- The organization structure is based on funding units instead of programmatic synergy.
- Having only 1 level of Educational Specialists limits the ALSDE's ability to levels of size and complexity of responsibility.

At the time of the report, the number of exempt positions was in excess of 30 positions. It was noted by most ALSDE staff interviewed that the impact of the Kenning Report on hiring decisions is pervasive and undergirds most staffing related decisions today. Many program staff indicated feeling constrained by personnel policies adopted as a result of this study. It was noted that with proper explanation and documented evidence of need, the State Personnel will typically grant position allowances.

PCG's concern with this study is that it looked at existing positions and right-sized the organization based on current roles and responsibilities. It did not determine if existing roles and responsibilities were appropriate or the best lever for supporting educational improvement in Alabama. PCG approached our organizational review with an education subject matter lens and reviewed the organizational structures for programmatic gaps or misalignment towards achieving the ALSDE's core functions.

### ***Recommended Organizational Structure***

PCG has reconsidered the organizational structure of the ALSDE with a lens towards increased accountability, assistance and support of school districts. The organizational structure should align with the *Strategy to Action Plan* and the core function of every program must be to improve student outcomes. PCG recommendations do not assume the need for additional FTEs, but rather a significant repositioning of job descriptions and responsibilities. Many of these new job descriptions require an increased professional skillset and deep subject matter expertise of the program area. PCG does not believe these proposed changes can or should be made quickly, as the organization does not currently have all the necessary people and structure to currently enact these changes. PCG recommends these changes occur over the next three years to ensure maximum impact.

PCG proposes the following Organizational Structure.

#### **Senior Leader Team:**

- 1- Direct reports to the State Superintendent include: Deputy Superintendent of Student Learning, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, Deputy Attorney General, Chief of Staff, Director of Strategic Communications, Board and Legislative Affairs, and Director of Data, Strategy and Internal Audit.
- 2- Expand Chief of Staff role to 1.0 FTE (currently at 0.5). Core job duties include:
  - a. Direct Support to State Superintendent
  - b. Strategic Initiatives
  - c. Policy Advisor
  - d. LEA Communications
  - e. Board Support
  - f. Cross-departmental Communications
  - g. Crisis Management
- 3- Expand current Communications Director role to encompass board communications, legislative affairs and oversight of a Problem Resolution unit.
  - a. The Problem Resolution should be the first and primary point of contact when a parent or other stakeholder calls the ALSDE with a specific complaint or concern. This role will be to either resolve the concern or route to the appropriate unit. All calls should be logged and tracked for timely resolution and consistent messaging.
  - b. Expand focus on strategic communications, including both external communications and internal messaging.
- 4- Legal: Move legislative affairs out of this team.

- 5- Chief of Staff's office: Dissolve the current Professional Learning Team. Move these duties to other units as described below.
- 6- Create a true Data Analysis, Strategy and Internal Audit Division to inform policy and practice and ensure ALSDE efficacy of practice.
  - a. All Strategic Planning should run through this office.
  - b. This Division should be charged with leading efforts to create culture of data use at the ALSDE and across Alabama's districts and schools.
  - c. Include a Project Management Office (PMO) to ensure consistent project management protocols and implementation planning procedures are followed. Require Project Management Professional (PMP) certification or equivalent for this role. The PMO would support all new initiatives and other large-scale implementations related to the strategic plan.
  - d. Create an Internal Audit team to ensure fidelity of program implementation and provide internal oversight.

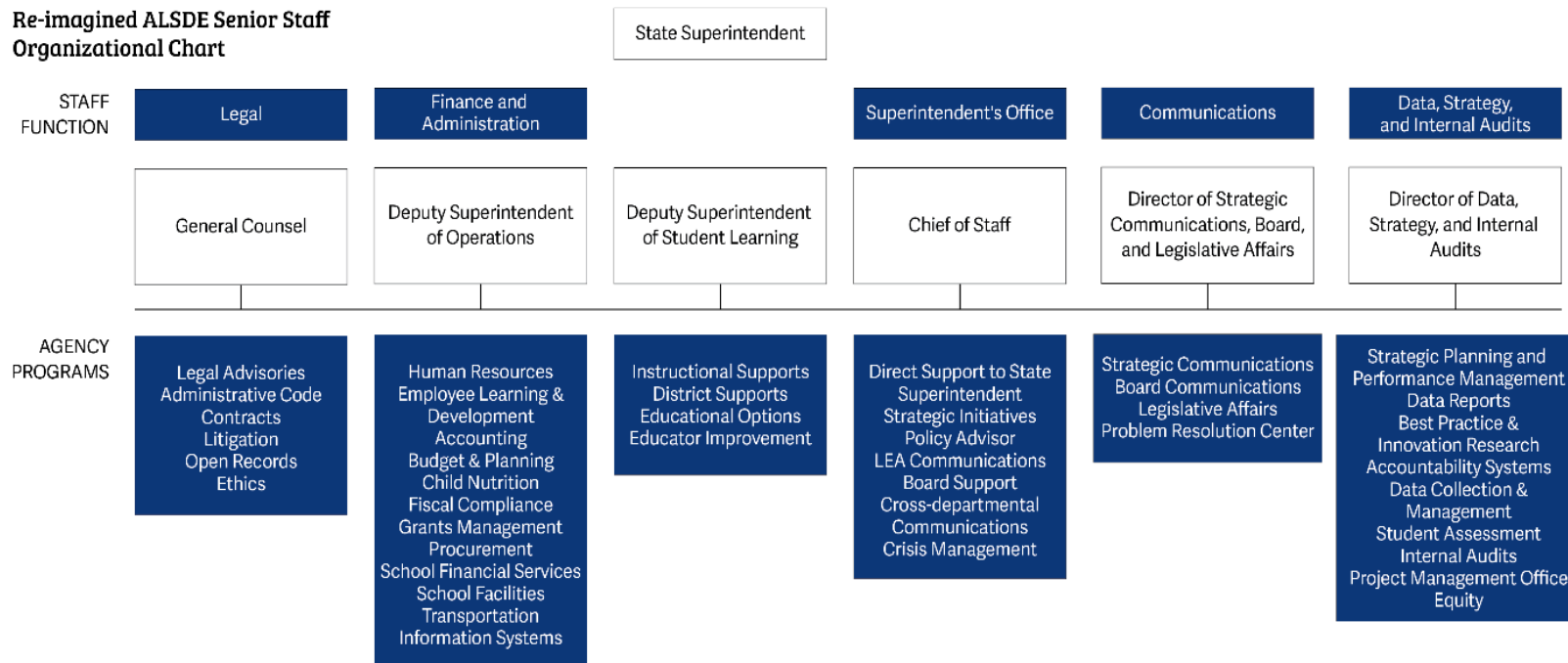
**Division of Student Learning:**

- 1- Change name of Division of Instruction to Division of Student Learning to redirect focus to end goal.
- 2- Reconfigure Division to align to core functions: 1) Implementation of Educational Standards; 2) LEA Accountability and Assistance; 3) Educator Quality and 4) Prepared Graduates.
- 3- Create a District Accountability and Assistance unit that has significantly more reach and responsibility than the current School Improvement Team.
- 4- Bring the responsibilities of the RICS in-house to become a true regional arm of the ALSDE. Assume this transition will be a multi-year endeavor.
- 5- Expand CTE to take a more comprehensive look at Career Readiness/Post-Secondary Success.
- 6- Create a section known as Innovative Schools that focuses on new models of school and innovative practice at the school and district level.
- 7- Expand the role of Teaching and Leading to include all aspects of Educator Quality.

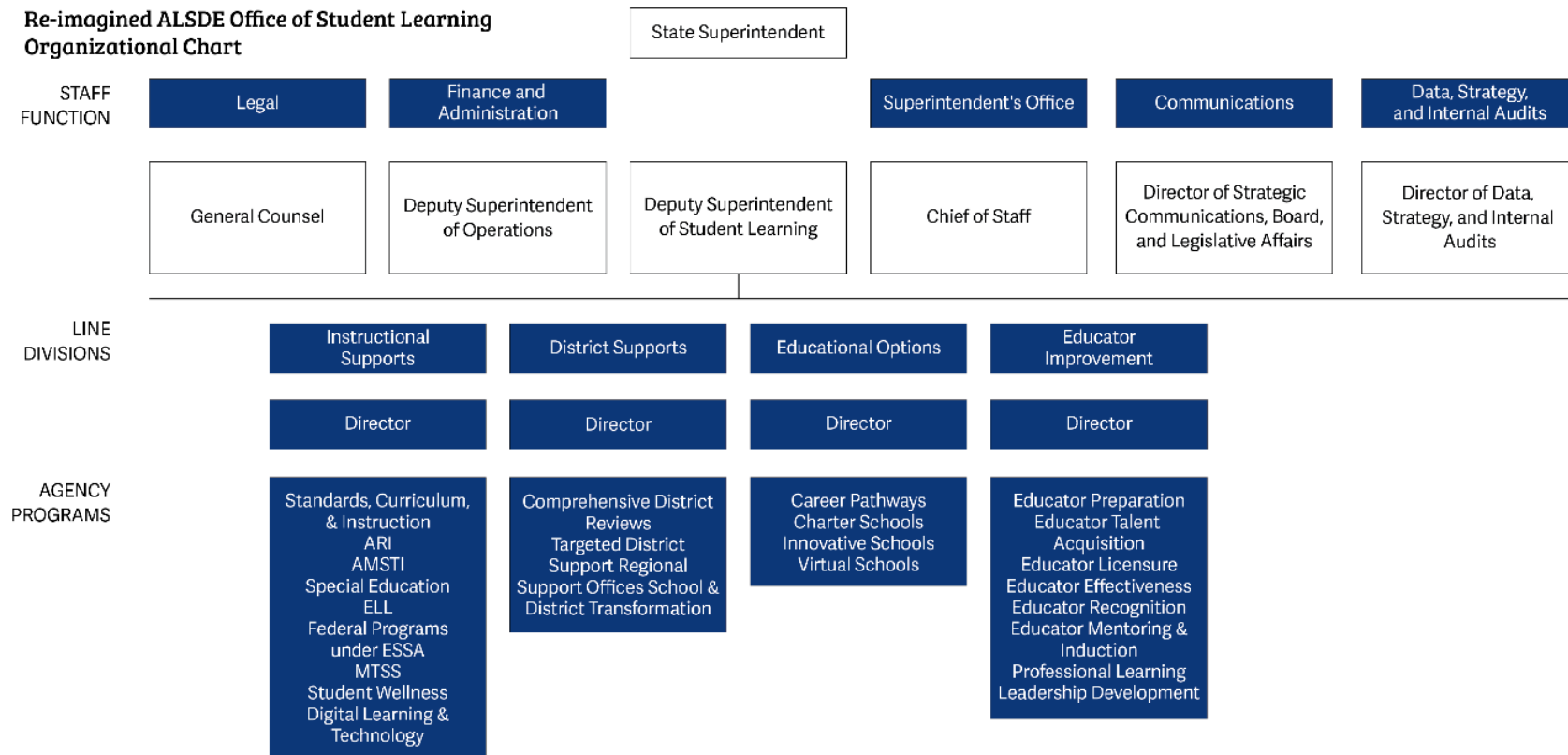
**Operations Division:**

- 1- Expand the role of Human Resources to Internal Employee Learning and Development to support staff growth and professionalization.
  - a. Onboarding
  - b. Professional Learning
  - c. Performance Monitoring and Employee Growth
  - d. Technology Trainer
  - e. Determine if some of HR's current duties could be moved to personnel.
- 2- Removal of DDS. As noted earlier, DDS does not support the core functions of the ALSDE. Additional detail provided in the recommendations.
- 3- Removal of non-school based Nutrition Services functions to the Department of Agriculture or another appropriate Agency.
- 4- All other functions remain as is.

**Exhibit 46. Re-imagined ALSDE Senior Leadership Organizational Chart**



**Exhibit 47. Re-imagined ALSDE Office of Student Learning Organizational Chart**



The following tables include the proposed core program and duties of the Division of Student Learning. PCG is recommending a significant reshuffling of current organization to better align to core functions. PCG recommends each of these units to be headed by senior-level leaders who have deep content expertise in their field and a history of proven success.

**Exhibit 48. Instructional Support Unit Programs and Duties**

| <b>Instructional Support Unit Programs and Duties</b>  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Standards, Curriculum and Instruction</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course of Studies</li> <li>• Curriculum Guides</li> <li>• Instructional Materials</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> <li>• Family Resources</li> </ul>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Alabama Reading Initiative</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration of the Alabama Reading Initiative</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration of the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Special Education</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies, Procedures and Guidance</li> <li>• Grants and Funding</li> <li>• Statewide IEP</li> <li>• Program Improvement Monitoring</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> <li>• Child Find</li> <li>• Early Childhood/Early Intervention</li> <li>• SPP/APR</li> <li>• Gifted</li> </ul> |
| <b>ELL</b>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies, Procedures and Guidance</li> <li>• Grants and Funding</li> <li>• Statewide ELL Plan</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Federal Programs ESSA</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of all Federal Programs under ESSA</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>MTSS</b>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies, Procedures and Guidance</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Student Wellness</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Nursing</li> <li>• 504</li> <li>• Counseling and Guidance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Education Technology</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Technology</li> <li>• PowerSchool Learning Modules</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**Exhibit 49. District Supports Unit Programs and Duties**

| <b>District Supports Unit Programs and Duties</b> |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Accountability Monitoring</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive District Reviews</li> <li>• Compliance Monitoring with a results-driven focus</li> </ul>                 |
| <b>Assistance</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted District Support</li> <li>• Regional Support Offices</li> <li>• School and District Transformation</li> </ul> |

**Exhibit 50. Educational Options Programs and Duties**

| <b>Educational Options Programs and Duties</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Career Pathways</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTE</li> <li>• Career Readiness/Planning</li> <li>• Work-based Learning</li> <li>• Vocational Technical Schools</li> <li>• Dual Enrollment/Early Colleges</li> <li>• Program Monitoring and Accountability</li> </ul> |
| <b>Charter Schools</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies, Procedures and Guidance</li> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Program Monitoring and Accountability</li> </ul>                                                                                         |
| <b>Virtual Schools and Online Learning</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies, Procedures and Guidance</li> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Program Monitoring and Accountability</li> </ul>                                                                                         |
| <b>Innovative Schools</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New models of schooling</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**Exhibit 51. Educator Improvement Programs and Duties**

| <b>Educator Improvement Programs and Duties</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Education Preparation</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education oversight of Ed Prep Programs</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Educator Talent Acquisition</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Alternative Certification Models</li> <li>• Educator Diversity</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Educator Licensure</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification</li> <li>• Recertification</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Educator Effectiveness and Support</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educator Evaluation</li> <li>• Educator Recognitions</li> <li>• Educator Mentoring and Induction</li> <li>• Leadership Development</li> <li>• Professional Learning (in collaboration with Instructional Supports as content experts)</li> </ul> |

## VII. Priority Recommendations

PCG saw ample evidence that the ALSDE has a foundation on which to build. As noted throughout this report, the Agency has many notable strengths including its willingness to participate in this review as part of a continuous improvement cycle.

However, without a sense of urgency and an unrelenting commitment to implementing the recommendations in this report with fidelity, the ALSDE will stagnate. Enacting change, the kind of change that will fundamentally improve outcomes of all students, requires focus, a strong vision from the State Superintendent and enacted by senior leadership staff, an appropriate allocation of resources, mandated professional learning, and clear, non-negotiable, accountability measures. This type of reform requires the involvement and commitment of every staff person and a willingness to establish high expectations for districts, schools and students.

The following are PCG's key, non-negotiable recommendations. Without faithful implementation of these five recommendations, all other organizational recommendations will have limited to no impact.

### 1. Take the Lead.

The ALSDE must take full ownership and accountability for student progress across Alabama. The ALSDE is responsible for both academic and social/emotional success of students, with the end goal of ensuring all graduates are prepared for life after high school. The ALSDE must establish their proper role as the state educational authority in Alabama and perform accordingly.

The ALSDE leadership must be bold but also collaborative. There are times when the ALSDE must take charge and bear full responsibility for aspects of reform, and other places where the ALSDE must set the conditions for others to assume leadership. Like an expert conductor, the ALSDE may not have the expertise to play all the instruments but through a combination of the use of outside experts, significantly involving the people in schools and districts that do the hardest work, and partnering with as many involved groups as possible, the Department can and should be able to move the State of Alabama forward in significant ways.

### 2. Develop and Implement a Strategy to Action Plan.

The ALSDE tends to be reactive primarily because it does not have a clear plan of action, leading to inconsistent decision-making. Decisions are in response to external pressure and appear to be quick fixes without regard to long term ramifications or connections to other initiatives within the Department or the State.

The ALSDE must develop a comprehensive, detailed and transparent *Strategy to Action Plan* with defined steps and activities, financial implications, milestones, deadlines and results. This *Strategy to Action Plan* should guide the implementation of all recommendations in this report. As a first step, the ALSDE will need to inventory and consolidate all existing plans to ensure all staff are working towards the same goals. To ensure transparency and partnership, the ALSDE must institute routine and public progress updates. An iterative Strategic Communications Plan should be developed and implemented to communicate the *Strategy to Action Plan*. Regular progress updates should be provided to the Alabama State Legislature, the State Board of Education, Superintendents and all of Alabama's citizens.

### 3. Focus First on the Priorities.

There is much to address but beginning with a few, clear critical initiatives is the only way to galvanize the State to move in the right direction. The *Strategy to Action Plan* must drive this prioritization.

**STANDARDS:** For the next year, the core focus must be on the adoption of the Reading and Math Course of Study at the local level. If teachers understand these standards and align their instruction to them, student achievement will improve. The ALSDE must implement a detailed Communications, Professional Learning, and Technical Assistance Plan to support standards adoption. Equally, state testing should be used as an improvement tool to ensure instruction is aligned to the standards. The ALSDE needs to begin immediately to prepare to analyze the results of the new state tests and provide critical data to schools and districts. The ALSDE must ensure local educators have detailed data to examine test results and to connect the test items to the standards. The release of test items will also be an important tool for local educators. The ALSDE should also look for ways to disseminate classroom teaching practices that are working across the state to get results.

**STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM:** The pending PowerSchool implementation has the potential to substantially impact how schools and districts function. For the first time, all systems, schools and teachers across Alabama will have access to the same learning management, student information, reporting and analytics tools. The scale of this initiative is huge. An equal and prioritized focus must be placed on this roll-out to ensure implementation success.

#### 4. Hold Schools and Districts Accountable.

Student performance and compliance with state and federal requirements is the responsibility of local schools and districts. The ALSDE must hold all schools and districts accountable for their performance in an actionable way. Current accountability structures do not incite needed urgency at the local level. For example, only 38% of all students and 20% of Black students statewide were considered proficient in Science by Alabama measures in 2019, yet the state received a letter grade of B on the State Report Card. Accountability and assistance must be closely linked to produce continuous and sustainable improvement. Strengthen the ALSDE's ability to provide targeted, coordinated and deep technical assistance for schools and districts that have demonstrated the inability to do it on their own.

#### 5. Significantly Reorganize the ALSDE Internally.

Substantial structural changes must occur at the ALSDE to implement the recommendations in this report. The organizational structure should align with the *Strategy to Action Plan* and the core function of every program must be to improve student outcomes. All staff employed by the ALSDE should have the core skills and competencies needed to do their job well. There needs to be a significant focus on the professionalization of staff, including a deep investment in staff training. The current hiring process also needs to be revisited in collaboration with the State Personnel Office. Outdated internal systems and paper-based practices are unnecessarily time-consuming and limit productivity. Streamlining procedures and moving to electronic systems across the ALSDE has the potential to significantly improve outputs.

## VIII. Additional Recommendations

### Standards, Accountability, and Assistance

1. **Accountability.** Accountability and assistance must be closely linked to produce continuous and sustainable improvement.
  - a. Modernize data and analytics systems, improve analytic capabilities, and place data at the center of all policy discussions in public education.
  - b. The Accountability unit primarily functions as an internal data analytics shop. Broaden the role of accountability to focus on policy, research, and district guidance to drive the school improvement conversation.
  - c. There is a wealth of data used to produce School Report Cards. Develop data reports, policy briefs and analytics tools that can support local decision-making. These should be publicly available.
2. **Report Card.** The current School and District Report Card Develop should be refined to improve stakeholder clarity and ensure accurate understanding.
  - a. Be more explicit about the formula that is used to calculate a school or district's letter grade on the Record Card.
  - b. Review state-level formula inputs to reconsider if state letter grade should be a "B." If deemed appropriate, Report Card should more clearly justify how this letter grade was determined.
  - c. Use icons such as arrows to demonstrate upward or downward growth.
  - d. Provide comparative data to allow for end users to understand how a school or district performs against other districts and the state overall.
  - e. Develop user guides and videos to orient stakeholders to better understand how letter grades are calculated and how to interpret data shared.
  - f. Determine if there is the ability to suppress certain data fields that are not relevant to certain grade spans (i.e., graduation rates at the elementary level). The inclusion of the term "no data" can be misleading to some end users.
  - g. Consider how assigned letter grades align to other accountability systems.
3. **Education Funding.** Alabama's education funding model does not differentiate based on student need or poverty level.
  - a. Review impact of adopting a weighted student-based funding model (foundation formula model) to align to national best practice.
4. **Graduation Rates.** The current graduation rate in Alabama is 90%, yet a quarter of all students must take remedial courses in Alabama's colleges. Given NAEP scores and remedial course taking rates, determine if requirements for graduation are too low.
5. **School Improvement.** Strengthen the scope and capacity of this team to better drive school improvement.
  - a. The CSI team charged with providing the support is small and under resourced. Most NAEP states reviewed have a cadre of staff to support this function. In addition, these states augment with outside partners who have expertise, experience and success working with low performing schools, both in rural and urban areas.
  - b. Create incentives to ensure schools and districts use their resources to improve student outcomes rather than fill in budget gaps within the districts.
6. **Innovation.** Create an Innovation Unit to allow districts and schools flexibility to implement practices that best support their community and incubate new ideas. Increased accountability measured by student outcomes must be a non-negotiable component of granting increased flexibility.
7. **Compliance Monitoring.** Monitoring is solely focused on compliance indicators. Determine if there are opportunities to augment monitoring elements to emphasize results/student outcomes.

- a. The ALSDE uses a risk score to determine onsite monitoring each year. Consider how districts that are frequently identified as high risk would benefit from more intensive or mandated technical assistance from compliance monitoring or other program staff.
- b. Compliance reports (outside of special education) are not currently posted online. Not sharing this data inhibits accountability and transparency. This is particularly true for Correction Action Plans (CAPs).
- c. PowerSchool may help to streamline the monitoring process.

