

NATIONAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE,
ENGAGEMENT, AND SUCCESS CENTER



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NSAESC

National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center

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Using Student Voice to Inform ESSA School Improvement

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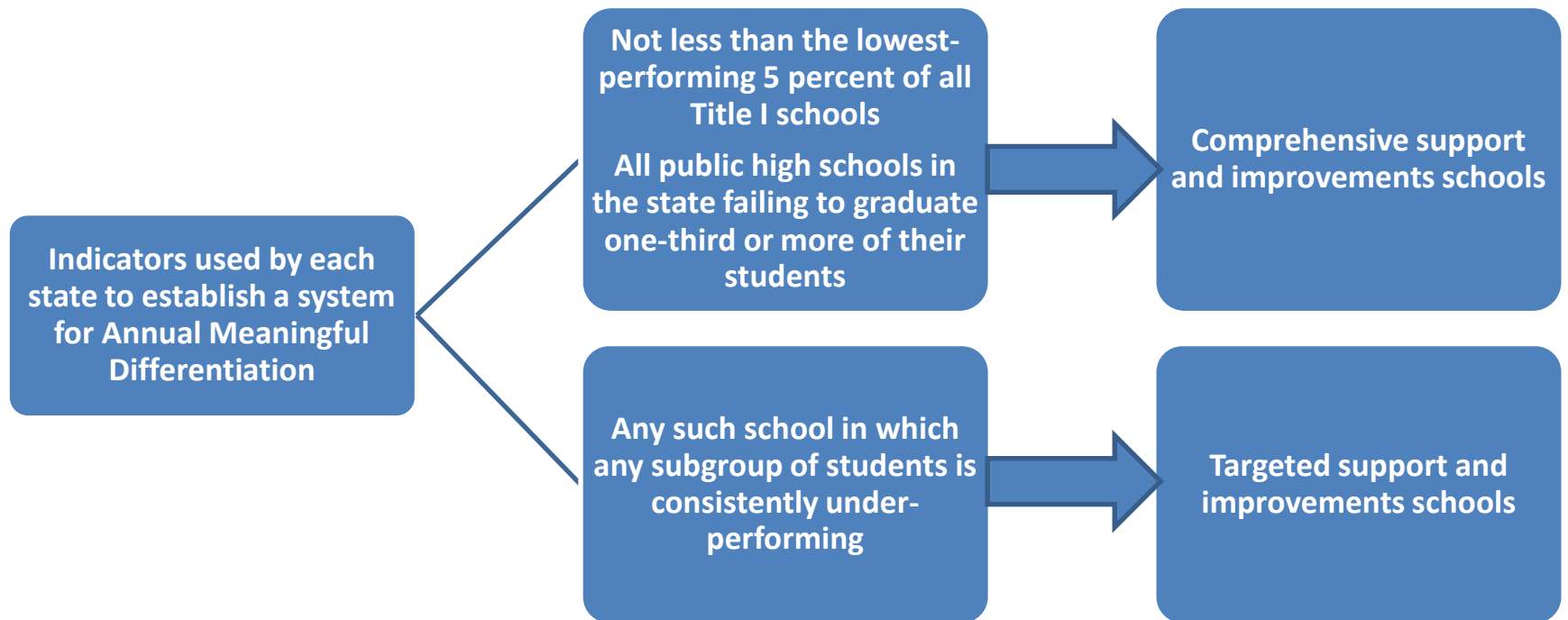
National Student Attendance, Engagement, and Success Center

Every Student Succeeds Act

- Based on a system of meaningful differentiation, states must establish a methodology for identifying low-performing schools.
- Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, and at least once every three years thereafter, states are required to identify a statewide category of schools for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) and targeted support and improvement (TSI).
- Each state education agency (SEA) is required to notify each local education agency (LEA) of any schools identified for CSI or TSI.
- LEAs are responsible for developing and implementing a plan for each CSI school identified.
- Any school identified for CSI that fails to improve within a state-determined number of years (not to exceed four years) shall be faced with more rigorous state-determined action.



ESSA



How do schools improve?

- Whole-school improvement occurs when effective means are found to do three things simultaneously:
 - Build adult capacity and mindsets
 - Enhance student supports and motivations
 - Create school structures that enable a shared mission and continuous improvement towards enabling all adults and students to succeed
- The real question of school improvement is: How to do this given the existing circumstances, challenges, capacities, and experiences of a school?



Engaging Students in School Improvement

- ***Discussion: What opportunities are available at your school for student voice