## Governance

8. **State Board of Education.** Facilitate annual board retreats and other board trainings to set board expectations, priorities and roles. The Chief of Staff should serve as the first point of contact for board inquiries and questions.
9. **State Leadership.** Strengthen two-way communication with the State legislature. Communication should be frequent, meaningful and led by the State Superintendent.
10. **Strategic Plan.** Finalize and disseminate the draft Strategic Plan as a *Strategy to Action Plan*.
  - a. Be explicit on strategic actions
  - b. Set metrics and track progress towards goals
  - c. Provide regular public updates on plan progress

## Internal Functions

11. **Reorganization of the ALSDE.** Implement the significant organizational changes outlined earlier in this report to better align the ALSDE to its core functions. These include:
  - a. Expand Chief of Staff role to 1.0 FTE (currently at 0.5).
  - b. Expand current Communications Director role to encompass board communications, legislative affairs and oversight of a Problem Resolution unit.
  - c. Legal: Move legislative affairs out of this team.
  - d. Dissolve the current Professional Learning Team. Move these duties to other sections.
  - e. Create a true Data Analysis, Strategy, and Internal Audit Division to inform policy and practice and ensure the ALSDE's efficacy of practice.
  - f. Reconfigure Division of Instruction to align to core functions: 1) Implementation of Educational Standards; 2) LEA Accountability and Assistance; 3) Educator Quality and 4) Prepared Graduates.
  - g. Create a District Accountability and Assistance unit that has significantly more reach and responsibility than the current School Improvement Team.
  - h. Expand the role of Teaching and Leading to include all aspects of Educator Quality.
12. **Personnel.** In close collaboration with the State Personnel Office, relax personnel requirements for a 24-month period to allow the ALSDE to have the most effective staff in place to support the implementation and delivery of all recommendations in this report. Monitor activity closely to ensure appropriate staffing decisions.
13. **Regional or Satellite Offices.** Many programs are heavily field-based and staff waste significant time on travel. Regional satellite centers may support efficiency and increase the pool of quality job candidates. Conduct a cost analysis study to determine the long-term feasibility of a regional model.
14. **Current Facilities.** The current space in the Gordon Persons building is not conducive to a collaborative or productive working environment. Staff are siloed, spread across multiple floors with another Agency wedged between, and the layout is confusing and not welcoming to visitors. Develop a plan to move to a facility that better supports the core functions of the ALSDE. Consider how a building move might be coupled with a regional office approach.
15. **Human Resources.** Realign the work of Human Resources to make its core focus the professionalization and development of staff. Consider if some existing job functions could be transferred to the Payroll Office to better support this repositioning of responsibilities. Duties at a minimum should include:

- a. Onboarding Program for Staff
  - b. Professional Learning Program, differentiated by staff role, experience and learning needs
  - c. Performance Monitoring and Employee Growth
  - d. Technology Training
  - e. Written documentation on staff expectations, job descriptions, human resources policies and procedures.
- 16. Job Ladders.** Determine if there is opportunity for internal professional growth and advancement through greater stratification in job titles.
- a. Enhance opportunities for clerical staff that excel at the ASA III level
  - b. Differentiate roles at the Education Specialist level to include at least an Education Specialist II position
- 17. Legal Services.** Develop systems to ensure better tracking of activities to allow for consistent practices and more informed decision-making.
- a. Procure a Case Management System to create a shared database that allows for document sharing, better record keeping, time tracking and trend analysis.
  - b. Log calls received and resolution from school districts, families and other stakeholders. Conduct regular analysis of issues received by type, district and outcome to determine areas where Agency guidance, policies or other proactive measures might lessen or eliminate concerns.
  - c. Review Board of Adjustment claim activity over the past 24 months, including frequency of low dollar claims, to determine if policy changes should be made to current practices.
  - d. Analyze type and frequency of legal support provided directly to school districts to determine if many of these activities should be local obligations. Develop written guidance around when legal services should be provided at the state level versus district managed.
- 18. Information Technology.** Continue to set the expectation that the role of IT is to function as an internal Fee for Service unit for the ALSDE programs. Program staff must own all business requirements development, system design, and final approval of all IT development activities.
- a. Several IT solutions are developed and hosted internally. Before new design updates occur, consider if existing technologies can be procured that fit system requirements. For example, the Child Nutrition application needs to be rewritten. Consider off-the-shelf solutions through an RFI process prior to developing in house.
  - b. Analyze purchasing trends over the past 24 months to determine if a P-Card would expedite purchasing turnaround time on low dollar items.
  - c. The IT department reported challenges in recruiting qualified staff under current State Personnel practices. As such, several employees are in long-term contract positions. Consider if current hiring procedures should be revised to better attract more qualified candidates to these positions.
  - d. Adopt Agency-wide internal document sharing practices to allow for better collaboration amongst staff and with school districts. For example, use of Microsoft SharePoint, Teams and OneDrive would greatly increase collaborative work habits.
  - e. Agency staff would benefit from additional training in Microsoft Office Applications and other technology use. Target ASA and Education Specialist staff first. This function should be an HR responsibility with IT input.
- 19. Written Procedures.** There is an absence of written policies, procedures, manuals and guidance used to drive internal work. Ensure procedures have written documentation that is consistent across programs (where relevant) and is regularly updated. This should be housed in an electronic format in a location that is readily accessible to all staff.
- 20. Emergency Management.** Practice safety drills with an emergency management internal team. While the ALSDE is focused on upgrading security and ensuring safety drills are being held in schools and districts around the state, the ALSDE has been remiss with that same focus with their own building and staff.

- 21. Purchasing/Procurement Process.** Streamline the purchasing/procurement process to reduce the number of steps and signatures.
- The ALSDE is working on a technology requisition system with a targeted completion date of summer 2020. Confirm this system will increase timeliness and ease of procurement process.
- 22. Memo Routing Processes.** Streamline the routing processes for memos, letters and contracts to improve internal efficiencies and communication with school districts.
- Convert paper-based memo writing process to an electronic format. Electronic routing will allow for better standardization, internal tracking for timeliness, and reduce the risk of lost or misplaced documentation.
  - Reduce the number of required signatures to only those whose review is critical.
  - Develop a Style Guide and Memo Template so that all staff are aware of memo writing formatting expectations.
  - Provide training to all new staff on memo writing processes to ensure consistent practices.
- 23. Child Nutrition Program.** Conduct an in-depth review of the current structures and function of this program to ensure efficacy, compliance and aligned practices. The Child Nutrition Program currently oversees several programs that are provided elsewhere in other states.
- Consider moving all non-school based nutrition programs to the Department of Agriculture or other suitable agency. This would likely include: Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Emergency Food Assistance Program, and the Child and Adult Care Program.
  - Review internal operations that adhere to federal regulations. Many recent audit findings, while easily correctable, are due to a lack of oversight within the section.
  - Consider reviewing the expectations of the staff and section leadership. The Child Nutrition Program currently oversees a staff of 37+ and oversees more than 11 programs without an administrator assigned to lead the section. Making changes to roles and responsibilities within the section may ensure more oversight leading to less audit findings.
  - Ensure a customer service orientation to all aspects of Child Nutrition program delivery.

## Communications

- 24. Complaint and Inquiry Management.** There is not a centralized location for families and other stakeholders to call when there are a potential concerns or questions. In its absence, multiple individuals are answering calls that are outside of their core work, callers are often bounced around or receive misinformation, and there is no centralized knowledge of the types of calls received.
- Create a unit to receive inquiries and complaints from families and other stakeholders to streamline process for callers. This unit should set up systems to ensure appropriate logging of calls, consistency of communication, and ensure problem resolution.
  - Elevate calls to appropriate individuals in other units as needed.
  - Conduct trend analysis to identify greatest areas of concern for callers.
- 25. External Communications to All Stakeholders.** Create a Strategic Communications Plan that ensures consistent, frequent and targeted messaging to all constituents. The Strategic Communications Plan should be regularly revisited and updated to reflect current messaging needs. At a minimum this Communication Plan should include:
- An updated, website that is friendly to all end users.
    - Include a plan for how the website will be maintained and frequently updated.
    - New website should be mobile-friendly and meet accessibility standards.
    - Develop content guidelines to ensure all information on website serves a purpose, is informative, and accurate
    - The new website is in development with a target roll out date of July 2020. Track progress to ensure an on-time launch.
  - A social media strategy to target messages around key reform initiatives to engage stakeholders, educate and build community.

- i. See Tennessee's #TNBestforALL campaign as an example.
  - c. A media relations strategy to ensure calculated deployment of media to tell the ALSDE's story.
  - d. Identification of metrics and tracking of these metrics to determine awareness, engagement and consumers. Web-based applications such Google Analytics to track website traffic and Hootsuite for social media management can support metric analysis.
  - e. Update logo and Style Guide to communicate a more contemporary, energized message to stakeholders.
  - f. Presentation (i.e., PowerPoint) and report templates to ensure consistent and professional materials are used.
  - g. Targeted communications plans should be developed for all key and new initiatives, and should including branding, identification of target audiences, messaging and metrics. These should be mutually owned by the Communications Department and the respective program area.
- 26. Communications to Districts.** Current written communications to Superintendents and other school district leaders comes in the form of disparate memos. Develop a streamlined newsletter that can be used to communicate overall messaging and strategy, along with formal guidance.

## Educator Workforce

- 27. Teacher Certification Process.** Significant changes must be made to the current teacher certification and recertification process to remove inefficient processes, redundancies and opportunities for human error. Improvements should also reduce the reliance on paper-based processes. The LeanFrog Report was comprehensive, and recommendations are aligned to PCG's findings.
- a. Release an RFI to determine if a vendor solution may meet the ALSDE needs prior to implementing a web-based solution in house.
- 28. Educator Effectiveness.** Finalize and implement the new Teacher Evaluation System. Develop a detailed implementation plan that includes a comprehensive Communications Strategy and Professional Learning Approach so that all teachers understand new expectations prior to roll-out.
- 29. National Board-Certified Teachers (NBCT).** Review effectiveness of National Board-Certified Teacher pay supplemental to determine if program has intended outcomes. Revise policy as necessary depending on data review. At a minimum, analyze:
- a. Achievement outcomes for students taught by an Alabama NBCT versus others.
  - b. % of those receiving the NBCT pay supplemental who are current classroom teachers versus in those other positions.
  - c. Efficacy of the additional \$5,000 supplement for NBCT teachers in identified struggling schools.
  - d. Distribution of NBCT teachers across the state by school demographics.
- 30. Teacher Recruitment and Retention.** Prioritize and implement the 33 recommendations from the Teacher Taskforce Report.
- a. Develop an implementation roadmap to develop a multi-year plan and ensure accountability to timelines.
  - b. Determine if there is the opportunity to implement a statewide alternative certification and consider other outside of the box approaches to teacher retention.

## Disability Determination Services

- 31. Disability Determination Services (DDS).** DDS processes claims for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability claims. It does not perform a direct K-12 educational function. Given this and the below data, PCG recommends moving DDS to another Agency outside of the ALSDE.

- a. DDS is an outlier to the ALSDE. The section provides different services than any other section but uses many ALSDE resources. The resources include:
  - i. Finance- Reports and is supervised by CFO. Receives services from the SDE Business and Support Services
  - ii. Human Resources- Manages all aspects of 406 employees (almost the size of the rest of the ALSDE). Hires from 8 different registers.
  - iii. Legal- Reviews all contracts, which may be 50+ in a month
  - iv. Accounting
  - v. Procurement- Ordering goes through the ALSDE procurement process
  - vi. IT Department
- b. The ALSDE staff report the unit to be high functioning and well-managed, with indirect costs covering all operational expenses. However, the DDS Director has served in the Department for 45 years and PCG's assumption is retirement will be forthcoming. It is highly likely that shifting to new leadership will put a strain on the ALSDE and initially impact services.
- c. In analyzing NAEP states, the DDS programs are not located under the State Departments of Education with the exception of NH, which has it under Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the DOE. The list of states are as follows:
  - i. Florida- Department of Health
  - ii. Mississippi- Department of Rehabilitation Services
  - iii. Massachusetts- Office on Disability
  - iv. Tennessee- Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services
  - v. NH- Department of Education- Voc Rehab Services
  - vi. Wyoming- Department of Health
  - vii. New Jersey- Department of Human Services
  - viii. Minnesota- Department of Human Services
- d. Uncoupling a department that has been with the ALSDE for 50+ years will be complicated and may take legislative involvement. However, making changes that align with other successful NAEP states will ensure that all services being provided are focused on education, which must become the priority.

## Coordination with Other Agencies

- 32. Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE):** The work of DECE directly impacts a student's learning trajectory.
  - a. Strengthen communication with the DECE's Office of School Readiness to ensure for greater policy alignment and more streamlined experiences for families and schools specifically as it relates to Pre-K and the PK-3 Early Learning Continuum.
  - b. Ensure coordination between Early Invention and Special Education to better support families of children who qualify for these services.
  - c. Develop intentional partnership strategies with DECE to promote overall school readiness.
- 33. Department of Mental Health.** Expand to school-based mental health collaboration to increase access to mental health professionals across the state.
- 34. Alabama Commission on Higher Education.**
  - a. Strengthen partnership to increase student access to and participate in dual enrollment opportunities.
  - b. Increase data sharing to allow for better tracking of students' post-secondary outcomes.

## Improved Instruction and Supports to Districts

- 35. Career Readiness and Workforce Readiness.**

- a. Leverage external initiatives to expand current focus. The Governor's "Strong Start, Strong Finish" initiative prioritizes the education to workforce pipeline. Perkins V requires intensified focus on academic standards and alignment to workforce development.
- b. Calling the unit "CTE" limits the vast scope of workforce preparation activities this office can and should perform.
- c. The CTE Director role is currently vacant. This provides an opportunity to broaden role to greater encompass "college, career, and life" readiness.
- d. Develop a P-20W statewide longitudinal data system to support tracking of post-secondary outcomes.
- e. Develop a statewide system for K-12 career exploration and planning.
- f. Require individual career plans for all students in grades 6-12.
- g. The Graduation Tracking System serves as an early warning tool to identify students off-track to graduate at the local level. It is unclear to PCG how and if this is still used.
- h. Deploy CTE pathway-aligned models of work-based learning and dual enrollment.
- i. Credentials tracked for the CCR Accountability metric should be aligned to regional labor market data and tied to high-growth, high-demand, and high-wage sectors.
- j. Partner with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship to increase work-based learning opportunities for students.

**36. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).** An MTSS Taskforce formed this year to begin to develop state guidance on an MTSS framework. MTSS is a decision-making framework that enables schools to proactively identify student's strengths and needs based on data and use of evidence-based practices. MTSS address both academics and student's social-emotional needs. MTSS should be a core component to how school districts build the necessary supports to ensure the success of all students.

- a. Develop written guidance for districts to understand the philosophy, model and required components.
- b. Design a professional development strategy that ensures training is provided to all districts.
- c. Given the complexity of this work, consider engaging with a national expert to facilitate framework design and implementation strategy.

### **37. Mathematics**

- a. Aggressively disseminate the new Math standards across the State. Since they represent what Alabama students should know and be able to do in Mathematics at the various grade levels, the most important audience are teachers, local administrators, and parents. Less detailed documents need to be shared across the State with families, community members and other stakeholders.
- b. Lead the initiative of unpacking the new math standards and use all resources available to train coaches and teachers to implement the standards with fidelity. With the support of regional centers, all schools throughout the state should have access to the support it needs to adhere to the more rigorous standards. Data should lead this roll out process with the districts serving the bottom 6% of schools receiving priority.
- c. Track AMSTI impact on teacher practice. Create systems for data collection using multiple measures outlined below to monitor progress throughout the implementation. Link multiple data sources and monitoring progress toward measurable goals.
  - i. Define the strategies needed to achieve the ALSDE's vision of improved student achievement in mathematics as well as measure whether the instructional strategies are effective.
  - ii. Ensure strategies are in place to ensure long-term, sustainable results
  - iii. Identify the current performance for both teacher effectiveness and student achievement against the measures (baseline data) and the target performance desired at predetermined points.
  - iv. Recognize when strategic shifts are needed to accomplish the ALSDE goals without a big lapse in time.

- d. Break down the silo between AMSTI and Instructional Services. While one of the Instructional Services tasks is to develop Courses of Study (standards), there appears to be a lack of communication and collaboration between members of each team.
  - i. Schedule consistent time set aside for the math and science education specialists to collaborate and plan to provide supports to the LEAs.
- 38. Gifted Education.** Gifted Education only has one staff member. As a result, the predominant focus is on compliance.
  - a. Prioritize the hiring on current vacancy to allow for a greater focus on technical assistance and professional learning.
  - b. Determine if this role should remain housed within special education or stand on its own.
  - c. Gifted Education is not on the Cognia system for Compliance monitoring. For a lack of another system, monitoring data reports are currently shared via email. Move to a more secure data/document sharing platform.
- 39. English Language Learners.** The number of English Language Learners in Alabama is growing. Current services are disjointed and spread among multiple sections. Hire a statewide ELL administrator to develop a strategic approach to support this population.
- 40. Special Education.** Consider how all activities of this section work to help school districts raise the level of and access to high levels of rigor as well as generate a culture of academic optimism for students with IEPs.
  - a. Under the revised Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) framework, the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has sharpened its focus on what happens in the classroom to promote educational benefits and improve outcomes and results for students with disabilities. The accountability system that existed prior to the new one placed substantial emphasis on procedural compliance, but it often did not consider how requirements affected the learning outcomes of students.<sup>25</sup> RDA offers a strategic opportunity for Special Education to shift programmatic emphasis and monitoring towards a greater emphasis on outcomes.
  - b. Monitor state IEP system in PowerSchool to ensure it supports reporting and monitoring needs.
- 41. Regional In-Service Centers (RICs).** Conduct a feasibility study to determine if the functions of the RICs can and should be moved in-house to the ALSDE. In the interim, do the following:
  - a. Expect all Regional In-Service Centers to align to the 2019 Accountability Standards. They should be posted on every website and RICs should be held accountable to meeting them.
  - b. Set minimum expectations for all websites. There should be an easily accessible and updated monthly professional development calendar. Expecting educators to spend time searching for professional learning on a RIC website will not encourage them to sign up for learning that they need to support student achievement.
  - c. Provide more focus on supporting training for ALSDE's initiatives. It is difficult for educators to travel hours to attend a training in Montgomery. The advantage of RICs is that all Alabama educators have the same opportunity to receive high-quality professional learning no matter where they are located. With the Alabama Literacy Act in effect, teachers need as much support as possible to achieve the lofty goal of all students reading on grade level by the end of third grade. Every Regional Center should be contributing to this effort.
  - d. Build a stronger collaboration with the ALSDE. The oversight and accountability of the RICs is difficult to understand. Many are unclear as to "who is in charge." Set the expectations for all Regional In-Service Centers and how will those expectations be measured.
- 42. Whole Child Wellness/Prevention and Support Services**

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<sup>25</sup> April 5, 2012, RDA Summary, U.S. Department of Education. [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/rdasummary.doc](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/rdasummary.doc)

- a. Create mission and vision for a comprehensive approach to whole child wellness and align resources and services to that mission.
  - b. Develop stronger communication and collaboration between Prevention and Support and other sections such as special education and instructional services.
- 43. MEGA Conference.** The MEGA Conference provides many different educator groups with an opportunity to gather, connect, and learn. While the sessions are large in number, the focus and goals of the Conference are not clear. There is substantial effort on the ALSDE staff to support this conference.
- a. Review the goals of the MEGA conference and determine if the current delivery format meets those goals.
  - b. All MEGA Conference sessions should explicitly link to the ALSDE's goals as well as align to the Alabama's professional learning standards. When educators choose which session(s) to attend, they should clearly know what goal and/or strategy that is aligned to the session(s). Including a vast array of short professional learning sessions that are limited in their connection to the Department's initiatives is a missed opportunity.
- 44. Virtual Learning.** The ACCESS virtual learning program provides equal access to high quality instruction to all student learners across the state.
- a. Continue to expand to capacity to increase course enrollment.
  - b. Continue to expand AP and other advanced course offerings. Based on the ACCESS course catalogue, there are 10 AP courses offered out of the 39 available from the College Board.
  - c. Use data to drive program design. Analyze and publish course success rates and enrollment trends to refine offerings. Determine course taking impact on college and career readiness.
- 45. PowerSchool Implementation.** The implementation of PowerSchool statewide has the potential exponentially improve educator, school, and district practice. By summer 2020, the Student Information System will be fully implemented statewide. By school year 2020-21, educators are expected to fully use all modules in the system. Statewide technology implementations are challenging, particularly ones that requires a dramatic shift in educator practice. Thoughtful and focused attention and long-term scenario planning must be given to ensure adoption success. While current PowerSchool training will focus on access to and use of the technologies, it is imperative that the ALSDE is developing subject matter guidance and complementary professional learning that will ensure deep adoption and long-term impact.
- a. Ensure educators and administrators have multiple and relevant opportunities for system trainings that focus on practical applications.
  - b. Develop structures and guidance to support a data culture and inquiry-based thinking in schools and districts.
  - c. Develop a training plan to ensure educators, administrators, and technology coordinators know how to understand and apply data.
  - d. Create canned reports to encourage appropriate usage of analytics tools among less experienced end users and to create efficiencies among all end users.
  - e. Develop criteria to determine professional learning quality control on the Learning Management System.
  - f. Embed PowerSchool into all professional learning opportunities offered by the ALSDE. Ensure that RICs are doing the same.
  - g. Require all ALSDE staff to participate in end user training to ensure system understanding.
  - h. Launch a Communications Campaign that brands the tool specific to Alabama, generates system awareness, and creates excitement.
- 46. Charter Schools.** The Alabama School Choice and Opportunity Act passed by the legislature in 2016 ensures the likelihood that charter schools will be part of the educational landscape within Alabama in the upcoming years. Although the law was passed four years ago, charter school openings are still in their infancy stage with currently only four (4) opened and operated within the

state. With that said, more charter school applications are in progress and the ALSDE anticipates three (3) additional openings in the near future. Currently, the ALSDE has one person serving in the role of liaising between the ALSDE, the charter school operator, and the Alabama Public Charter School Commission. As the state begins to support these new schools, consider the following:

- a. Communicate internally the role that the ALSDE has in the support and oversight of charter schools. When probing about charter schools with ALSDE staff, there was a lot of confusion regarding roles and responsibilities of staff.
- b. Separate charter schools from virtual schools on the ALSDE website as well as internally. There is a lot of information focused on charter schools, but it is confusing when both entities share the same webpage. As more potential operators need pertinent information to launch a new charter school, that page will become a lifeline.
- c. Design a plan to build out the ALSDE staff for this team. One person as the liaison, but also providing technical assistance to new charter schools is unsustainable as the numbers grow.

## IX. Appendix

The Appendix includes the following sections:

- A. PCG Team
- B. NAEP Comparison State Sample Selection
- C. NAEP Performance Comparison
- D. NAEP Sample State Education Agency Organizational Charts
- E. Sample of ALSDE Organizational Charts
- F. Total CSI Allocations and School Improvement Strategies, by School
- G. CSI Schools and Academic Target Attainment
- H. Department Merit-Based Pay Position Descriptions
- I. List of Reviewed Documents

## A. PCG Team

PCG's team members include:

**Anna d'Entremont** served as the **Project Lead** and was responsible for all project oversight. Anna brings two decades of education and management experience to this project. She has a strong background in understanding the organizational policies and practices essential to support program and process improvement. She has worked with numerous schools, districts and state education agencies across the country delivering consulting services, including audits, strategic planning and guiding educational leaders through change management. State-level clients include the Delaware Department of Education, Minnesota Office of Higher Education, Rhode Island Department of Education and the Massachusetts Department of Education among others. Prior to joining PCG in 2008, Anna was the Director of Operations of the Edward W. Brooke Charter School in Boston, MA. In this role, she served as co-director and the operational leader of a high-performing K-8 urban charter school. Anna also worked as a Program Officer at New Visions for Public Schools, where she managed a diverse portfolio of initiatives designed to support and develop innovation in 85 new small high schools across New York City. Anna began her career as a bilingual kindergarten teacher for the Houston Independent School District and as an elementary school ESL teacher in the DC Public Schools. She is also a Teach for America alumna and received her Ed.M. in Education Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University.

**Dr. David Driscoll** served as **Senior Advisor for State Agency Leadership**. He has ensured that all recommendations are grounded in best practices and reflect the realities and constraints of state education agencies. Commissioner Driscoll has a 55-year career in public education and educational leadership. A former secondary school mathematics teacher, he was named Melrose Assistant Superintendent in 1972 and Superintendent of Schools in the same community in 1984. He served in that role until 1993, when he was appointed Massachusetts Deputy Commissioner of Education, just days after the state's Education Reform Act was signed into law. He became Interim Commissioner of Education on July 1, 1998 and was named Commissioner on March 10, 1999.

As Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Driscoll held several key leadership roles, both in the external affairs of the Department and in internal management. He was the Principal Investigator for the National Science Foundation's mathematics and science program in Massachusetts, PALMS, and was instrumental in 1997 in gaining the NSF's approval of a second five-year round of funding for this initiative. He was also appointed to oversee the implementation of the state agreement on management and governance of the Lawrence Public Schools. As Interim Commissioner, Dr. Driscoll worked with Governor Cellucci, Senate President Birmingham and House Speaker Finneran to pass the state's "12-62 Plan," a law aimed at enhancing future educator quality. The program gained national recognition for its accelerated teacher education and bonus programs, both aimed at encouraging mid-career professionals to become classroom teachers. As Commissioner, Dr. Driscoll oversaw the development of the state's curriculum frameworks, implementation and expansion of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the development of the state's School and District Accountability System and the development and administration of the Educator Certification Test and new licensure regulations. These initiatives and others have led to consistent annual improvement in student achievement as measured by state standards (MCAS) national measures (NAEP, SAT) and international tests (TIMMS). In 2005 Massachusetts was named the first state to ever earn the highest scaled score in the nation on all four NAEP exams.

Dr. Driscoll earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics at Boston College, his master's degree in Educational Administration from Salem State College, and his Doctorate in Education Administration from Boston College. Dr. Driscoll has served on a number of national Boards including K-12Inc., Alliance for Excellent Education, US Education Delivery Institute and Teach Plus. He is currently Chair of the Fordham Institute. He was appointed to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) that oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by Secretary Paige and served as Chair of NAGB from 2009-2013. As a Private Consultant, Dr. Driscoll mentored State Commissioners of Education in Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Missouri and Pennsylvania. He appeared as an expert witness before

appointed State Commissions for Education Reform in Colorado, Maryland, Rhode Island and Virginia. In November 2017, Harvard Education Press published his book, *Commitment and Common Sense: Leading Education Reform in Massachusetts*.

**Mary Ellen Hannon, CAGS**, served as **District Experience Lead**. Ms. Hannon led interviews with district superintendents to better understand the district experience. Ms. Hannon has over 30 years of successful educational systems experience, including extensive understanding in school leadership, data analysis, curriculum design, and school improvement management. Ms. Hannon served as the Project Director for the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary School's project Monitoring Teaching and Learning in Level 4 and 5 Schools. Her responsibilities included leading client meetings, overseeing the development of a classroom monitoring tool, collecting and analyzing school data, and developing reports for the Commissioner of Education. Recently, Ms. Hannon has been reviewing and providing feedback on Turnaround Plans for MA Level 3 schools. Additionally, Ms. Hannon served as project director and lead principal coach for the Saginaw, MI ISD Priority School Coaching project. Ms. Hannon coaches school leaders in priority schools to support increased student achievement. Currently, she is coaching principal supervisors in Broward County, FL and Crowley, TX.

Ms. Hannon was appointed to the NH Professional Standards Board, which reviews teacher certification standards and higher education programs for new teacher graduates. Prior to joining PCG, Ms. Hannon served as a Superintendent of Schools in New Hampshire. Under her leadership, the district was recognized by NH Department of Education as a leader in data-based decision making. In addition, she has served as adjunct professor, assistant superintendent, curriculum director, and elementary teacher.

**Dr. Christine Donis-Keller** served as **State Comparison Lead**. She led the benchmarking with states who perform in the top 10% of the NAEP. In addition, Dr. Donis-Keller led interview protocol design and ensure all data collection in completed in a rigorous manner. Dr. Donis-Keller is a research and evaluation specialist who has worked in the education field for over 25 years and has worked at PCG since 2011. Dr. Donis-Keller leads data collection methodology and analysis for PCG's education projects including the development of research instruments and protocols, conducting interviews, focus groups, surveys, and case studies to understand program effectiveness. Recent evaluation work at PCG includes the evaluation of implementation and impact of a district-wide arts initiative in Hartford Public Schools; a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center in Jersey City, NJ; a Family and Community Engagement grant project in Bridgeton, NJ; and the State Systemic Improvement Plan in Indiana. Additional work includes special education reviews in Alexandria and Arlington, VA, and evaluations of statewide school reform initiatives in Florida and Tennessee. She has supported progress monitoring of Level 4 and 5 schools in Massachusetts, developed a needs assessment for Head Start of Broward County, FL, and wrote a set of best practice case studies for the Georgia Governor's Office of Student Achievement's Connections for Classrooms program.

Before joining PCG, Dr. Donis-Keller led a three-year research study of school district consolidation in Maine funded by foundations and the state DOE. The multi strand research project included interviews with hundreds of stakeholders in communities, schools, and districts before and after consolidation votes, and state policymakers including members of the legislature and the Governor's office. She has provided support to researchers and practitioners in other states who are interested in consolidation and has provided testimony to a state committee in CT on her research. Dr. Donis-Keller received her Doctorate in the Sociology of Education from New York University. She has published reports school district reorganization, theme high schools, charter schools, and the four-day school week.

**Matthew Scott** served the role of **Data Analyst**. Mr. Scott brings 10 years of education management experience specializing in accreditation, strategic planning, program quality review, learning assessment processes, and education policy. Prior to joining PCG, Matthew spent 7 years as the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Accreditation, and Regulatory Affairs for a specialized graduate school. In this capacity, he oversaw a portfolio of strategic growth and regulatory initiatives, including an initial institutional accreditation effort, new program development, enrollment management, and state approval processes. He began his

career as a student advisor and leadership development professional for the University of the Pacific. He earned a M.A in Educational Administration and Leadership from the University of the Pacific, and a B.A. in Political Science from California State University, Long Beach.

**Sydney Menzin** served as **Project Support**. In this role, she provided project management and data analysis support. Prior to joining PCG, Sydney completed her MA in Urban Education Policy at Brown University. During this time, she served as a Research Consultant for the Massachusetts-based Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy and as a Research Assistant for Providence Public Schools. In these roles, Sydney was charged with responsibilities of project management, data collection/analysis, and policy research related to student leadership, social emotional learning, opportunity youth, and community partnerships. She previously served as Director of Digital Strategy and Outreach Coordinator for former First Lady Michelle Obama's social media campaign, Better Make Room, which puts students at the forefront of promoting postsecondary attainment. Following this work, she supported Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo's Education team with efforts to improve postsecondary access and affordability and to build a college-going movement across the state. Sydney has worked with students in classroom settings as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Madrid, Spain, and as a volunteer with the organization Generation Citizen, facilitating an action-civics curriculum in schools throughout Rhode Island.

## B. NAEP Comparison State Sample Selection

In order to create an aggregated ranking across all years and all scores, NCES took 2019 state average scores for each subject/grade and calculated the difference between each state's average score and the national public average score. Then they standardized the difference by dividing it by the national public standard deviation.

The Summary data presented in Exhibit 52 presents an average across the standardized difference from each subject/grade. This average is the average across subjects/grades in difference from the national average (in terms of standard deviations).

States are sorted by the Average column. The top state (MA) is 0.290 standard deviations above the national public average across math and reading, grades 4 and 8.

**Exhibit 52. Top 10% of NAEP States**

| Jurisdiction  | Average<br>(Grades 4 & 8, Reading<br>and Mathematics) | Rank* |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Massachusetts | 0.290                                                 | 2     |
| New Jersey    | 0.220                                                 | 3     |
| Minnesota     | 0.158                                                 | 4     |
| New Hampshire | 0.145                                                 | 5     |
| Wyoming       | 0.143                                                 | 6     |

\*The top jurisdiction was Department of Defense Schools (DoDEA)

## C. NAEP Performance Comparison

In addition to the aggregated ranking of NAEP states (Exhibit 15), the exhibits that follow explore 2019 NAEP performance among Alabama and comparison sample states in reading and mathematics in 4th and 8th grade. The data presented in each grade level and subject area examine average NAEP scores as well as the percent proficient or above. A final set of exhibits examine the performance of Alabama's subgroups over time on NAEP including eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch and race and ethnicity.

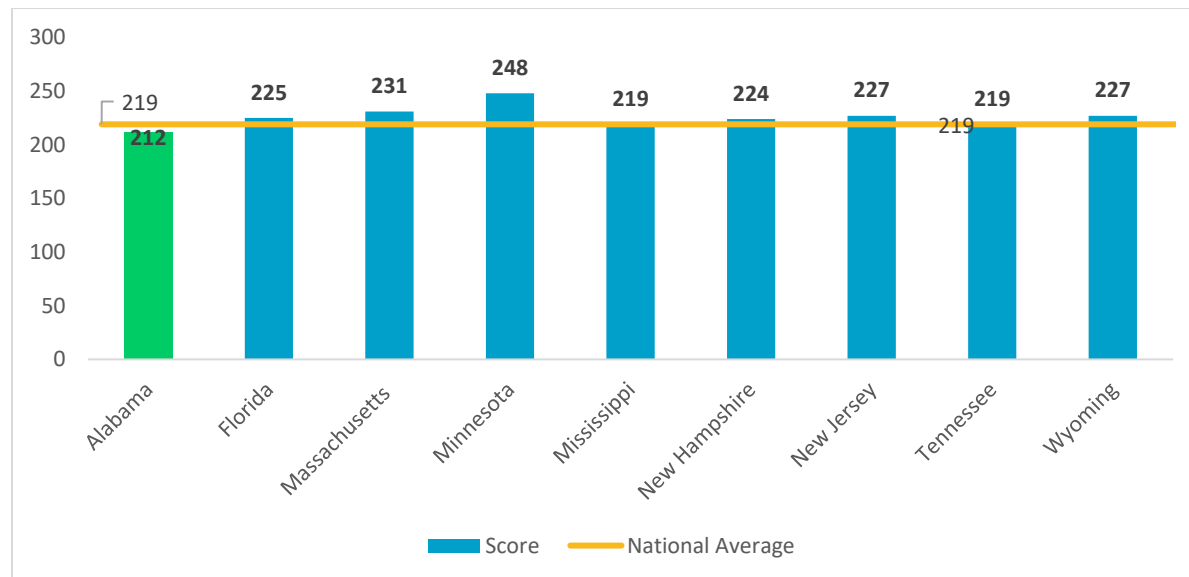
### Reading

The national average score for **fourth grade reading** in 2019 was 219. Alabama's fourth grader's score was 212, seven points below the national average. Each state in the comparison group performed at (Mississippi and Tennessee) or above the national average.

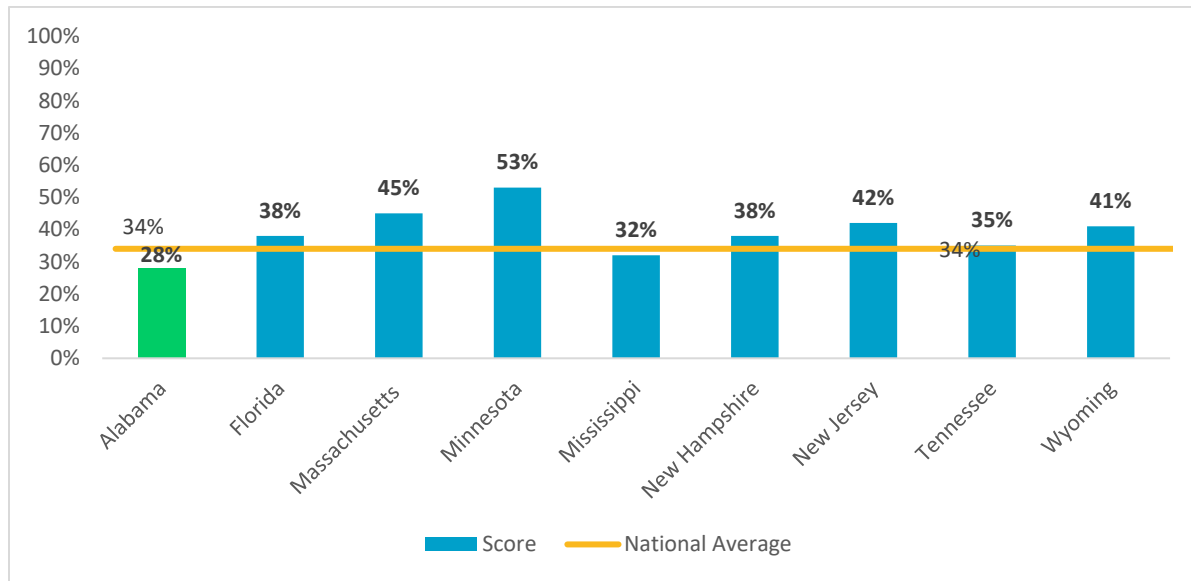
The national average for fourth grade percent proficient or above (Exhibit 54) was 34% for 2019. Alabama's rate, 28%, was six (6) percentage points below. Alabama's state reading assessment results indicated that 47% were proficient or above, and nearly 20 percentage point difference. All other states in the sample performed at or above the national average, except for Mississippi which was two percentage points below (32%).

In **eighth grade reading**, all states in the comparison sample achieved scores at or above the national average (262) except Mississippi (256). Alabama was 9 points below at 253. The national average for students at or above proficient was 32% for eighth grade reading. All states in the sample except Mississippi (25%) met or exceeded the average. Alabama was 8 percentage points below at 24% proficient or above. In contrast, Alabama's state reading assessment results indicate that 43% are proficient or above, a 21-percentage point difference.

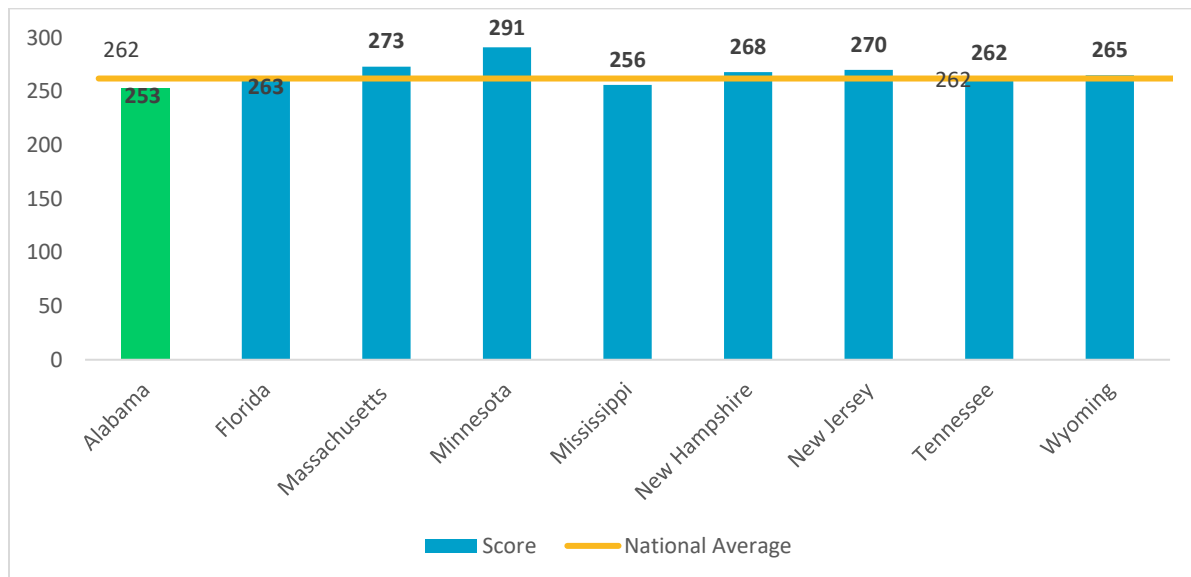
**Exhibit 53. AL Grade 4 Reading NAEP Scores Compared to Other States (2019)**

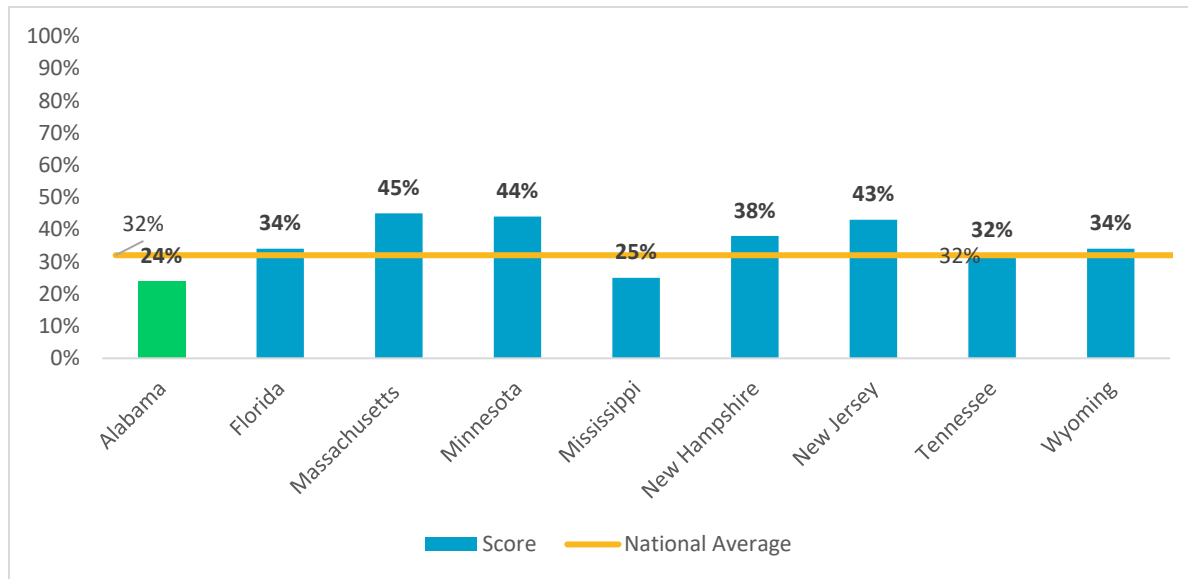


**Exhibit 54. AL Grade 4 Reading NAEP Scores (at or above proficient) Compared to Other States (2019)**



**Exhibit 55. AL Grade 8 Reading NAEP Scores Compared to Other States (2019)**



**Exhibit 56. AL Grade 8 Reading NAEP Scores (at or above proficient) Compared to Other States (2019)**

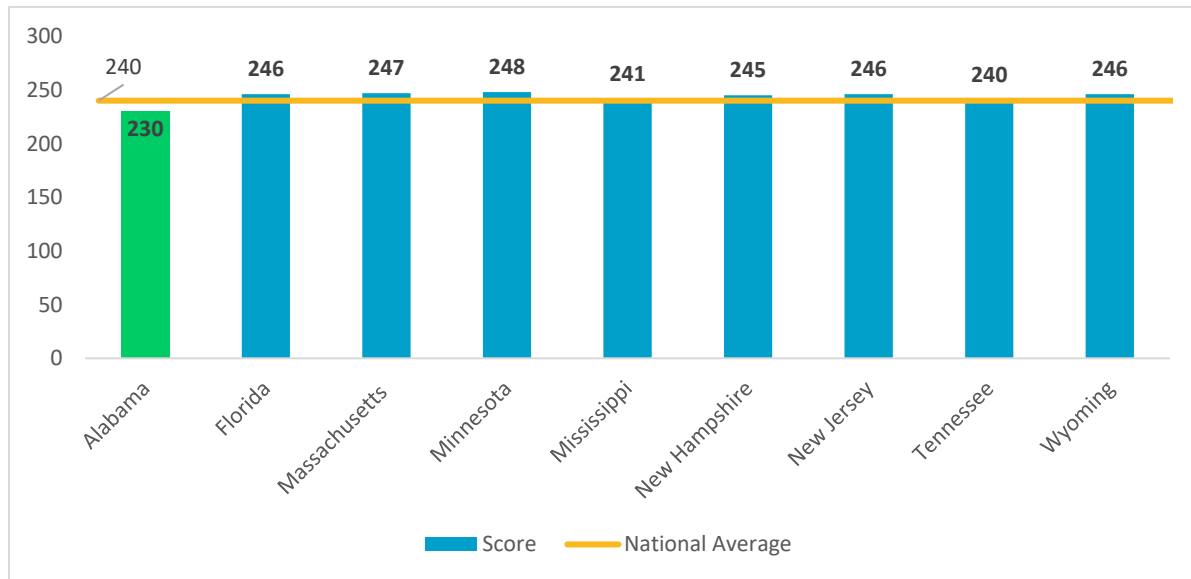
### Mathematics

The national average score for **fourth grade mathematics** in 2019 was 240. Alabama's fourth grader's score was 230, 10 points below the national average. Each state in the comparison group performed at (Tennessee) or above the national average, including Mississippi which was one point above (241).

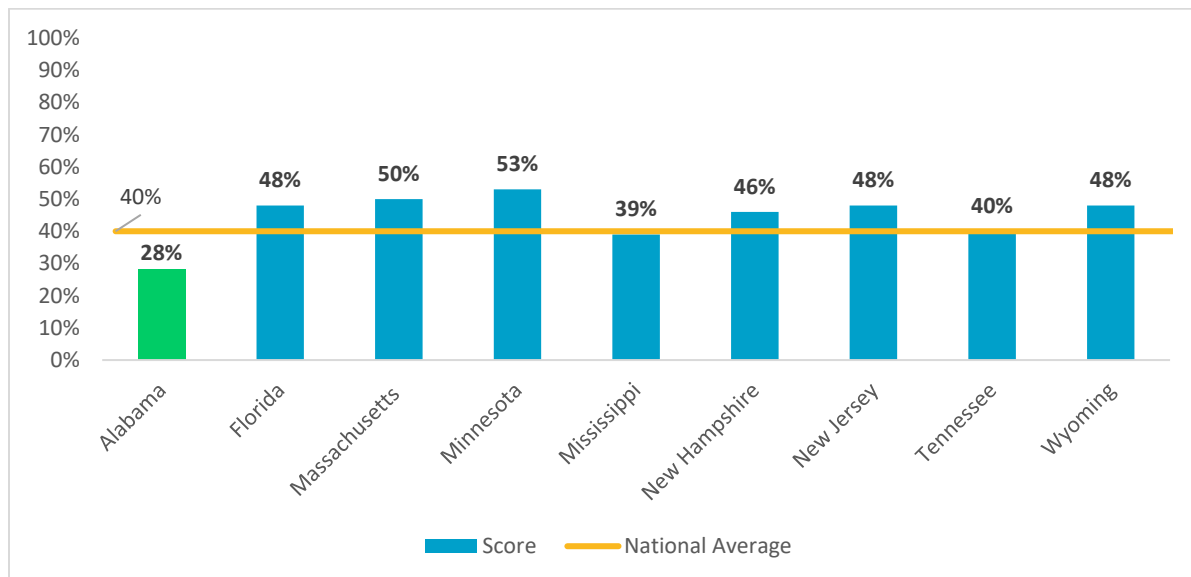
The national average of percent proficient or above for fourth grade was 40% for 2019. All other states in the sample performed at or above, except for Mississippi which was one percentage point below (39%). Alabama's rate is 12 percentage points below the average (28%). Alabama's percent proficient on their state assessment was 47% for fourth grade mathematics.

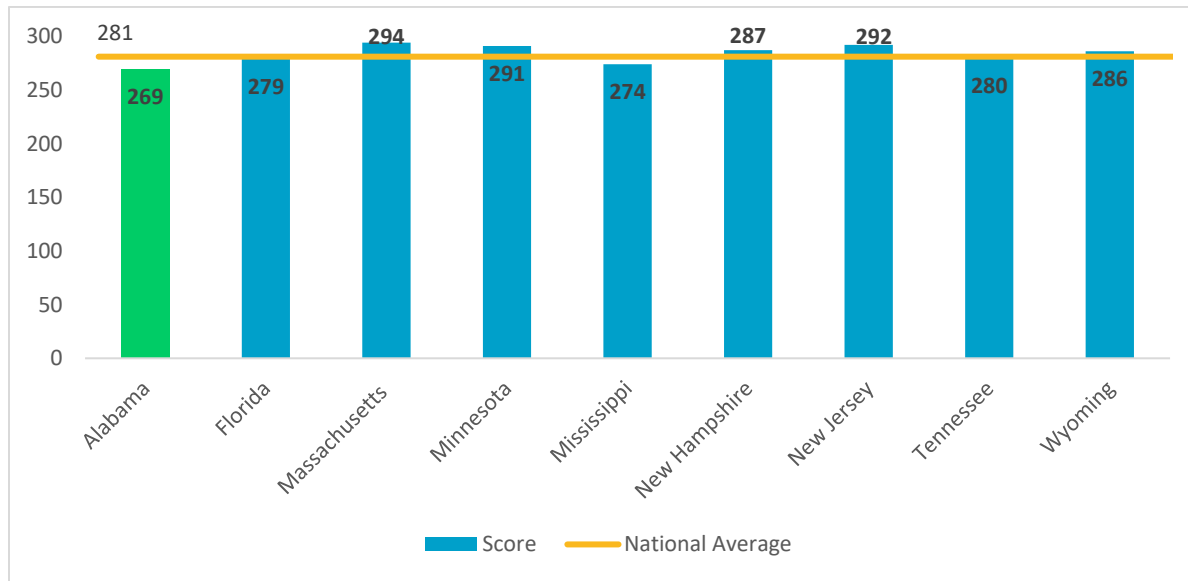
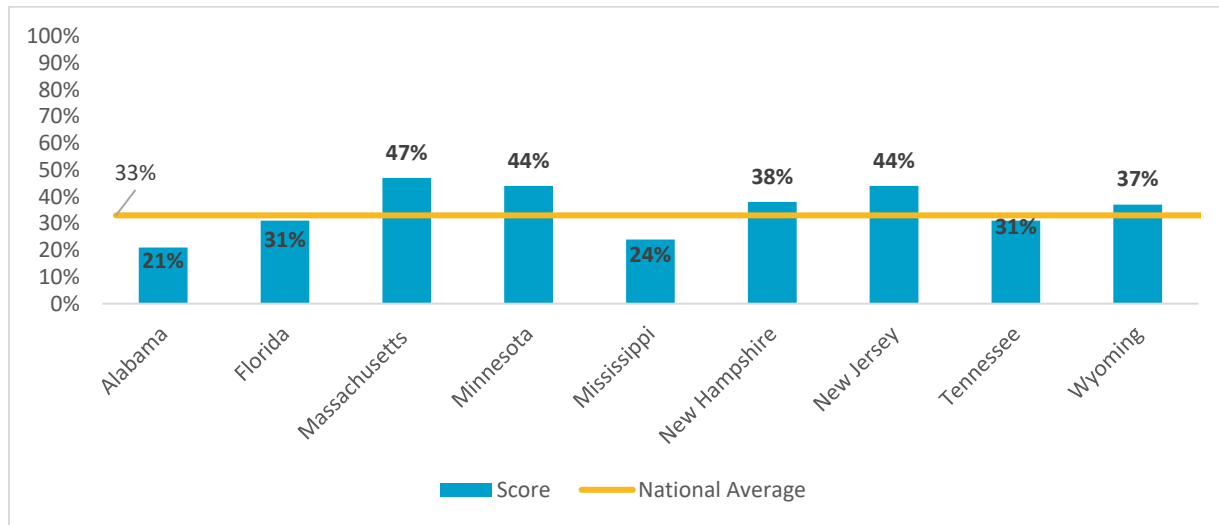
In **eighth grade mathematics**, we see a similar pattern. All states in the sample achieved scores at or above the national average (281) except Florida (279) and Mississippi (274). Alabama was 12 points below at 269. The national average for students at or above proficient is 33% for 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics. All states in the sample but Florida (31%), Mississippi (24%) and Tennessee (31%) exceeded this amount. Alabama was 12 percentage points below at 21% proficient or above on NAEP while the state's assessment results showed 45% of eighth graders proficient or above.

**Exhibit 57. AL Grade 4 Mathematics NAEP Scores Compared to Other States (2019)**



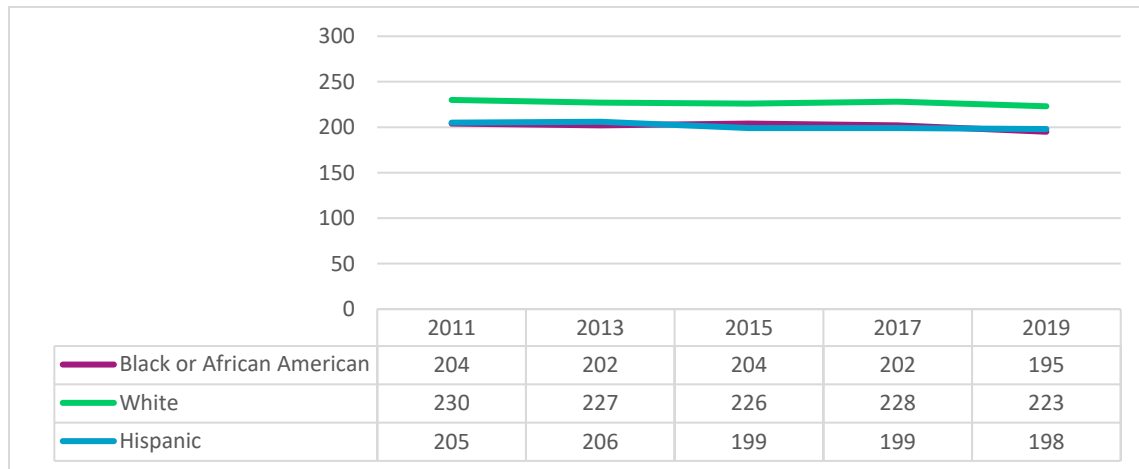
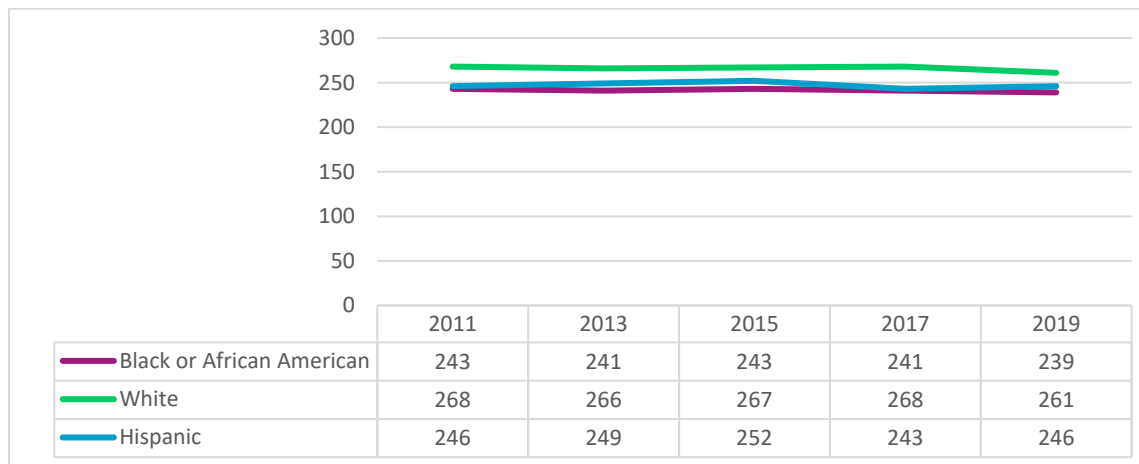
**Exhibit 58. AL Grade 4 Mathematics NAEP Scores (at or above proficient) Compared to Other States (2019)**



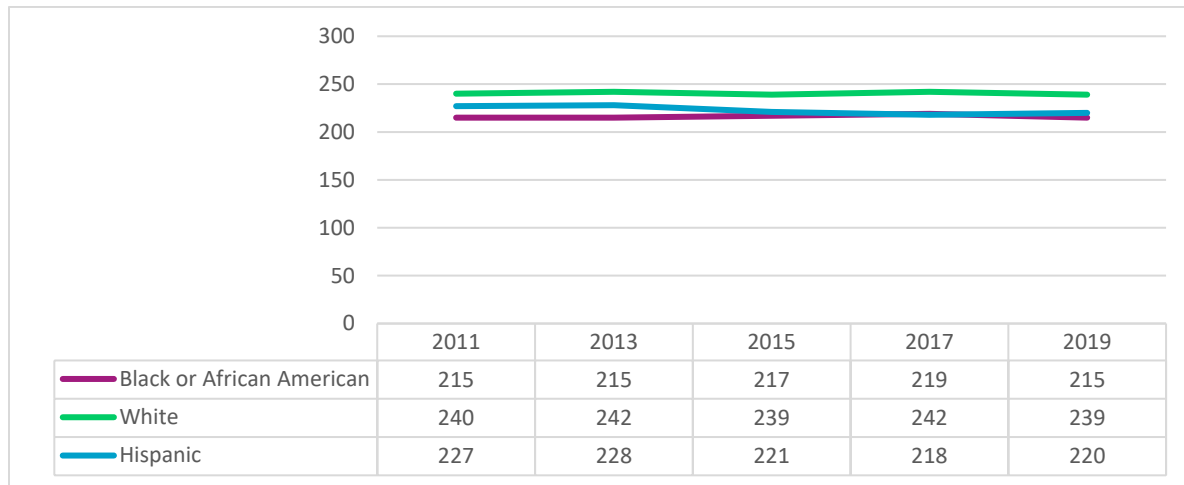
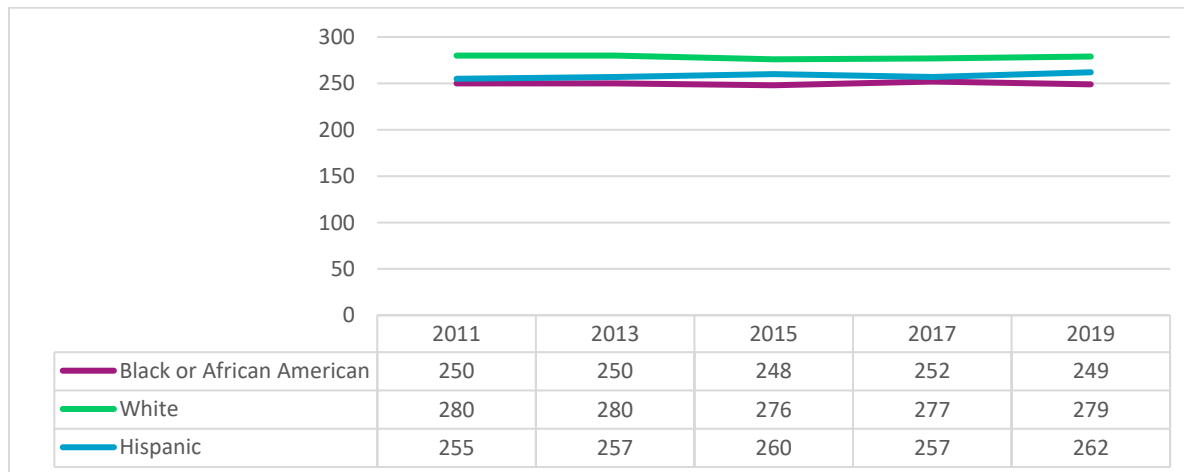
**Exhibit 59. AL Grade 8 Mathematics NAEP Scores Compared to Other States (2019)****Exhibit 60. AL Grade 8 Mathematics NAEP Scores (at or above proficient) Compared to Other States (2019)**

### *Race/Ethnicity*

Exhibits 61-62 present **reading** performance by race and ethnicity for Alabama's fourth and eighth graders. Scores for all groups have declined since 2011 for fourth grade. The gap between white and black students and white and Hispanic students in fourth grade has remained over 21% (between 21% and 29%) from 2011-2019. Among eighth graders, the gap between Hispanic and white students has ranged from a 15 to 25 percentage point difference, while between black and white students the gap has ranged from 22 to 27 percentage points. Overall scores for black and white students declined during this period while scores for Hispanic students, after increasing through 2015, are the same in 2019 as they were in 2011. In 2019 the gap with white students narrowed for both groups.

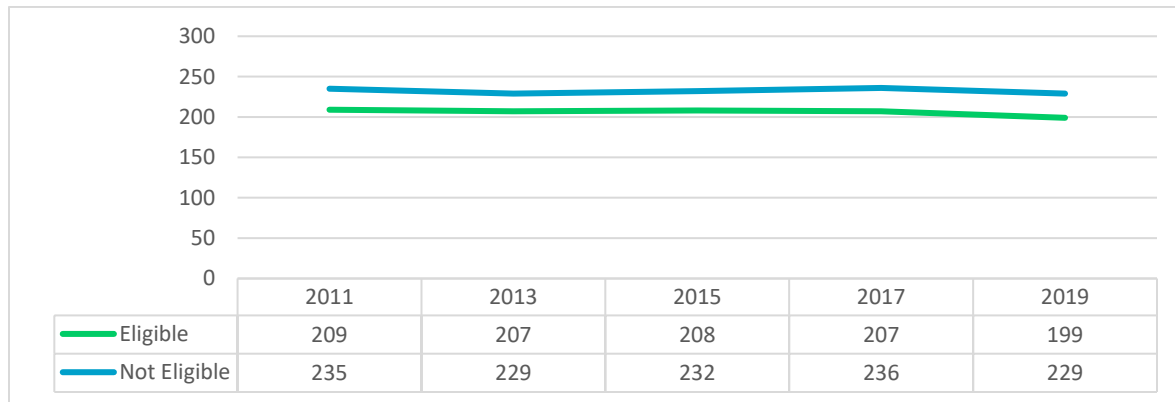
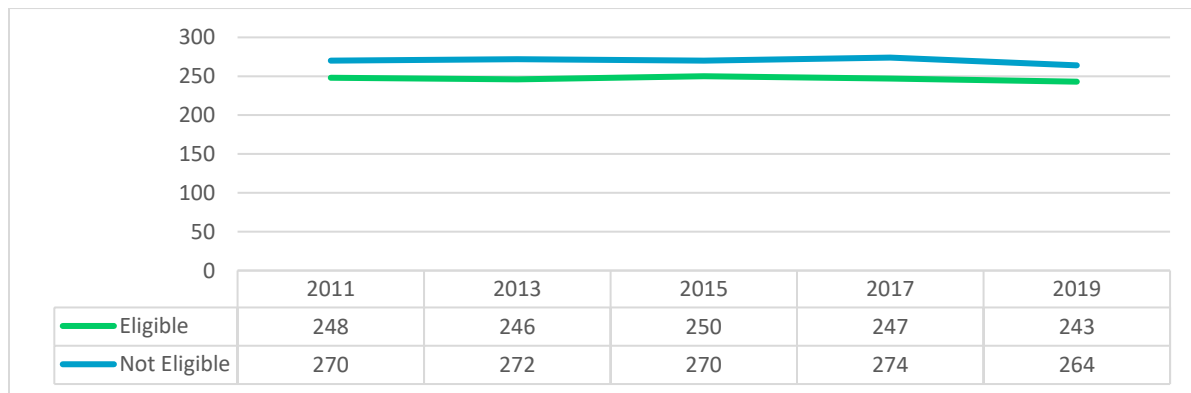
**Exhibit 61. AL Grade 4 Reading NAEP Scores by Race and Ethnicity (2019)****Exhibit 62. AL Grade 8 Reading NAEP Scores by Race and Ethnicity (2011-2019)**

Exhibits 63-64 present **mathematics** performance by race and ethnicity for Alabama's fourth and eighth graders. The gap between white and black students in fourth grade has remained over 20% (between 22 and 27 percentage points). The gap between Hispanic and white students was smaller and ranged from 13 to 19 percentage points. Among eighth graders, the gap between Hispanic and white students has decreased, while the gap between black and white students has been relatively flat at 30 percentage points.

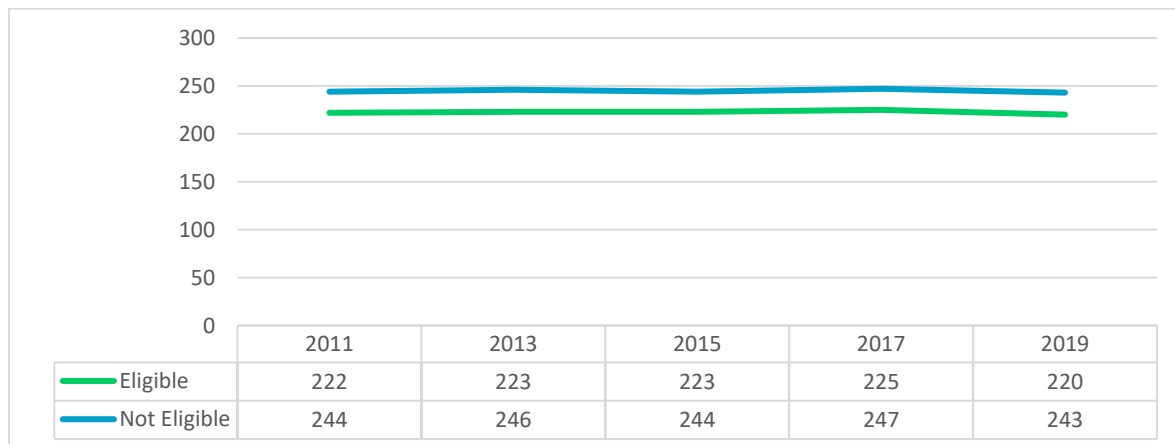
**Exhibit 63. AL Grade 4 Mathematics NAEP Scores by Race and Ethnicity (2019)****Exhibit 64. AL Grade 8 Mathematics NAEP Scores by Race and Ethnicity (2019)**

### *Free/Reduced-Price Lunch*

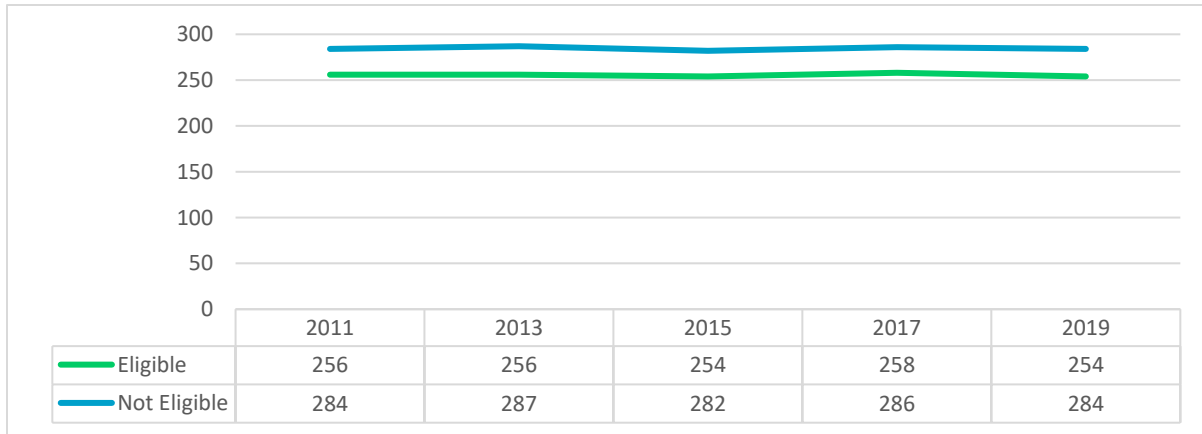
Exhibits 65-66 present comparisons for **reading** results between students who are Free and Reduced Lunch status and non-eligible students for fourth and eighth grade. The gap for both grade levels has remained over 21 percentage points since 2011 and increased to 30 percentage points for fourth graders in 2019. Among eighth graders, the gap has narrowed to 21 percentage points from a high of 27 percentage points in 2017.

**Exhibit 65. AL Grade 4 Reading NAEP Scores by Free and Reduced Lunch Status (2019)****Exhibit 66. AL Grade 8 Reading NAEP Scores by Race and Ethnicity (2019)**

Exhibits 67-68 present comparisons for **mathematics** results between Free and Reduced Lunch eligible students and non-eligible students for fourth and eighth grade. The gap in fourth grade between the two groups has remained relatively flat since 2011, ranging from 21 to 23 percentage points. Among eighth graders, the gap is larger and has also remained relatively flat since 2011, ranging from 28 to 31 percentage points.

**Exhibit 67. AL Grade 4 Mathematics NAEP Scores by Free and Reduced Lunch Status (2019)**

**Exhibit 68. AL Grade 8 Mathematics NAEP Scores by Free and Reduced Lunch Status (2019)**



## **D. NAEP Sample State Education Agency Organizational Charts**

This section includes available organizational charts for the Departments of Education for the following states included in the NAEP comparison analysis:

- Florida
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- New Jersey
- Tennessee
- Wyoming

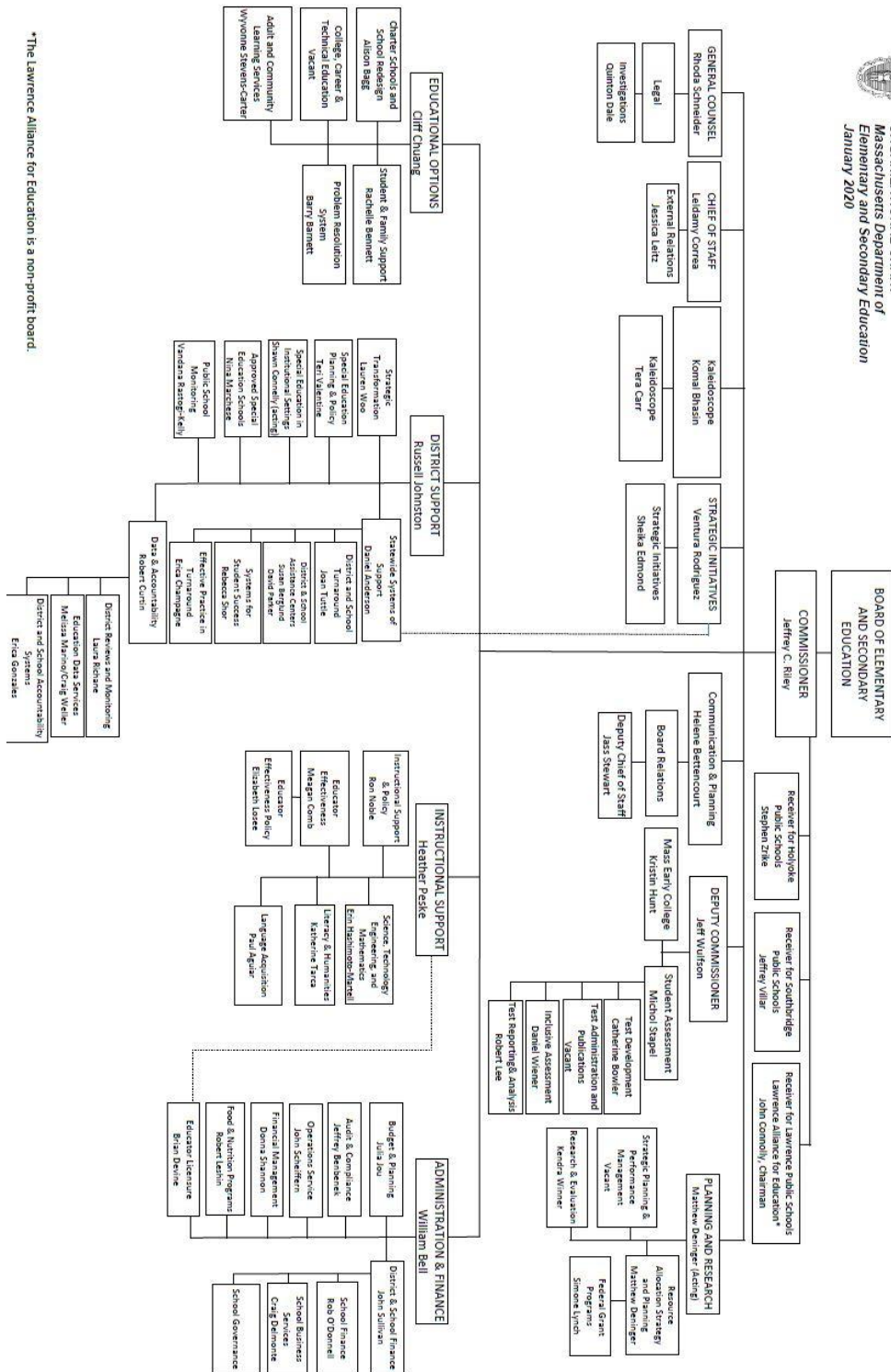
New Hampshire is not included, as it does not have a current organizational chart.



# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

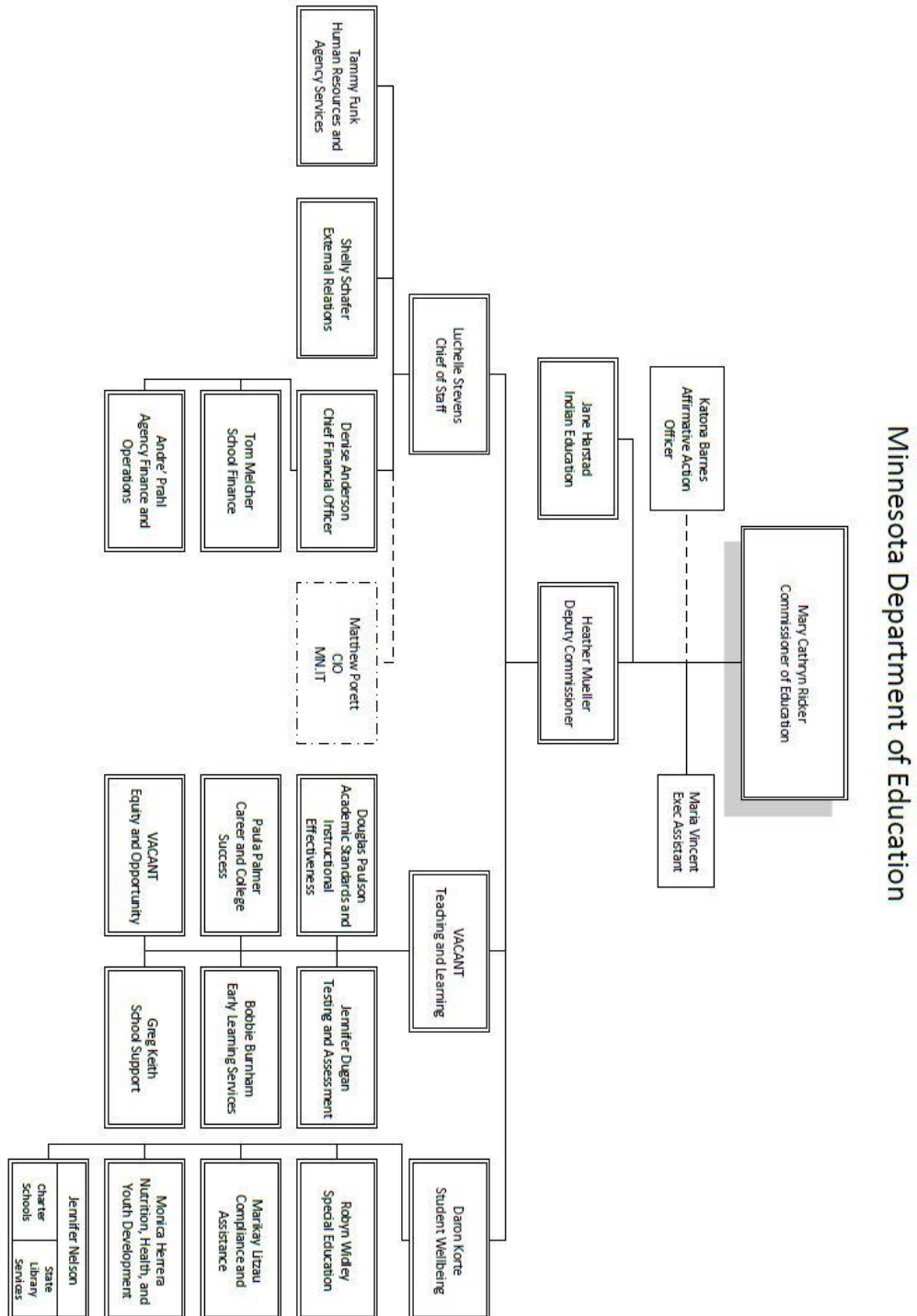


## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education January 2020

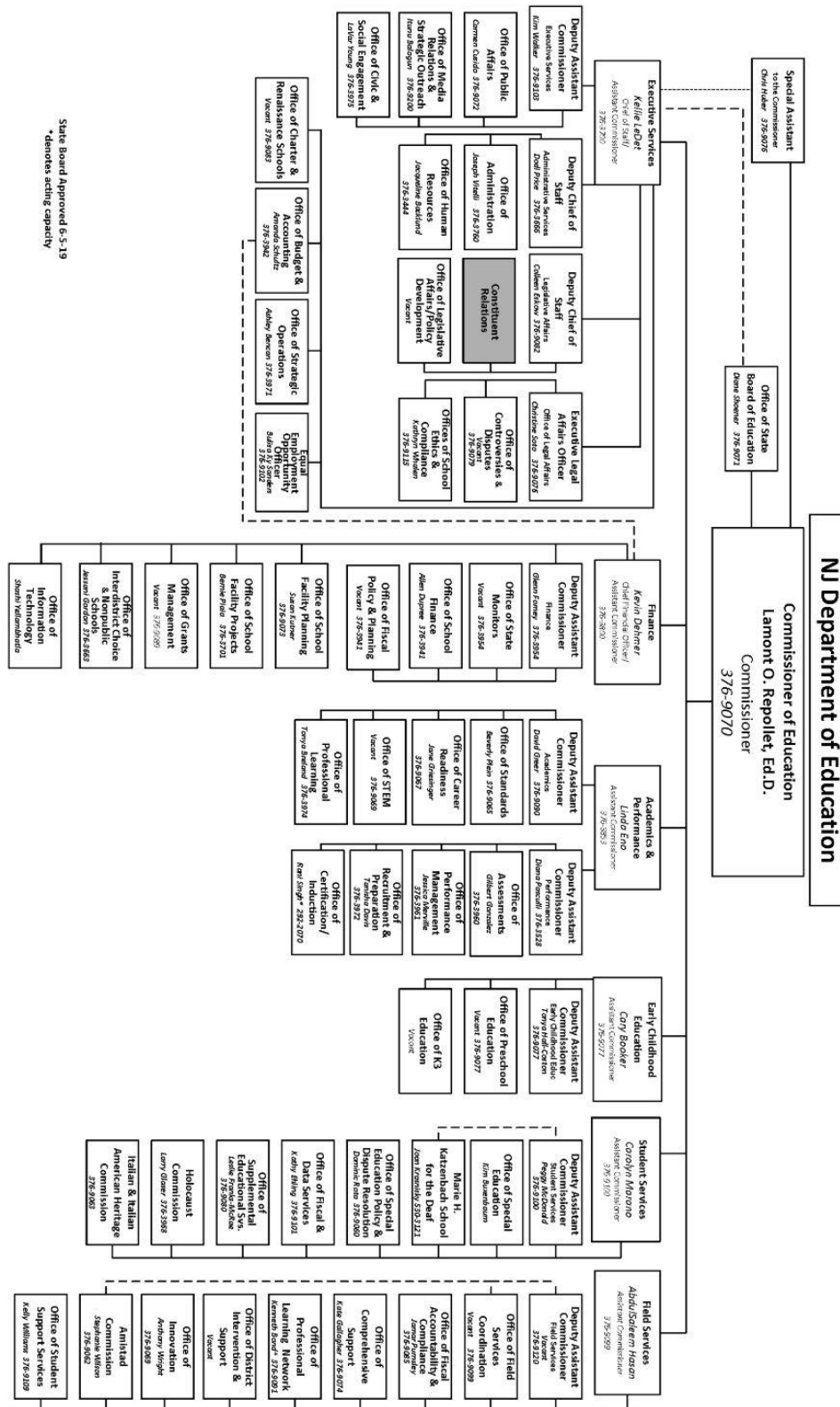


## Minnesota Department of Education

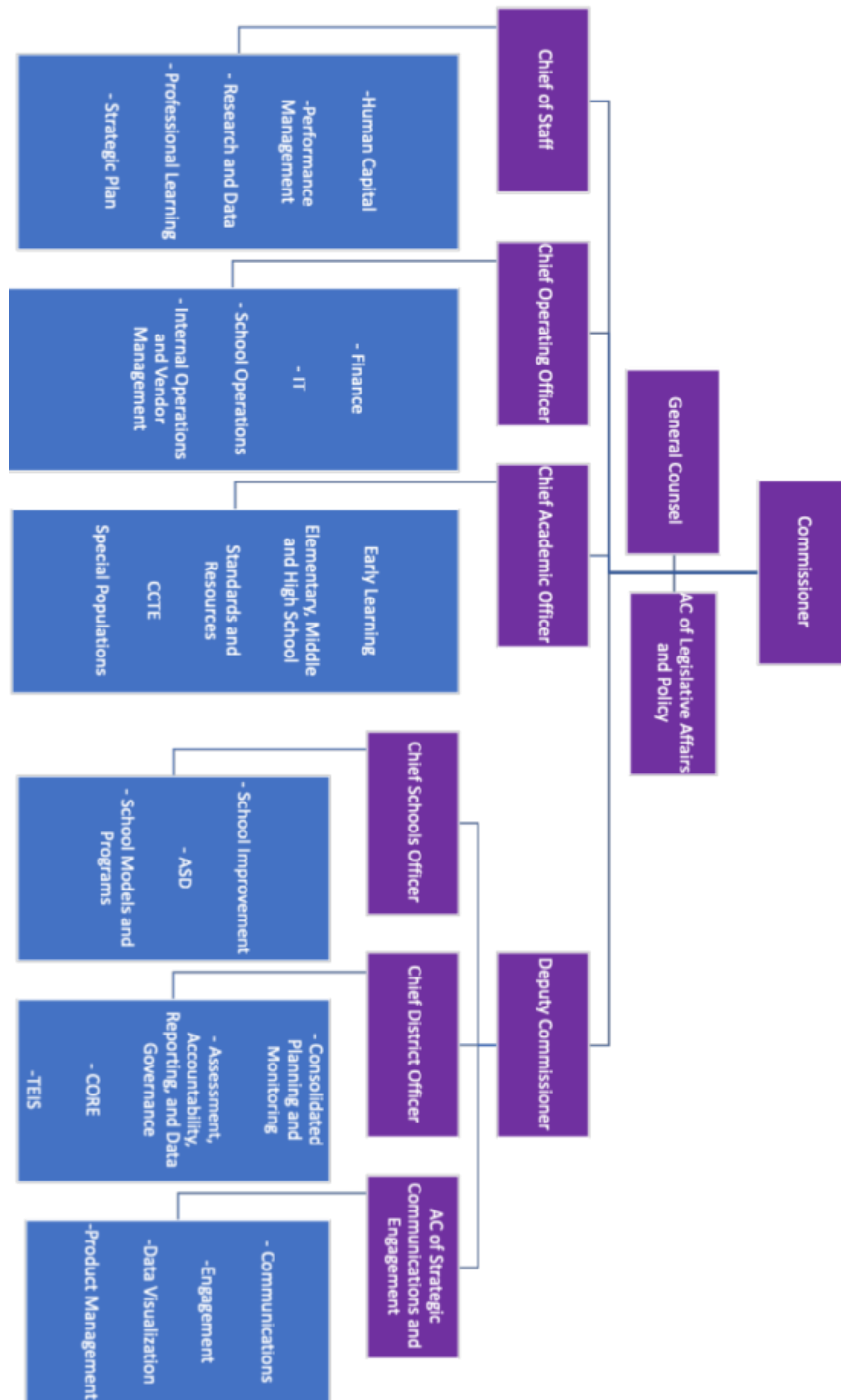
January 2020



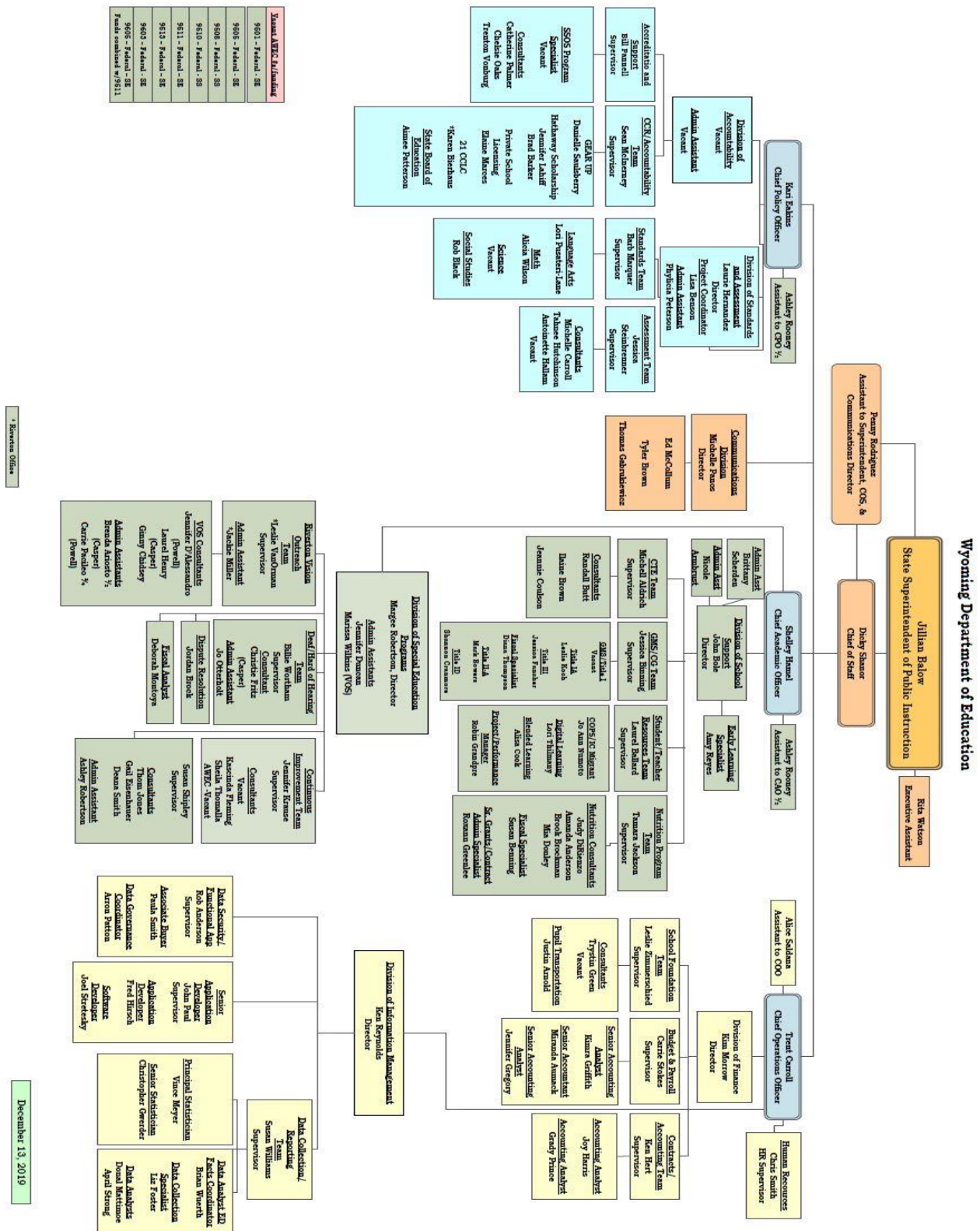
## New Jersey Department of Education



## Tennessee Department of Education



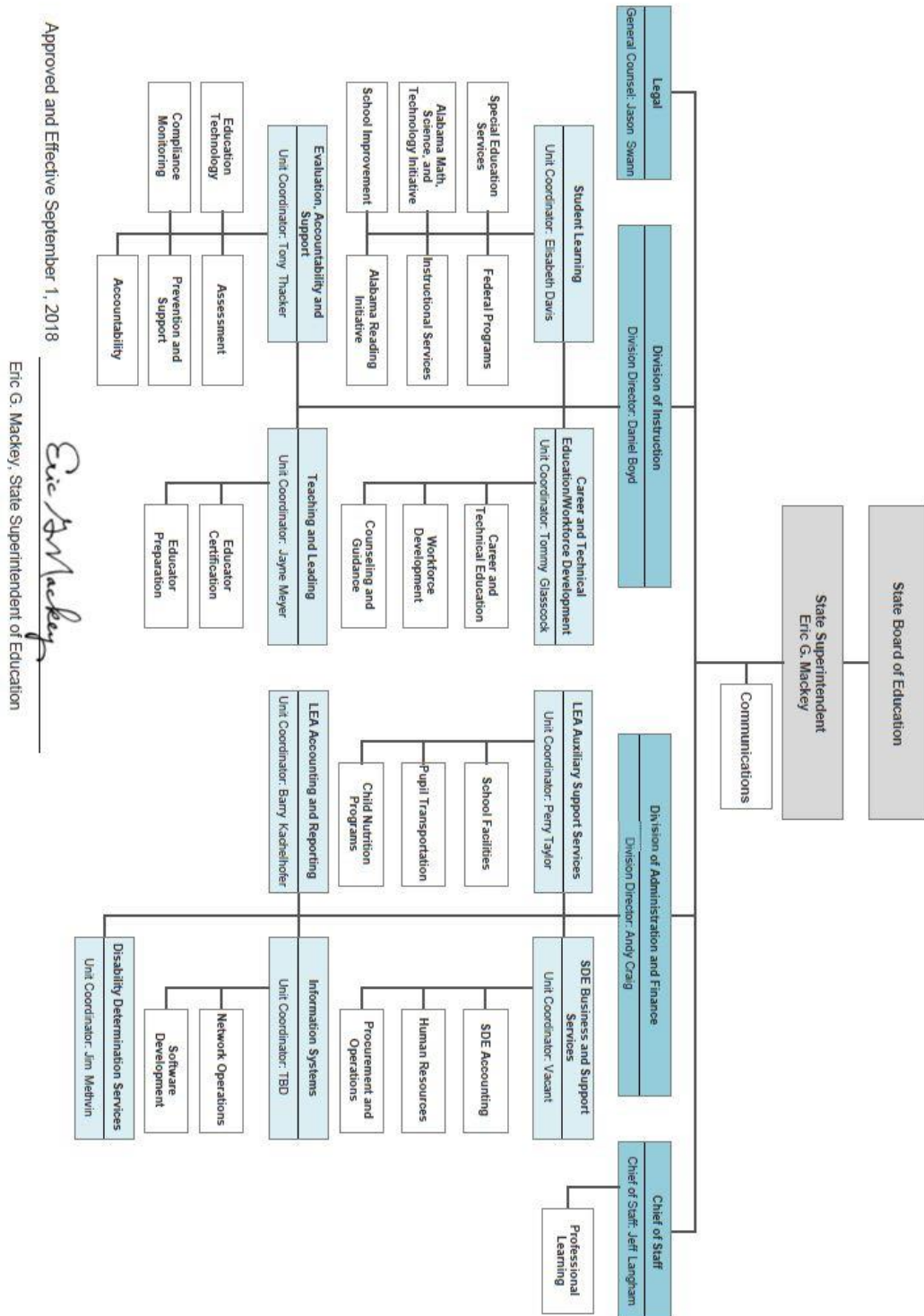
**Wyoming Department of Education**



## E. Sample of ALSDE Organizational Charts

1. ALSDE Organizational Chart
2. ALSDE Accounting
3. AMSTI
4. Child Nutrition Programs
5. Education Technology
6. Educator Certification
7. Evaluation, Accountability, and Support
8. Human Resources
9. Information Systems
10. Instructional Services
11. LEA Accounting and Reporting
12. Procurement and Operations
13. Professional Learning (November 2019)
14. Proposed ALSDE Organizational Chart (April 2018)
15. Pupil Transportation
16. Special Education Services
17. Student Learning
18. Teaching and Leading

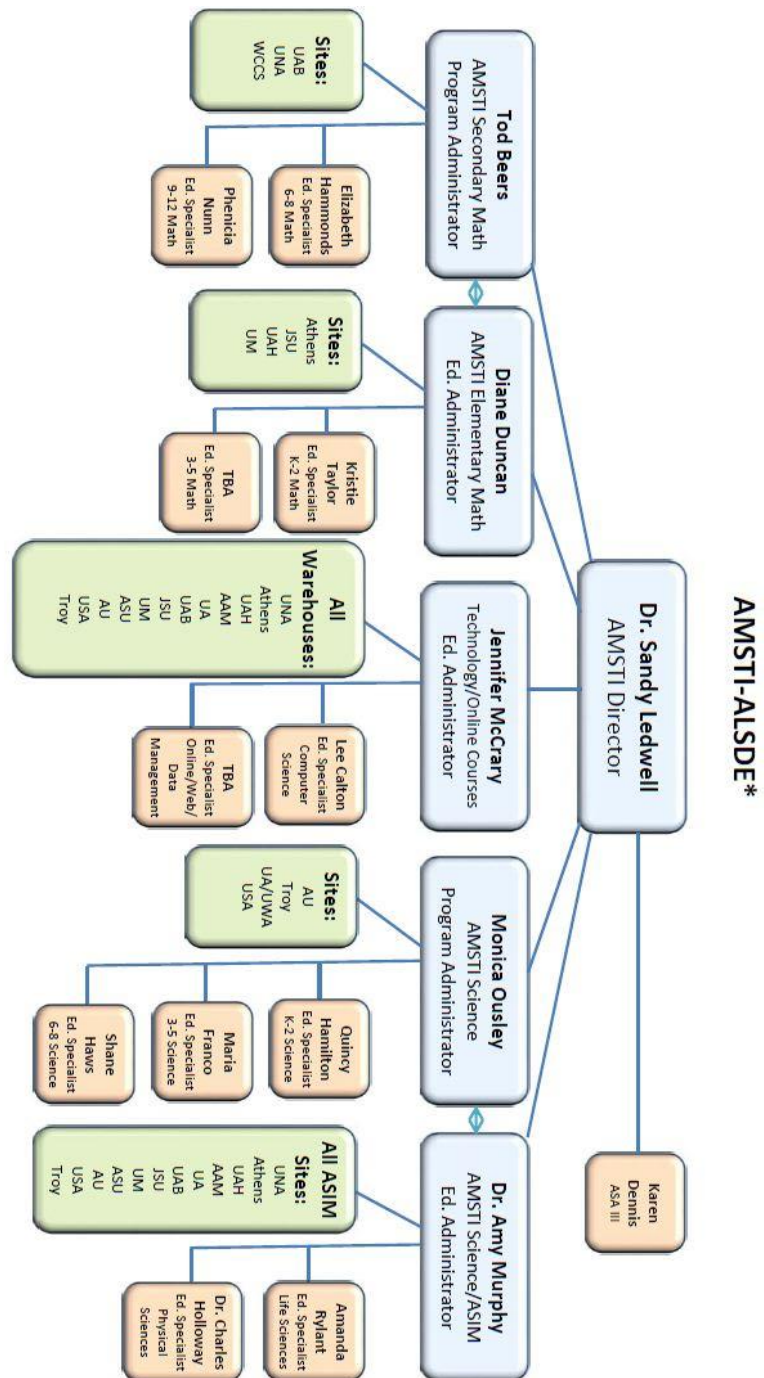
## 1. ALSDE Senior Staff



## 2. ALSDE Accounting

| STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION      |  |  |  |  |  |
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| DEPUTY STATE SUPT. ADMIN. & FIN. SERV. |  |  |  |  |  |
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Updated 10-17-2019



\*All positions are 100% funded through the AMSTI line item.

### 3. AMSTI

#### 4. Child Nutrition Programs

[illegible]

## 5. Education Technology

### EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

5351 Gordon Persons Building – Tel: (334) 694-4641 – Fax (334) 694-4958

|                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Larry Raines     | Coordinator              |
| LaToya Edwards   | Administrative Assistant |
| Stephanie Foulke | Administrative Assistant |

### ACCESS VIRTUAL LEARNING

|                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Steve Blair             | ACCESS Program Administrator |
| M.J. Ballard            | Education Specialist         |
| Scherrie Banks, Ed.D.   | Education Specialist         |
| Scott Booth             | Education Specialist         |
| Sue Ellen Gilliland     | Education Specialist         |
| Paul D. Norgaard, Ph.D. | Education Specialist         |
| Nuncy Rembert           | Education Specialist         |
| Regina White, Ed.D.     | Education Specialist         |

### ALABAMA LEARNING EXCHANGE (ALEX)

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Richard Murphy, Ph.D. | Education Administrator |
| Hailey Ridgeway       | Education Specialist    |

### E-RATE, ALABAMA JOINT PURCHASING PLAN (AJPP)

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Devlynne Barnes     | Education Administrator |
| Mark Coleman, Ph.D. | Education Specialist    |

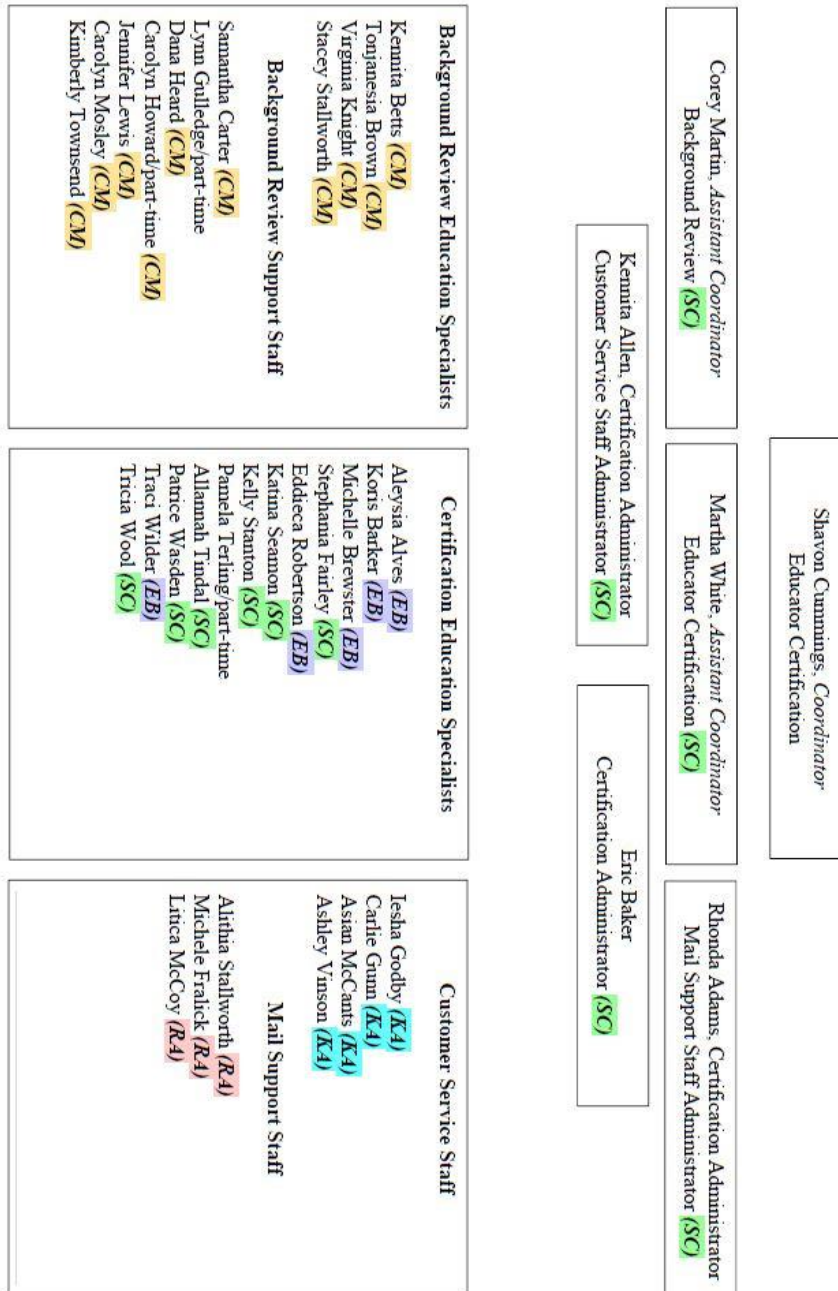
### ALABAMA TECHNOLOGY IN MOTION (ATiM)

|                |                                             |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Nikkisha Hooks | Education Administrator, Alabama e-Learning |
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### EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

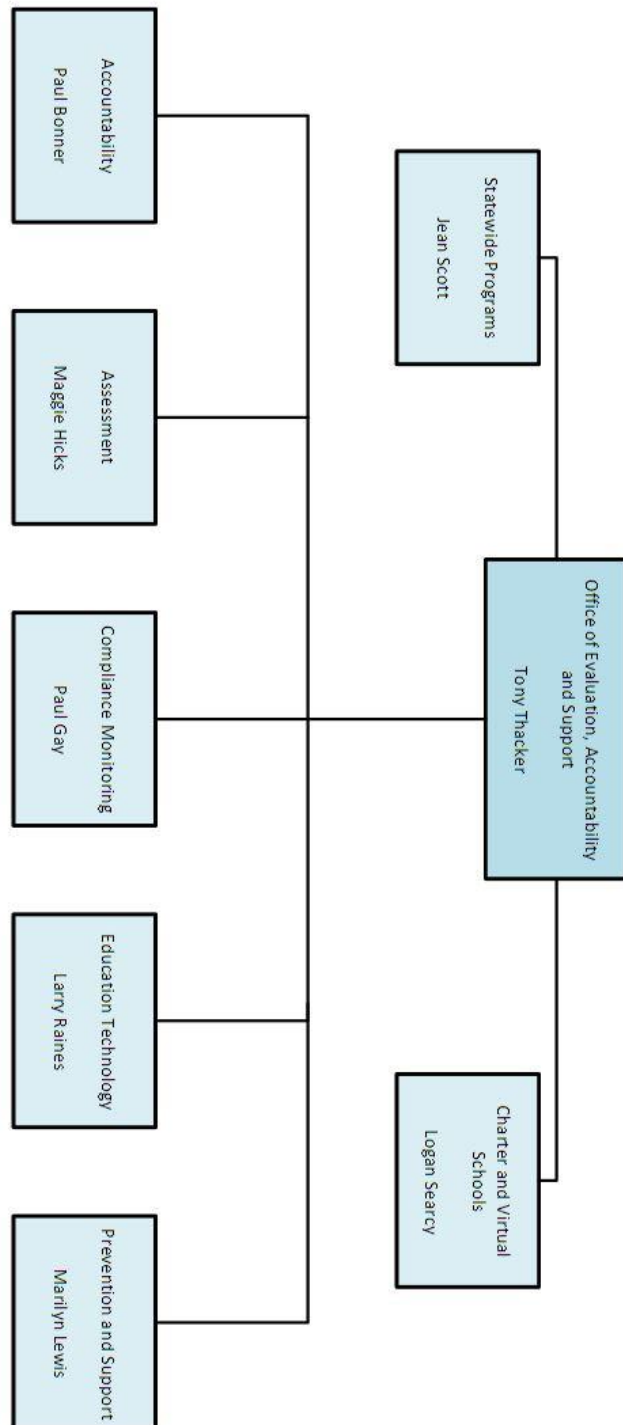
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| Terry Atchison     | Education Specialist, AETC Coordinator             |
| Joan Greene-Fisher | Education Specialist, AETC Co-Coordinator          |
| Donna M. Fuller    | Public Information Specialist, AETC Co-Coordinator |

## 6. Educator Certification

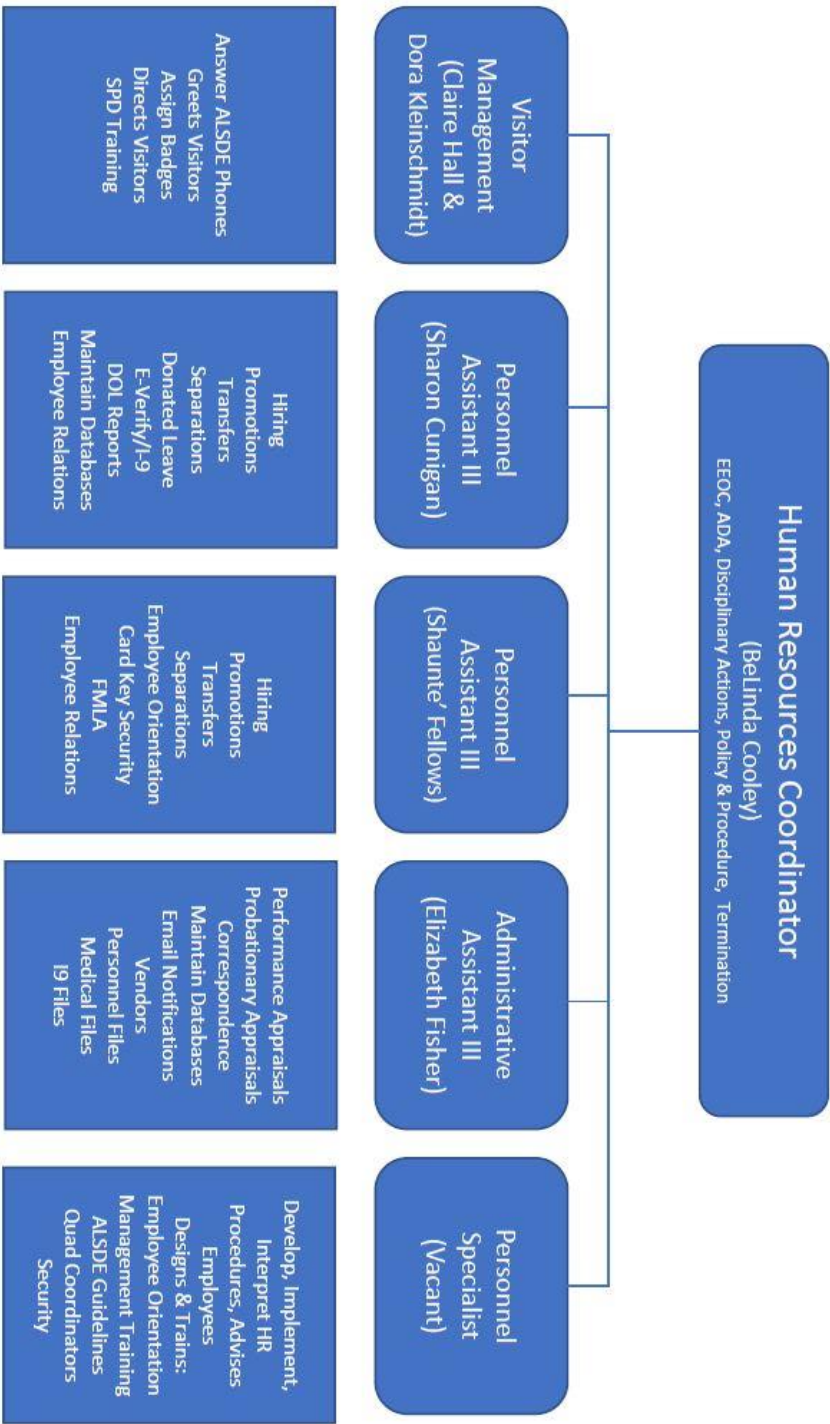


*Educator Certification*  
Updated July 2019  
Appraisal completed by: Shavon (SC), Cory (CM), Eric (EB), Rhonda (R4), Kennita (K4)

## 7. Evaluation, Accountability, and Support

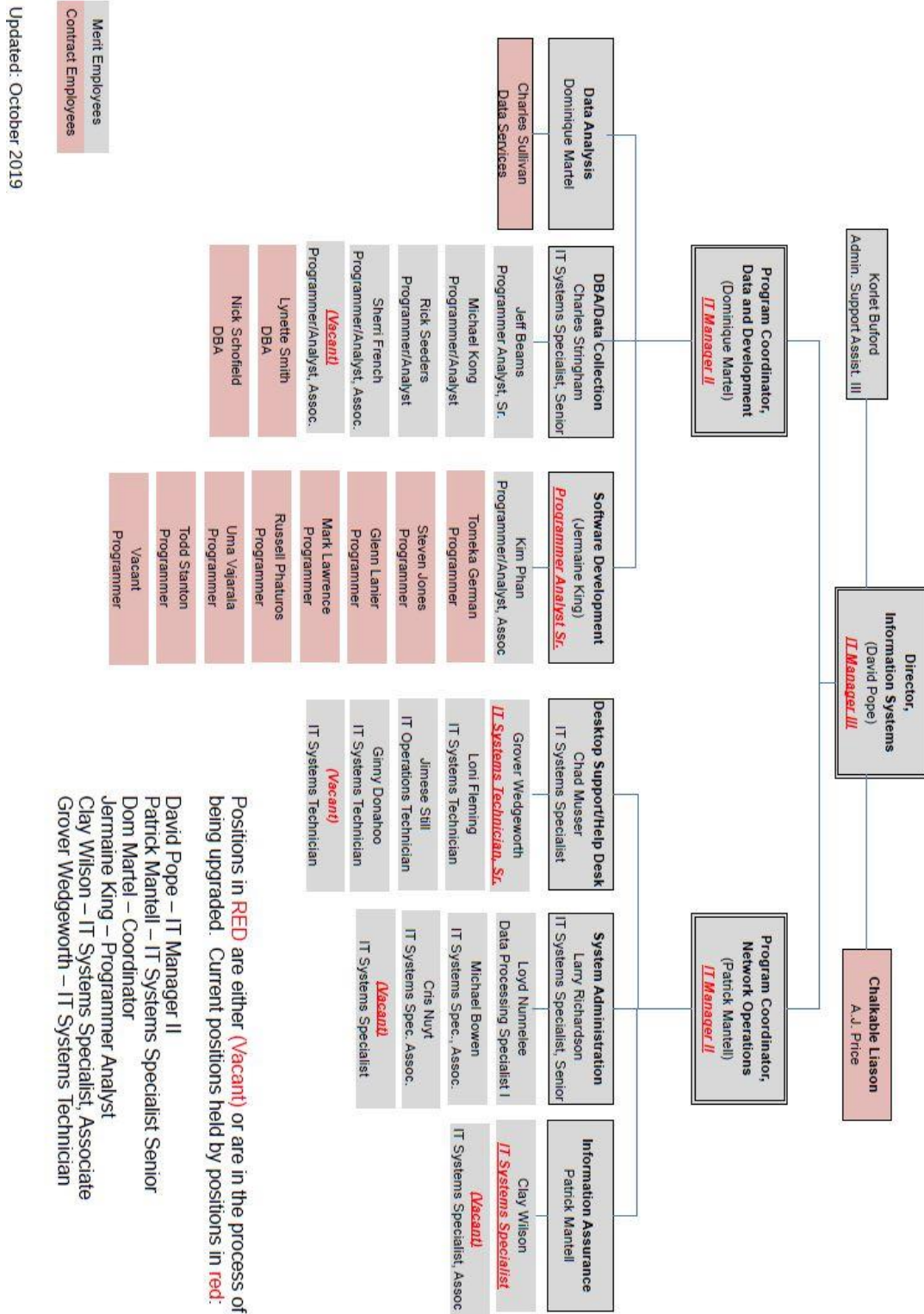


# Human Resources Section



Note: Vacant position responsibilities shared between PA III & HR Coordinator

## 9. Information Systems



## 10. Instructional Services



### **Instructional Services Staff Organization and Task Structure** *Updated September 2019*

#### **Sean J. Stevens, Program Coordinator**

- Graduation Requirements
- Alabama High School Diploma, including Non-Traditional HS Diploma Option
- Academic Waivers
- REACH Student Advisory Initiative
- Service Dogs Alabama—School Facility Dog Support
- Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit
- Advanced Placement Program/International Baccalaureate Programme
- Embedded/Substitute Credit
- Student Records and Transcripts
- LEA Technical Assistance

#### **Cathy Jones, Education Administrator I**

- Courses of Study Executive Secretary
- Subject and Personnel Codes Lead/Support
- Mathematics Content Area Lead
- Liaison*—Alabama Mathematics, Science, and Technology Initiative

#### **Carolyn Jones, Education Administrator I**

- Textbook Adoption Lead
- Grants, Awards, and Scholarships Lead
- SREB College and High School Readiness Courses Lead
- Professional Development Support
- College Readiness/Remediation Support

#### **New, Education Administrator I (Position Announcement in Progress)**

- Transcript Audit Lead
- Career Preparedness Course Lead
- Summer School Lead
- Credit Advancement/Credit Recovery Lead
- REACH Student Advisory Program Support
- Alabama High School Diploma, including Non-Traditional HS Diploma Option Lead
- Dual Enrollment Support
- Student Records/Transcripts Lead Support
- Professional Development Support
- College Remediation Support
- Liaison*—CTE/WFD and Counseling & Guidance

#### **Dr. Michal Robinson, Education Specialist I**

- Science Content Area Lead
- Subject and Personnel Codes Lead/Support
- Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Program Lead/Support
- Alabama Administrative Code: Local School Governance Lead
- Professional Development Support
- EdTPA Project Support



## **Instructional Services Staff Organization and Task Structure**

*Updated September 2019*

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### **Nettie Carson-Mullins, Education Specialist I**

Social Studies Content Area Lead  
World Languages Content Area Lead  
Career Preparedness Course Support  
REACH Student Advisory Support  
Professional Development Support

### **Andy Meadows, Education Specialist I**

Arts Education Content Area Lead  
Academic Competitions Lead  
Professional Development Support  
Credit Advancement/Credit Recovery Support  
Summer School Support  
*Liaison*—CTE Perkins V Plan Development

### **Cristin Dillard, Education Specialist I**

Library Media Content Area Lead  
IS Website Lead/Support  
E-Blast Newsletter Lead  
Curriculum & Instruction Meetings Lead/Support  
Professional Development Lead/Support  
MEGA Conference Lead  
PowerSchool Learning Management System Support

### **Jonathan Thompson, Education Specialist I**

Health/Physical Education Content Area Lead  
NCAA Lead/Support  
Secondary Athletics Liaison  
Professional Development Support  
*Liaison*—CTE Perkins V Plan Development

### **Jessica Morton, Education Specialist I**

English Language Arts Content Area Lead  
Middle/Secondary Literacy Instruction  
Grade 3 Cursive Writing Lead  
SREB College and High School Readiness Courses Support  
Professional Development Support  
EL Support for Grades 4-6  
*Liaison*—Alabama Reading Initiative  
*Liaison*—Department of Early Childhood Education



## **Instructional Services Staff Organization and Task Structure**

*Updated September 2019*

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### **Lori MaGee, Administrative Support Assistant III**

- Quote Requests
- A2 Processing
- Justification Letters
- Obtaining Sole Source Letters
- Faxes and Copies
- Processing Incoming/Outcoming Mail
- Print Requests
- In-State Travel Claims
- Out-of-State Travel Requests
- Out-of-State Travel Claims
- Correspondence Routing
- Program Support—AP/IB, Science, Library Media, Alabama HS Diploma, including HSDO
- Leave Forms
- Staff Leave Entry
- Conference Room Reservations
- Appraisals/Evaluations/Employee Roles/Responsibilities
- Staff Weekly Itineraries
- Property Inventory
- Property Transfer Forms
- Equipment Storage
- Tracking Equipment Sign-Outs
- Labels
- Staff Meeting Notes
- Employee of Year Nominations
- Other Duties, Tasks, and Special Projects

### **Daphne Selmar, Administrative Support Assistant II**

- Phones
- Faxes and Copies
- Print Requests
- Correspondence Routing
- Program Support—Arts, Health/PE, Textbooks, Transcript Audits
- Academic Waiver Correspondence Processing
- Leave Forms
- Staff Leave Entry
- Conference Room Reservations
- Quote Requests and A2 Processing
- In-State Travel Claims
- Out-of-State Travel Requests
- Out-of-State Travel Claims
- Staff Meeting Notes
- ALSDE Calendar Requests
- Other Duties, Tasks, and Special Projects



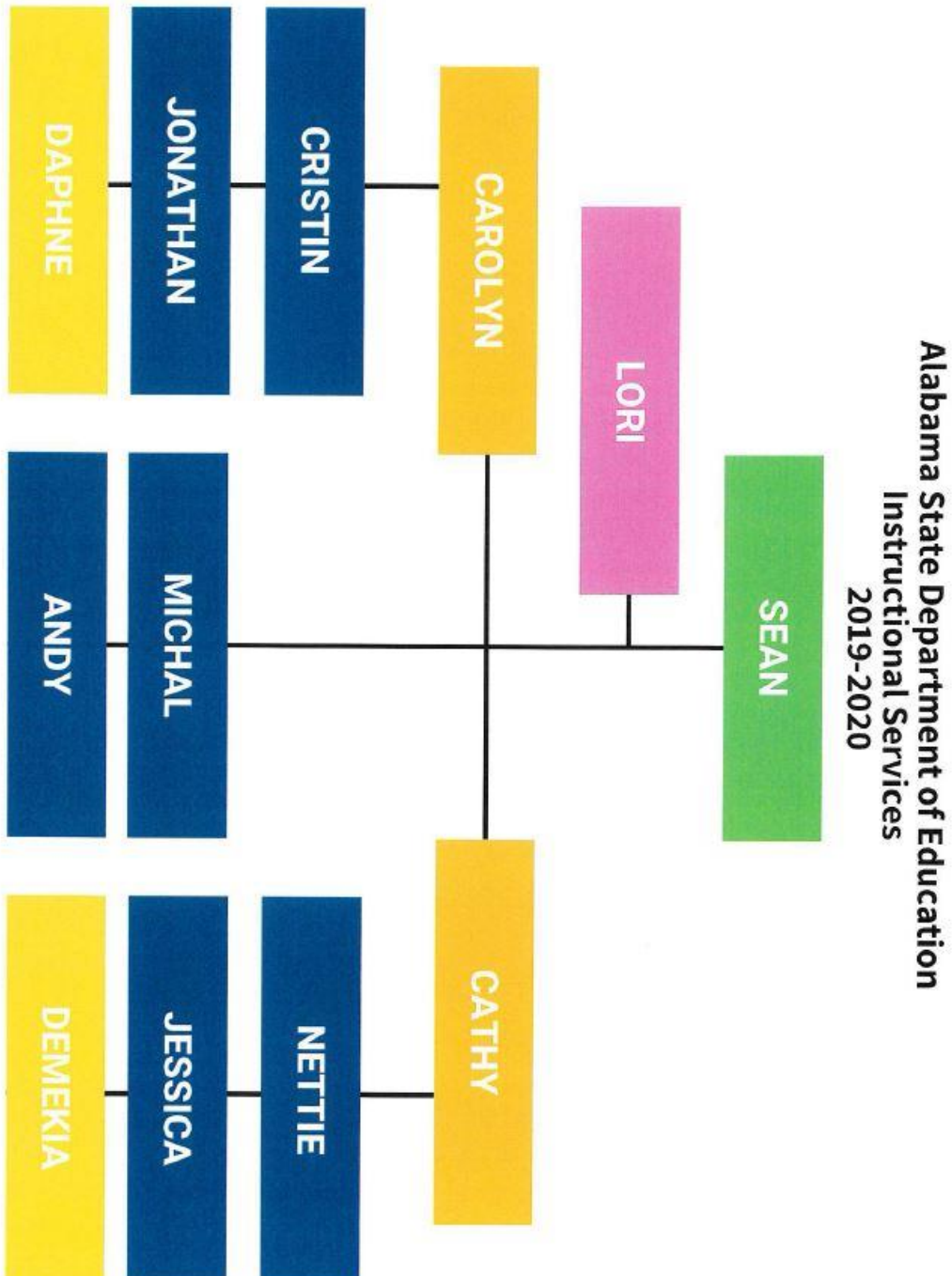
## **Instructional Services Staff Organization and Task Structure**

*Updated September 2019*

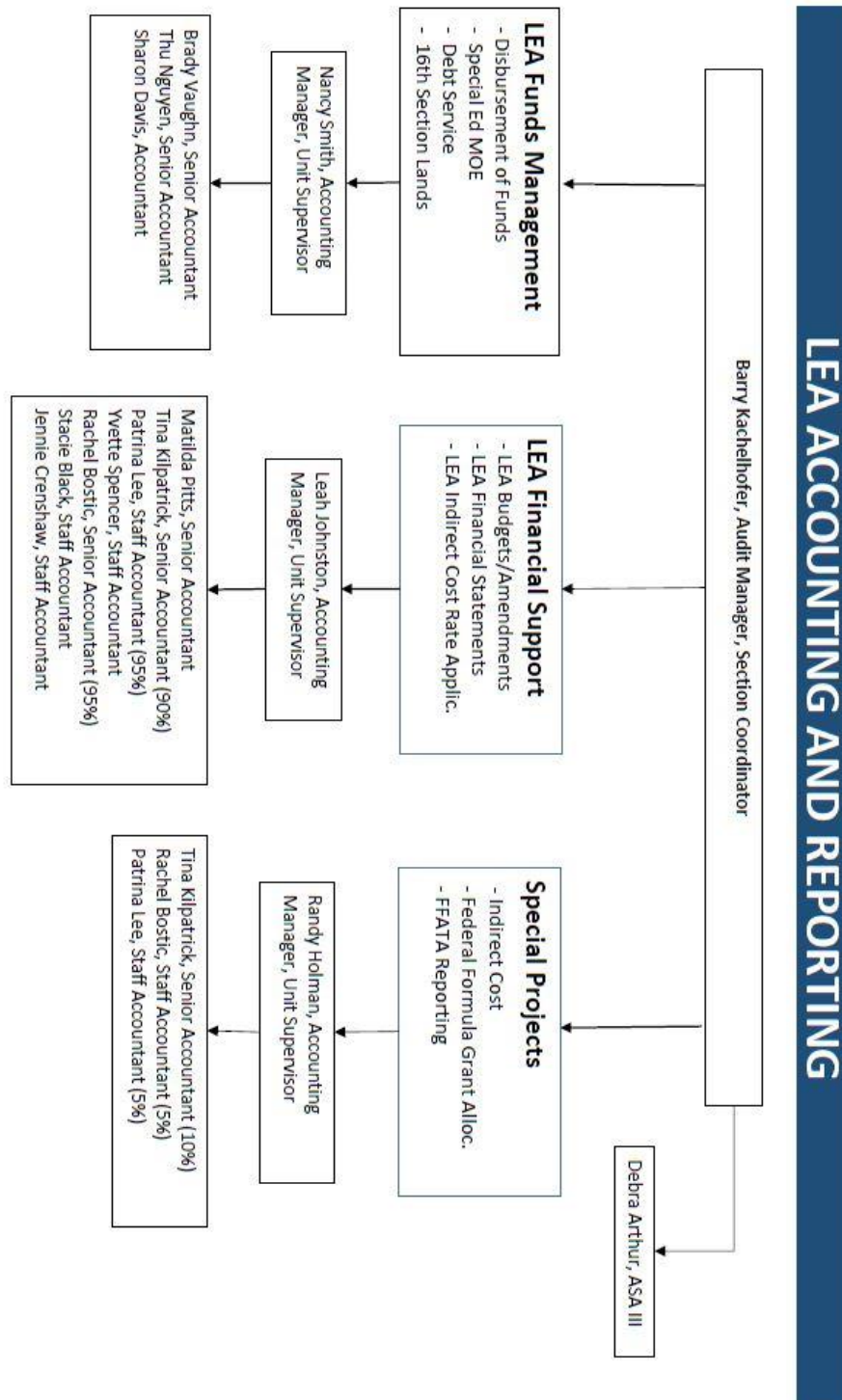
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### **Demekia Maddox, Administrative Support Assistant II**

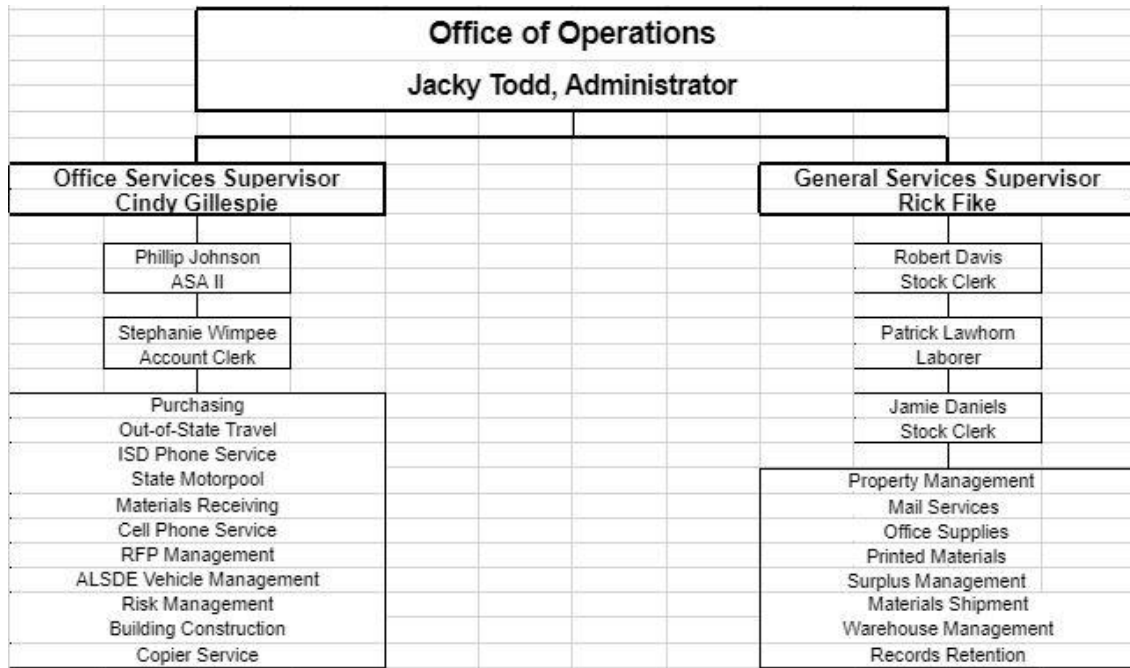
- Phones
- Faxes and Copies
- Print Requests
- Correspondence Routing
- Program Support—Courses of Study, Mathematics, ELA, Social Studies, and AMSTI
- Conference Room Reservations
- Quote Requests and A2 Processing
- In-State Travel Claims
- Out-of-State Travel Requests
- Out-of-State Travel Claims
- Course of Study Meeting Notes
- ALSDE Calendar Requests
- Other Duties, Tasks, and Special Projects



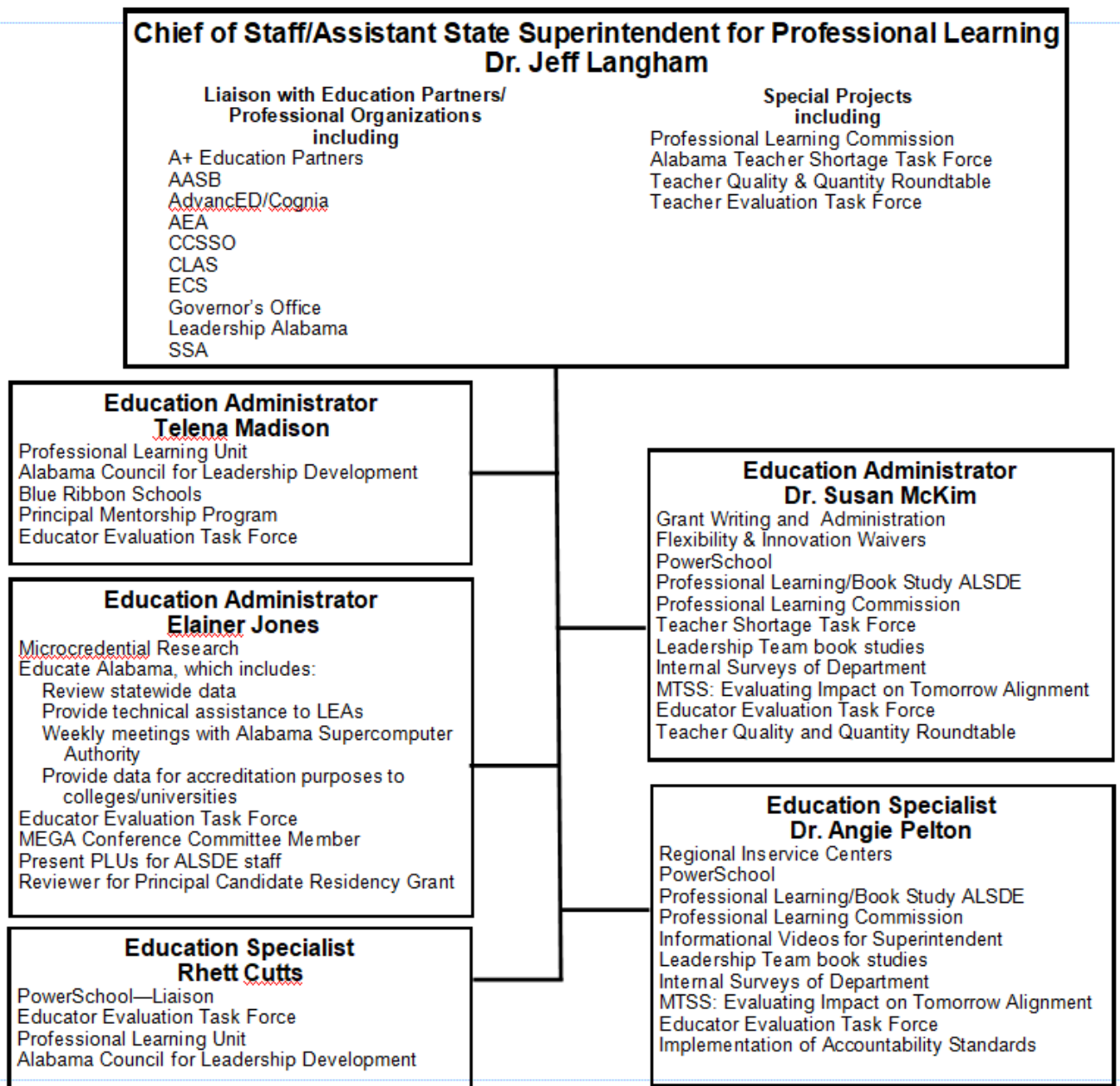
## 11. LEA Accounting and Reporting



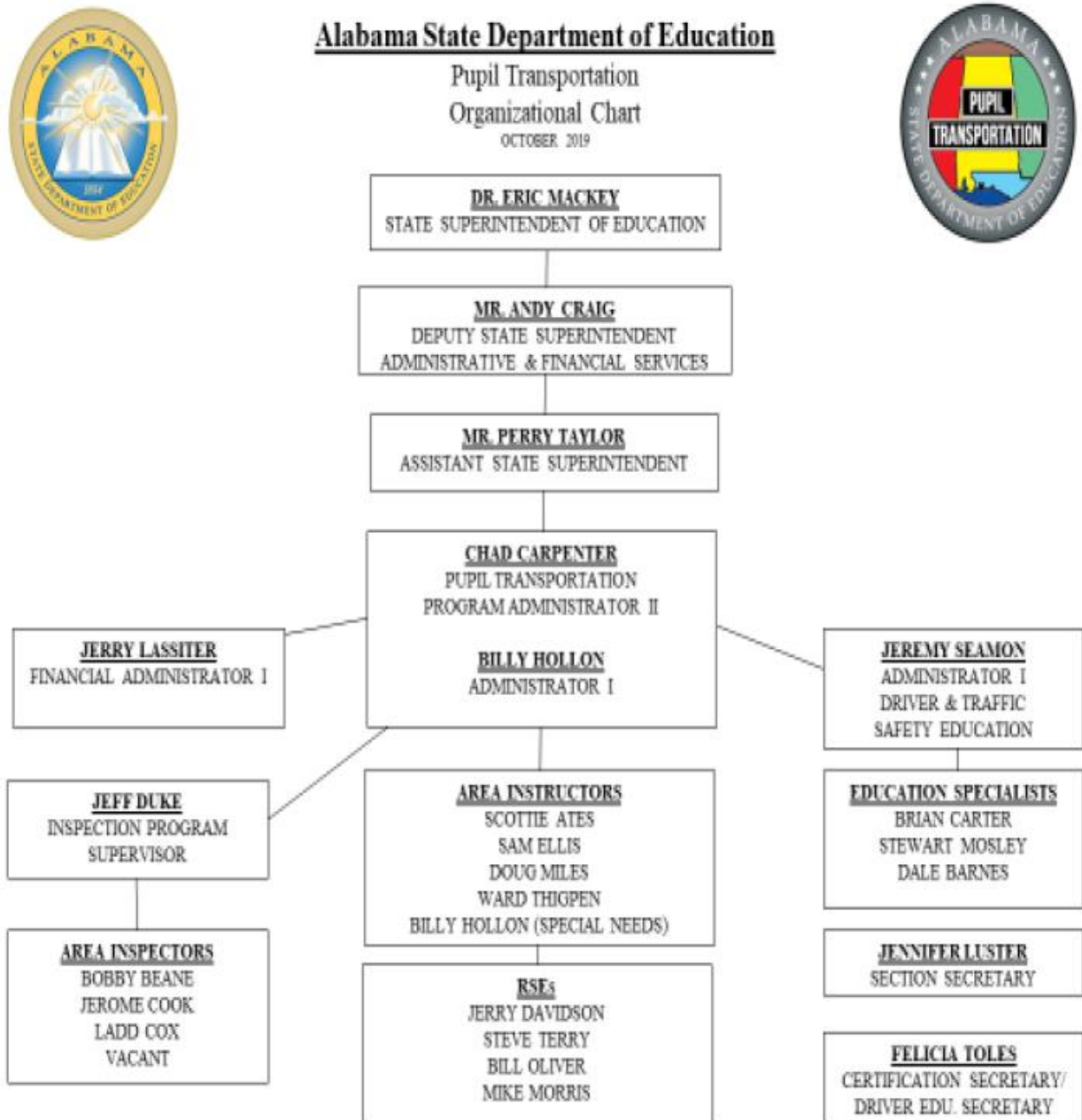
## 12. Procurement and Operations



### 13. Professional Learning



## 14. Pupil Transportation



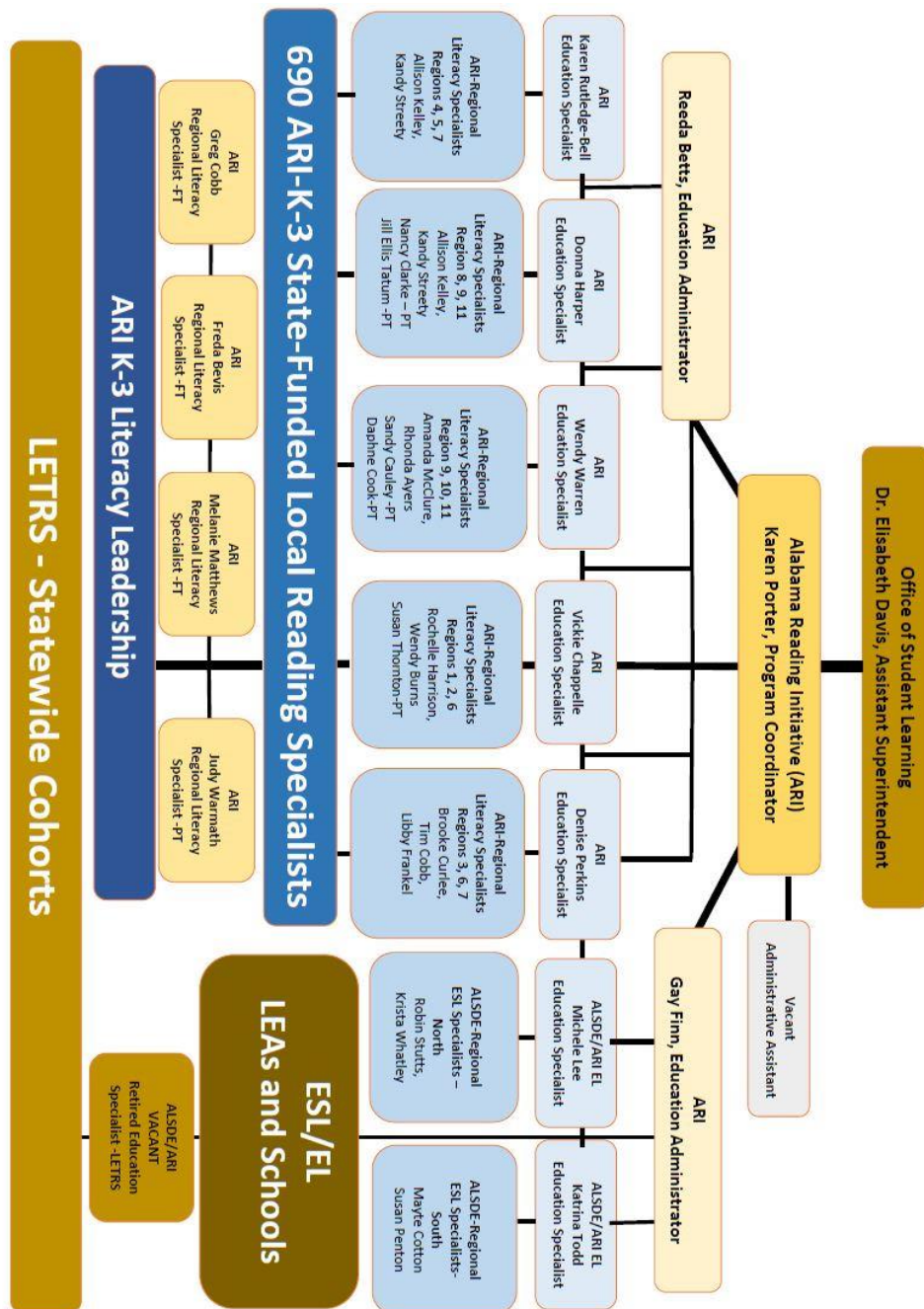
## 15. Special Education Services

**SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES ORGANIZATION CHART**

October 1, 2019

|                                                                 |                                                |                                                                                                                |                                          |                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Gail Comins</b><br>Powerschool Specialist                    |                                                | <b>Crystal Richardson</b><br>Program Coordinator<br><br><b>Beverly Jackson</b><br>Section Secretary<br>ASA III |                                          |                                                                            |
| <b>Alicia Hodge</b>                                             | <b>Erika Richburg</b>                          | <b>Susan Williamson</b>                                                                                        | <b>Tina Sanders</b>                      | <b>DaLee Chambers</b>                                                      |
| <b>COMPLIANCE<br/>MONITORING TEAM<br/>LEAD</b>                  | <b>FISCAL<br/>ACCOUNTABILITY<br/>TEAM LEAD</b> | <b>PERFORMANCE &amp;<br/>DATA<br/>ACCOUNTABILITY<br/>TEAM LEAD</b>                                             | <b>TARGETED ASSISTANCE<br/>TEAM LEAD</b> | <b>DISPUTE RESOLUTION &amp;<br/>POLICIES/<br/>PROCEDURES TEAM<br/>LEAD</b> |
| <b>Sheila Bolling</b>                                           | <b>Curtis Gage</b>                             | <b>Eric Dickson</b>                                                                                            | <b>Stephanie Frucci</b>                  | <b>Melissa Card</b>                                                        |
| <b>Diann Jones</b>                                              | <b>Camilla Gibson</b>                          | <b>Theresa Farmer</b>                                                                                          | <b>Susan Goldthwaite</b>                 | <b>Brian Dunn</b>                                                          |
| <b>Leroy Miles</b>                                              | <b>Sabrina May</b>                             | <b>Kemeche Green</b>                                                                                           | <b>Tara Jackson</b>                      | <b>Bernice Rush-Harrison</b>                                               |
| <b>Denise Wilson</b>                                            | <b>Rebecca Snell<br/>ASA I</b>                 | <b>Emily Hurst<br/>(Gifted)</b>                                                                                | <b>Celeste Minor</b>                     | <b>Shumeka Robinson<br/>ASA III</b>                                        |
| <b>Valarie Howard<br/>ASA I<br/>(Waiting on Final Approval)</b> |                                                | <b>Billie Thompson</b>                                                                                         | <b>Gwendolyn Preston</b>                 |                                                                            |
|                                                                 |                                                | <b>12 Part Time<br/>Instructional<br/>Coaches</b>                                                              | <b>Regina Sankey</b>                     |                                                                            |
| <b>Marlo Phifer<br/>ASA II</b>                                  |                                                | <b>Raymond Glasscock<br/>PT ASA III</b>                                                                        | <b>Marlo Phifer<br/>ASA II</b>           |                                                                            |
|                                                                 |                                                | <b>Meredith Brigman<br/>ASA I</b>                                                                              |                                          |                                                                            |

## 16. Student Learning



## 17. Teaching and Leading

### OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEADING

**Jayne A. Meyer, Director**

**Shelby Garrett, ASA III**

**Cheryl Robinson, ASA I**

| <b>Educator Certification</b>                                                | <b>Educator Preparation</b>                                                                            | <b>Educator Assessment</b>                         | <b>Educator Recruitment<br/>&amp; Placement</b> | <b>Teacher Mentoring</b>                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shavon H. Cummings</b><br><b>(Administrator II)</b><br><b>&amp; Staff</b> | <b>Anna T. Kozlowski</b><br><b>(Administrator I)</b><br><b>Amanda Inabinett</b><br><b>(Specialist)</b> | <b>Deanise Peacock</b><br><b>(Administrator I)</b> | <b>Debra Gosha</b><br><b>(Administrator I)</b>  | <b>Patience Oranika</b><br><b>(Specialist)</b> |

## F. Total CSI Allocations and School Improvement Strategies, by School

| School           | Total Allocation | School Improvement Strategy Implemented at CSI Schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>School 1</b>  | \$123,121.00     | Purchased Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Read 180/Computer Hardware and System 44 Software. Purchased In-Care Technologies Chromebooks. Purchased/Tech Services/US Business. Purchased Classroom Materials and Supplies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>School 2</b>  | \$260,041.00     | Benchmark Literacy (Reading program); Math 180 (Intervention Program; Instructional Coach.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>School 3</b>  | \$288,167.00     | Reading Specialist hired to provide intervention for targeted students and PD for teachers. Materials purchased to assist teachers to reach students operating below grade level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>School 4</b>  | \$212,809.00     | Asst. Prin. hired to focus solely on discipline; Reading program purchased to address those students severely below grade level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>School 5</b>  | \$80,666.00      | Provided Summer Enrichment Program for grades K-5 Purchased Lit Camp supplies for grades 4-5.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>School 6</b>  | \$129,490.00     | Purchased Edgenuity for intervention and credit recovery. Purchased chrome books to support technology in classrooms. Provided Professional Development for teachers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>School 7</b>  | \$90,218.00      | Used extended day (First 30) to provide additional time for academic intervention. Provided professional development for instructional coach. Provided incentives for 90% attendance (students and staff). Created attendance team (social worker, nurse, secretary, counselor) to identify root causes of absenteeism, communicate with parents, and conference as needed with students and parent.                                                                                                     |
| <b>School 8</b>  | \$189,989.00     | Differentiated Instruction with STAR, MyOn, SPED Co-Teaching/Co-Planning, Instructional Rounds, Flocabulary, EL Summer School, Classworks, Technology, Coaching Cycles, Writing Workshops                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>School 9</b>  | \$151,779.00     | Computers were purchased to provide opportunity for ind. instruction during intervention period. Also, personnel hired to provide math intervention for students.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>School 10</b> | \$312,049.00     | Saturday school (extended day) for students to prepare for ACT. Resources and professional development for teachers on ACT. Provided incentives to improve student attendance and address chronic absenteeism.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>School 11</b> | \$177,783.00     | 30-45 minutes of intervention was provided by each teacher daily for reading and math.<br>iRead and System 44 intervention provided by ELI and ARI coaches<br>Regular Formative Assessments data collected and utilized for intervention focus by classroom teacher.<br>Incentives were provided for students related to attendance.<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through regular classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers.                         |
| <b>School 12</b> | \$141,165.00     | Teachers used timely standards aligned formative assessments to measure students' progress and adjust instruction.<br>Extended reading and math intervention time by incorporating an additional hour for reading one day a week.<br>Tutors worked with students on reading and math skills.<br>Incentives were provided for students related to attendance.<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through regular classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers. |

|                  |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>School 13</b> | \$142,226.00 | Incentives were provided for students related to attendance.<br>Teachers used timely standards aligned formative assessments to measure students' progress.<br>Read 180/System 44<br>Extended intervention time<br>After school tutoring<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through regular classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>School 14</b> | \$345,482.00 | Teacher planning time was prioritized in master schedule to allow for collaborative planning and data analysis using student work and other resources.<br>Incentives were provided for students related to attendance.<br>Teachers used timely standards aligned formative assessments to measure students' progress<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through regular classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>School 15</b> | \$196,888.00 | Incentives were provided for students related to attendance.<br>Teachers used timely standards aligned formative assessments to measure students' progress<br>Tutors worked with students on reading and math skills.<br>Professional development related to academic and behavior instruction.<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through regular classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers.<br>Math and Literacy night for parents where they were provided with math and literacy strategies to support their child's learning at home.                                            |
| <b>School 16</b> | \$323,724.00 | Incentives were provided for students related to attendance.<br>Teachers used timely standards aligned formative assessments to measure students' progress<br>Community outreach programs provided by school leaders to address areas of personal and social development and good decision making.<br>Read 180/Systems 44 Intervention.<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through regular classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers.                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>School 17</b> | \$395,899.00 | CSI Teacher Leaders (MS)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>School 18</b> | \$278,615.00 | Teacher and Leader PD (particularly in the area of ELA and math),<br>Climate/Culture Supports (including attendance), CSI Teacher Leader (MS)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>School 19</b> | \$127,367.00 | Goal setting and progress monitoring with students.<br>Faculty Professional Learning Community<br>PBIS Celebrations/Awards Program<br>Regular monitoring and evaluation of intervention plan based on benchmark data to meet student needs.<br>Read 180/Systems 44.<br>SREB Turnaround Training.<br>Incentives were provided for students related to attendance.<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through regular classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers.                                                                                                                        |
| <b>School 20</b> | \$195,296.00 | Teachers used timely standards aligned formative assessments to measure students' progress.<br>Teachers' planning time is prioritized in master schedule to allow for collaborative planning and data analysis using student work and other resources.<br>Regular monitoring and evaluation of intervention/instructional focus based on benchmark data to meet student needs.<br>Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams. Team members conducted regular classroom observations and provided feedback and support to teachers. Team held weekly meetings using a meeting protocol provided by the district. |

|                  |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <b>School 21</b> | \$294,536.00 | Instructional Coach, 1 Interventionist, 2 full-time substitutes for Professional Learning, Studer PD, Read 180, Dreambox Learning                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>School 22</b> | \$323,193.00 | Instructional Coach, Interventionists, 2 full-time substitutes for professional learning, Studer PD, Read 180, Dreambox Learning                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>School 23</b> | \$60,499.00  | Principal Coach, Formative Assessments, Strategic Teaching, Stipends, and Substitutes for PD.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>School 24</b> | \$159,739.00 | Sonday System professional learning for staff and administration. Provided professional learning for staff and leadership team on quality Tier II and III instruction in reading and math. Improve the Problem-Solving Team process. Implement attendance plan that celebrates students with perfect attendance with incentives.       |
| <b>School 25</b> | \$152,840.00 | Walk to Enrichment, Strategic Data Meetings, Elevation for ELs, Co-Teaching/Co-Planning, Attendance Task Force.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>School 26</b> | \$171,414.00 | Explicit and Intensive Small Groups, Walk to Enrichment, Strategic Data Meetings, Elevation for ELs, Co-Teaching/Co-Planning.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>School 27</b> | \$185,213.00 | Explicit and Intensive Small Groups, Walk to Enrichment, Strategic Data Meetings, Elevation for ELs, Co-Teaching/Co-Planning, Attendance Team.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>School 28</b> | \$87,034.00  | Explicit and Intensive Small Groups, Walk to Enrichment, Strategic Data Meetings, Elevation for ELs, Co-Teaching/Co-Planning.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>School 29</b> | \$142,757.00 | Small Group, Walk to Enrichment, Strategic Data Meetings, Elevation for ELs, Co-Teaching/Co-Planning, Attendance Task Force.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>School 30</b> | \$142,226.00 | Professional development opportunities, Consultant (Dr. Nottingham – ICLE) to provide rigor and relevance training for teachers, Teacher Stipends, Materials and Resources, classroom library sets for teachers.                                                                                                                       |
| <b>School 31</b> | \$289,760.00 | Purchased Capturing Kids Heart training. Summer PD (and follow-up) focusing on Reading & Differentiated Instruction. Computers were also purchased.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>School 32</b> | \$241,466.00 | Academic interventionist to support intervention and professional development. Additional teachers to reduce class size. Professional development for teachers with emphasis on engagement and rigor. Concentrated focus was placed on school level leadership teams through classroom observations, feedback and support to teachers. |
| <b>School 33</b> | \$276,492.00 | Academic Interventionist and 4 instructional aides were hired to provide instructional support. Instructional programs also purchased to support core and intervention instruction. Technology for additional individualize academic support.                                                                                          |
| <b>School 34</b> | \$258,979.00 | Chrome books purchased, instructional materials for use in classrooms, Professional development for teachers, Program to address students reading below grade level, PBIS structure developed and implemented.                                                                                                                         |
| <b>School 35</b> | \$219,708.00 | Hired accountability Interventionist and Class Size Reduction Unit, Sonday System to support core and intervention instruction. Chromebooks for additional individualize academic support. Purchased Instructional materials to support academic intervention and Professional Development to improve teacher practice.                |
| <b>School 36</b> | \$241,997.00 | Technology to support and enhance academic achievement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>School 37</b> | \$210,686.00 | Academic Interventionist and instructional aids (2) to provide instructional support (core and intervention). Additional teacher to reduce class size.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>School 38</b> | \$145,941.00 | Materials to support students below grade level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

|                  |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>School 39</b> | \$57,846.00  | Academic Interventionist, 1/2 librarian, and 2 instructional aides to provide additional academic support (core and intervention).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>School 40</b> | \$196,888.00 | District level administrator to monitor and support CSI interventions. Professional development for teachers. Technology and programs to address students' reading difficulties.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>School 41</b> | \$535,471.00 | District administrator hired to ensure CSI schools receive the professional development needed to improve the level of instruction students receive. Academic Interventionist hired to provide teachers with EBP to increase achievement; GTS utilized to better track students; Incentives to address student & teacher attendance.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>School 42</b> | \$193,704.00 | Academic Interventionist to support intervention and professional development. Instructional program to support core and intervention instruction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>School 43</b> | \$360,342.00 | Additional teachers hired to reduce class size and provide more focused targeted instruction. District admin hired to ensure CSI school receive PD needed to improve level of instruction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>School 44</b> | \$508,937.00 | District admin. hired to ensure CSI schools receive PD needed to improve instruction students receive. Student incentives to address graduation rate; trip to visit colleges/career opportunities; Additional teachers to reduce class sizes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>School 45</b> | \$192,642.00 | Technology to support academic achievement. Professional Development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>School 46</b> | \$207,502.00 | Academic interventionist to support intervention and professional development. Additional teachers to reduce class size. Instructional program to support core and intervention instruction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>School 47</b> | \$175,129.00 | Academic Interventionist hired to conduct intervention throughout the day. Computers were also purchased to be used during intervention.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>School 48</b> | \$169,292.00 | Sondary System intervention instruction during IGNITE (30-45 minutes) of intervention per day. Adopted school theme- Ironman STRONG. Use theme in social emotional. Created "Castles" PBIS including Class Dojo. Initiated Parental/community programs. Partnership with volunteer programs for reading, ELL and "buddies". Classroom observation with feedback with the expectation of immediate adjustments to instruction. Identified ELL students on Imagine Learning daily. Summer school - Camp Lit, and improved technology. |
| <b>School 49</b> | \$182,559.00 | Hired ELL interventionist, Social Worker, Principal attended Transformation Academy and increased time in classrooms, peer observations, Instituted Parent and Community opportunities (AL's Pals, Indian River Journeys, ESL Tutors, Reading Carnival, Grandparents lunch). Began using Hope Institute PBIS, Summer School Lit Camp, Purchased StemScopes for Science and Reflex math. Teacher Professional Learning on Writing and Mastery connect.                                                                               |

## G. CSI Schools and Academic Target Attainment

| School                       | Reading Proficiency | Growth % | 11/2019 Failing School List | 2019 Letter Grade | Met ESSA Target Reading | Met ESSA Target Math | Met ESSA Target Reading/ Math | Met ESSA Target Graduation Rate | Bottom 5% of Title Schools 2018-2019 | SES SSIP Schools |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| AM Windham Elementary School | 36%                 | 2%       | No                          | 78:C              | No                      | No                   | No                            | N/A                             | No                                   | No               |
| Adams Elementary School      | 27%                 | -6%      | No                          | 76:C              | Yes                     | No                   | No                            | N/A                             | No                                   | No               |

|                                                   |     |      |     |      |     |    |     |     |     |            |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| <b>Barbour County Intermediate School</b>         | 19% | 1%   | Yes | 59:F | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Bellingrath Middle School</b>                  | No  | N/A  | Yes | 57:F | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Bessemer City High School</b>                  | No  |      | Yes | 57:F | No  | No | No  | No  | Yes | No         |
| <b>Brewbaker Intermediate School</b>              | 19% | -1%  | No  | 67:D | No  | No | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| <b>Bush Hills Academy</b>                         | 13% |      | Yes | 62:D | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Capital Heights Middle School</b>              | No  | N/A  | Yes | 57:F | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | Cohort III |
| <b>Chapman Elementary school</b>                  | 25% | -28% | No  | 69:D | Yes | No | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| <b>Charles A Brown Elementary School</b>          | 14% | -3%  | Yes | 67:D | No  | No | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| <b>Chastang-Fournier Middle School</b>            | 15% | -9%  | Yes | 60:D | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Chisholm Elementary School</b>                 | 17% | -1%  | No  | 61:D | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Dannelly Elementary School</b>                 | 18% | -1%  | No  | 63:D | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Davis Elementary School</b>                    | 14% | 2%   | Yes | 57:F | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Dozier Elementary School</b>                   | 22% | -8%  | No  | 59:F | No  | No | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| <b>Dunbar-Ramer School</b>                        | 22% | -1%  | Yes | 67:D | Yes | No | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| <b>Erwin Middle School</b>                        | No  | N/A  | No  | 68:D | No  | No | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| <b>Eufaula Elementary School</b>                  | 28% | 0%   | No  | 73:C | No  | No | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| <b>George Washington Carver Elementary School</b> | 29% | 0%   | No  | 73:C | Yes | No | Yes | N/A | No  | No         |

|                                          |     |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
|------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| Green Acres Middle School                | No  | N/A  | Yes | 57:F | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| Greene County High School                | No  |      | Yes | 68:D | No  | Yes | Yes | Yes | No  | No         |
| Greenville Middle School                 | No  | N/A  | No  | 68:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| Hayes K-8                                | 10% | -1%  | Yes | 55:F | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| Hemphill Elementary School               | 18% | 2%   | Yes | 63:D | Yes | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| Highland Gardens Elementary School       | 13% | -2%  | Yes | 63:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| Holt Elementary School                   | 19% | 0%   | No  | 67:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | Cohort III |
| Hudson K-Eight School                    | 18% |      | Yes | 69:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| Huffman Academy                          | 20% | -1%  | No  | 61:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| Huffman High School-Magnet               | No  |      | Yes | 66:D | No  | No  | No  | No  | No  | No         |
| Jefferson Davis High School              | No  |      | Yes | 61:D | No  | Yes | No  | No  | Yes | No         |
| Johnson Elementary School                | 16% | 1%   | No  | 66:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| Lakewood Elementary School               | 24% | -13% | No  | 71:C | Yes | No  | Yes | N/A | No  | No         |
| Lanier Senior High School                | No  |      | Yes | 70:C | No  | Yes | No  | No  | No  | No         |
| Lee High School                          | No  |      | Yes | 59:F | No  | Yes | No  | Yes | Yes | No         |
| Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School | 20% | 7%   | Yes | 58:F | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No         |
| Matthews Elementary School               | 17% | 4%   | No  | 67:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| Minor Middle School                      | No  | N/A  | No  | 65:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No         |
| Montview Elementary School               | 29% | -18% | No  | 77:C | Yes | No  | Yes | N/A | No  | No         |

|                                 |     |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |    |
|---------------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Morningview Elementary School   | 22% | 5%   | No  | 63:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No |
| Nixon Elementary School         | 12% | -1%  | Yes | 64:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No |
| RA Hubbard High School          | No  |      | Yes | 83:B | No  | No  | No  | Yes | No  | No |
| Rolling Hills Elementary School | 21% | -11% | No  | 65:D | Yes | No  | Yes | N/A | No  | No |
| Ronald McNair 7-8               | No  | N/A  | Yes | 63:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No |
| Salem Elementary School         | 20% | -7%  | No  | 77:C | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A | No  | No |
| South Hampton K-8               | 26% | -13% | No  | 73:C | Yes | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No |
| Southside High School           | No  |      | Yes | 65:D | No  | No  | No  | Yes | No  | No |
| Sumter Central High School      | No  |      | No  | 70:C | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No  | No |
| Tipton Durant Middle School     | No  |      | Yes | 57:F | No  | No  | No  | N/A | Yes | No |
| WE Putnam Middle School-Magnet  | No  | N/A  | Yes | 64:D | No  | No  | No  | N/A | No  | No |

## H. Department Merit-Based Pay Position Descriptions

| Title                             | FTE | Description                                                                                                                                                                                               | Qualifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Account Clerk</b>              | 8   | This is moderately difficult clerical accounting work involving varied work methods and problems.                                                                                                         | High school diploma or GED and one year of experience in clerical or office work, which includes bookkeeping responsibility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Accountant</b>                 | 5   | This is beginning professional level accounting work in the application of accounting and auditing principles, methods, and procedures in the establishment, analysis, and maintenance of fiscal records. | Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in Accounting. College seniors who are in their last semester or quarter may submit an application but will not be certified for appointment until they receive their degrees.                                                                                                    |
| <b>Accounting Director I</b>      | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Accounting Director III</b>    | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Accounting Manager</b>         | 8   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Accounting Technician</b>      | 2   | This is responsible para-professional accounting work.                                                                                                                                                    | High School Diploma/GED and completion of five (5) college-level accounting courses and two years of work experience performing accounting, bookkeeping, or fiscal clerical work.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>ASA I</b>                      | 5   | This is entry level office support work involving a variety of clerical duties.                                                                                                                           | High school diploma or GED and 6 months of clerical work experience.<br>Note: Typing skills are required for some but not all jobs in this classification. To be considered (selectively certified) for positions that require typing, we must receive a Certificate of Proficiency which describes your skill level.                                     |
| <b>ASA II</b>                     | 15  | This is advanced and/or supervisory office support work involving a variety of tasks and work methods.                                                                                                    | High school diploma or GED and at least three years of responsible clerical work experience.<br>Note: Typing skills are required for some but not all jobs in this classification. If you wish to be considered (selectively certified) for positions that require typing, we must receive a Certificate of Proficiency which describes your skill level. |
| <b>ASA III</b>                    | 34  | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Audiovisual Specialist III</b> | 1   | Listed as Audiovisual Specialist II. This is professional level work of moderate complexity in all phases of audio, visual, and video production.                                                         | High school diploma or GED, with three years of progressively responsible experience in audiovisual communication and production work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Clerical Aide</b>              | 1   | This is temporary and routine clerical work.                                                                                                                                                              | Completion of 10th grade and enrollment in high school or graduation from a standard senior high school/GED equivalency.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Clerk</b>                      | 8   | The Clerk is a permanent full-time position used by various agencies throughout the state. Employees in this class may perform a variety of clerical duties.                                              | High School diploma or a GED certificate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Title                                     | FTE | Description                                                                                                                                                                           | Qualifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Clerk Steno IV</b>                     | 2   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Data Processing Specialist</b>         | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Departmental Marketing Specialist</b>  | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Departmental Operations Specialist</b> | 2   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Docket Clerk</b>                       | 1   | This is responsible legal clerical work processing a large volume of criminal and civil case documents and records, and related typing duties.                                        | High school diploma or GED supplemented by a Certificate of Proficiency in typing of at least 50 net words per minute with 10 or less errors and two years of experience in responsible legal clerical work such as court clerk, paralegal, or legal secretary.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Education Administrator I</b>          | 73  | Listed as Education Administrator General Option. This is highly responsible professional and administrative work in directing and managing Alabama Department of Education programs. | Master's degree from an accredited college or university in an approved subject matter or education specialty area and six years of experience in teaching, education administration, or a related assignment including four years of experience in one of the specialty areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Education Administrator II</b>         | 9   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Education Specialist I</b>             | 161 | Listed as Education Specialist in the Merit Pay Guide. This is specialized professional work in promoting, developing, and supervising statewide educational programs.                | Master's degree from an accredited college or university in an approved subject matter or education specialty area and five years of experience in teaching, education administration, or a related assignment including three years of experience in one of the specialty areas.<br>Note: Advanced graduate study in approved coursework may be substituted for the required experience on the basis of one year of post master's education for one year of experience up to two years. Advanced graduate study is considered coursework towards a Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) or a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.). |
| <b>Executive Assistant III</b>            | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Executive Secretary</b>                | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>General Services Supervisor</b>        | 1   | This is responsible work supervising a variety of support services in a major state department.                                                                                       | Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a degree in any major<br>Two years of progressively, responsible experience in a support services function such as shipping/receiving, motor pool operations, property management/control, supply room operations, purchasing, records retention, office machine maintenance/control, and mail processing, including two years of supervisory experience                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Title                                     | FTE | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Qualifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Graphic Arts Technician</b>            | 1   | This is advanced and skilled technical graphic arts work in the operation of varied equipment in the performance of the more complex technical processes used in the areas of copying, duplicating, and printing.                                                                    | High School Diploma or GED and one year of experience in the skilled operation of composition, press, pre-press, and/or bindery equipment or a production printer OR Associate's Degree from an approved technical or trade school in graphic arts/compositions technology.                                  |
| <b>Human Services Program Coordinator</b> | 1   | This is highly responsible public relations and community mobilization work in facilitating the objectives of public programs concerning school readiness.                                                                                                                           | Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in child development, early childhood education, or a closely related field and two years of responsible experience in preschool/pre-k-administration and training or teaching preschool, pre-k, or kindergarten children.           |
| <b>IT Manager II</b>                      | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>IT Operations Technician</b>           | 1   | This is entry through full performance operations support for data and voice communications equipment, mainframe and client server operations, and network operations.                                                                                                               | (Computer option) - High school diploma or GED plus six months experience working with computers for a business, organization or government. (Telecommunications option) - High school diploma or GED plus six months experience in telecommunications working with voice and data communications equipment. |
| <b>IT Systems Specialist Associate</b>    | 3   | This is beginning through mid-level applied and developmental technical work in voice and data systems design and maintenance.                                                                                                                                                       | An Associate's Degree from an accredited college or technical school in Information Technology and two years of experience in telecommunications (voice) system design, maintenance, or support.                                                                                                             |
| <b>IT Systems Specialist Senior</b>       | 3   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>IT Systems Technician Senior</b>       | 1   | This is advanced applied technical level and/or supervisory work in data systems and installation. Employees are responsible for the planning, coordination, installation, and maintenance of varied and complex personal computer systems and equipment.                            | One year of credit from an accredited college or technical school in the field of Information Systems and two years of experience in troubleshooting and installing Business and/or Government applications software and/or hardware.                                                                        |
| <b>Laborer</b>                            | 3   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Legal Research Assistant</b>           | 1   | This is legal work of a paralegal level in conducting research into legal problems arising in connection with the operation of state departments and agencies, in the preparation and interpretation of basic legal documents, and in the handling of routine administrative duties. | Graduation from an accredited legal assistant or paralegal program and possession of a legal assistant or paralegal certificate and one year of experience in legal research work; or graduation from a recognized school of law and eligibility for admission to the Alabama State Bar examination.         |
| <b>Nurse Administrator</b>                | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Nurse Manager</b>                      | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Title                            | FTE | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Qualifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Nutritionist</b>              | 2   | This is professional work in providing nutritional services including assessment, counseling, and education as a part of a public health program in an assigned area, a rehabilitation service program, or a senior services program. | Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Nutrition, Foods and Nutrition, Dietetics or Community Nutrition.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Nutritionist Senior</b>       | 1   | This is advanced professional consultative work in one or more specialized programs of nutrition services covering multiple programs in a multiple clinic setting.                                                                    | Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Nutrition, Foods and Nutrition, Dietetics, or Community Nutrition and two years of professional nutrition experience.<br>OR<br>Master's degree from an accredited college or university in Nutrition, Foods and Nutrition, Dietetics, or Community Nutrition and one year of professional nutrition experience.                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Paralegal</b>                 | 1   | This is paraprofessional legal work conducting research for legal issues arising in connection with the operation of state departments and agencies, and in the preparation and interpretation of legal documents.                    | Graduation from an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited paralegal program in paralegal studies or a closely related field, or graduation from an accredited college or university with a four-year degree in paralegal studies or a closely related field<br>One year of experience conducting paralegal research work<br>OR<br>Graduation from an ABA accredited school of law with eligibility to be admitted to the Alabama State Bar Examination or a current member in good standing with the ABA |
| <b>Personnel Assistant III</b>   | 3   | Only Personnel Assistant I is listed in the Merit Pay Guide. This is entry level technical work of average difficulty performing a variety of duties in the maintenance of personnel records and processing personnel transactions.   | High school diploma or GED and two years of clerical experience including one year of experience in personnel administration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Procurement Officer I</b>     | 1   | This is responsible purchasing work involving a general knowledge of various commodity groups within an agency of state government.                                                                                                   | High school diploma or GED and one year of work experience in purchasing to include performing duties such as writing specifications, processing bids and requisitions, comparing quality of products, and word processing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Program Director</b>          | 2   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Program Analyst</b>           | 4   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Program Analyst Associate</b> | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Program Analyst Senior</b>    | 2   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

| Title                                  | FTE | Description                                                                                                                                                                              | Qualifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Public Information Specialist</b>   | 3   | This is advanced public relations and informational work in an agency.                                                                                                                   | Bachelor's degree with major coursework in journalism, public relations, communications, English or a closely related field.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>School Bus Equipment Inspector</b>  | 4   | This is technical fieldwork in the inspection of school buses for compliance with construction, maintenance, and safety standards as required by state and federal laws and regulations. | Eight years of experience as an auto or truck mechanic OR six years of experience as a school bus mechanic's helper OR Completion of technical school training in automotive mechanics.                                                                       |
| <b>School Bus Inspector Supervisor</b> | 1   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Senior Accountant</b>               | 13  | No description.                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Special Investigator</b>            | 1   | This is special investigative work in providing assistance in preparation for prosecuting cases and for performing highly confidential assignments.                                      | Bachelor's degree with major coursework in Criminal Justice, Business or Public Administration, or a Social Science and one year of law enforcement experience conducting complex criminal investigations.                                                    |
| <b>Staff Accountant</b>                | 18  | This is professional accounting work performed according to established procedures and regulations.                                                                                      | Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in Accounting, and two years of experience performing professional-level accounting, financial auditing, and/or compliance auditing work.                                             |
| <b>Stock Clerk I</b>                   | 1   | This is routine manual and clerical work in the operation of a small departmental supply unit.                                                                                           | High school diploma or GED and six months of experience performing stockroom duties such as shipping and receiving inventory management; stocking, locating and issuing supplies; completing and filing documents; and operating material handling equipment. |
| <b>Surplus Commodity Administrator</b> | 4   | No description.                                                                                                                                                                          | Listed as code 50282.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## I. List of Reviewed Documents

Below is a comprehensive collection of documents reviewed for the ALSDE Organizational Analysis and Study. While great effort was taken to fully capture all materials that informed the development of this report, given the quantity of documents received, it is possible not all documents reviewed have been included.

- 2018 State Appropriations Bill
- 2018 State Appropriations Comparison Sheet
- 2019 State Appropriations Bill
- 2019 State Appropriations Comparison Sheet
- 2020 State Appropriations Bill
- Additional FY21 Budget ARI State Funding, Draft (December 2019)
- Alabama Achieves Confidential Draft #1 (November 1, 2019)
- Alabama Achieves Edited Brochure with Strategies (Draft, December 30, 2019)
- Alabama Educator Evaluation Taskforce Members (November 2019)
- Alabama ESSA Plan, November 15, 2019
- Alabama Literacy Act: Journey to Success Implementation Guide (2019)
- Alabama Math Timeline (January 2020)
- Alabama Reading Initiative
- Alabama Reading Initiative Timeline, 1997-2020
- Alabama Science in Motion (ASIM) Act (Chapter 61C)
- Alabama State Department of Education 2019-2020 Compliance Monitoring On-Site Schedule
- Alabama State Department of Education Property Management Guidelines for Regional ARI Staff (March 14, 2017)
- Alabama State Department of Education Property Management Guidelines for ALSDE ARI Staff (October 2, 2017)
- Alabama State Motor Pool Online Vehicle Request System User's Guide, Version 1.0 (May 2004)
- Alabama State Personnel Department 2019 Merit System Employment Guide (Revised December 2018)
- Alabama Teacher Quantity and Quality Round Table Meeting #1 Agenda (September 30, 2019)
- Alabama Teacher Shortage Task Force Report (September 2019)
- Alabama's Draft MTSS Definition for Department Feedback (November 4, 2019)
- Alabama's Roadmap to STEM Success: A Strategic Plan for STEM Education (November 2019)
- ALSBE Work Session: ALSDE Reorganization Plan Update (April 12, 2018)
- ALSDE 2018-2019 Comprehensive Compliance Monitoring On-Site Manual (Revised June 28, 2018)
- ALSDE Compliance Monitoring Review 2018-2019 (Eufaula City Board of Education)
- ALSDE Educator Certification Processing – Assessment (November 2019)
- ALSDE FY19 Schedule of Federal Awards
- ALSDE Organization Effectiveness Study (December 15, 2017)
- ALSDE Reading Initiative
- AMSTI Three-Year Strategic Plan (Modified November 12, 2019)
- AMSTI Waitlist, Spreadsheet of LORs and MOAs (2017)
- ARI FY20 Budget/ARI State Funding Draft (October 2019)
- ARI Property/Inventory Procedures
- ARI Reading Coaches Description from Karen Porter (January 9, 2020)
- Budgeted Position Profile FY2020
- Certification Responsibilities and Duties

- Code of Alabama – Title 16: Education – Section 16-2-7 – Appointment, compensation, benefits, etc., of assistant state superintendents of education and division directors in State Department of Education; filling of vacancies
- CSI Allocations & Supports for Districts & Schools, Comprehensive (January 2, 2020)
- Curriculum and Instruction Meeting Briefing (January 2020)
- Department Level Budget Analysis Report by Cost Center, FY19, Period 12 (Preliminary)
- Department Level Budget Analysis Report by Fund Source, FY19, Period 12 (Preliminary)
- Description of the Mega Conference Committee 2020
- ECS Request: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Literacy Law Components, Comparison with other states
- Educator Evaluation PowerPoint (October 22, 2019)
- Efficacy of the Alabama Math, Science, Technology Initiative (AMSTI)
- ELL FY21 Budget State Funding Request, Draft (December 2019)
- ESSA Overview, Including Amendments PowerPoint (December 2019)
- Funding for Math Coaches, FY21 Budget Request (December 16, 2019)
- Funding Request for 2020 Math Coach Pilot
- Grants Update from Susan McKim (November 2019)
- Human Resources Notes
- Instructional Services Staff Organization and Task Structure (September 2019)
- Introduction to Regional In-Service Centers (November 2019)
- Key Responsibilities of Telena Madison, Professional Learning
- Legislative Report: 2019 Alabama National Board-Certified Teachers (NBCT) Report (September 2019)
- Legislative Report: Alabama Digital Tools for Teachers Initiative (September 2019)
- Legislative Report: Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) (October 2019)
- Legislative Report: Alabama Science in Motion (ASIM) (October 2019)
- Legislative Report: AMSTI FY20 (October 2019)
- Legislative Report: Charter Schools (November 2019)
- Legislative Report: Provisions Regarding Compensation for Earned Advanced Degrees (September 2019)
- Math ACOS PD Rollout Plan Draft #8, Phases I-V
- Memorandum: Exception of Overnight Per Diem for Trip Less than 100 miles One Way (July 8, 2019)
- Memorandum: Justification for In-State Travel (June 24, 2019)
- Memorandum: School Safety: Getting Back to the Basics Regional Trainings (September 25, 2019)
- Memorandum: Youth Mental Health First Aid Training (March 18, 2019)
- Mississippi Literacy Act Implementation Guide (Revised 2016)
- MTSS Framework Visual, Draft 3
- Organizational Charts
  - ALSDE Accounting
  - ALSDE Organizational Chart (August 22, 2017)
  - ALSDE Organizational Chart (January 12, 2015)
  - ALSDE Organizational Chart (June 25, 2015)
  - ALSDE Organizational Chart (June 8, 2017)
  - ALSDE Organizational Chart (September 2018)
  - ALSDE Organizational Chart 2017 PowerPoint – Dr. Dee Fowler
  - AMSTI
  - Child Nutrition Programs
  - Education Technology
  - Educator Certification

- Evaluation, Accountability, and Support
  - Human Resources
  - Information Systems
  - Instructional Services
  - LEA Accounting and Reporting
  - Procurement and Operations
  - Professional Learning (November 2019)
  - Proposed ALSDE Organizational Chart (April 2018)
  - Pupil Transportation
  - Special Education Services
  - Student Learning
  - Teaching and Leading
- Position Classification Questionnaire, Personnel Department, State of Alabama (Revised January 1995)
- PowerSchool Student Information System Trainings – Rhett Cutts
- Presentation to Joint Legislative Committee on Finance & Budgets, FY2021 (January 22, 2020)
- Process to Fill Vacancy
- Professional Learning Organizational Chart (November 2019)
- Quick Reference Guide: Selected Student Codes & Application Navigation
- Region 7 Comprehensive Center (R7CC) Draft Logic Models for 2020
- Regional In-Service Centers and ALSDE Survey
- Regional In-Service Centers Funding (2020)
- Remediation Data by LEA Senior Class of 2018
- SBOE Administrative Codes:
  - Chapter 290-030-040
  - Chapter 290-040-040
  - Chapter 290-070-010
  - Chapter 290-070-020
  - Chapter 290-070-030
  - Chapter 290-070-040
  - Chapter 290-070-050
  - Chapter 290-080-010
  - Chapter 290-080-020
  - Chapter 290-080-030
  - Chapter 290-080-040
  - Chapter 290-080-050
  - Chapter 290-080-060
  - Chapter 290-080-070
  - Chapter 290-080-080
  - Chapter 290-080-092
  - Chapter 290-090-010
  - Chapter 290-090-020
  - Chapter 290-1-1
  - Chapter 290-1-2
  - Chapter 290-1-5
  - Chapter 290-2-1
  - Chapter 290-2-4
  - Chapter 290-3-1
  - Chapter 290-3-2
  - Chapter 290-3-3
  - Chapter 290-3-5
  - Chapter 290-3-6

- Chapter 290-4-1
  - Chapter 290-4-3
  - Chapter 290-4-5
  - Chapter 290-8-8
  - Chapter 290-8-9
- School Safety Model
- Single Audit FY16
- Single Audit FY17
- Single Audit FY18
- Special Nutrition Programs, Management Evaluation Corrective Action Response FY18, National School Lunch Program & School Breakfast Program (October 31, 2018)
- Special Nutrition Programs, Management Evaluation Report FY17, Child and Adult Care Food Program (March 14, 2017)
- Special Nutrition Programs, Management Evaluation Report FY17, Summer Food Service Program (June 25, 2018)
- Special Nutrition Programs, Management Evaluation Report FY19, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (September 3, 2019)
- State Department of Education Review – Questions from Cynthia McCarty (shared on December 12, 2019)
- State of Alabama Department of Education Organization Effectiveness Study, Preliminary Report (Kenning Consulting, December 15, 2017)
- State of Alabama Personnel Department Merit Semi-Monthly Compensation Plan (October 1, 2019)
- Strategic Planning Committee for Reading (2017 Report)
- Superintendent Survey (Fall 2018)
- Take 10 for Public Education Demographic Reports
- Teacher Evaluation Task Force, October 2019-March 2020
- The School Safety Platform: EOPs Analysis Materials
- Three-Tiered Model of Interventions for Mental Health (Draft)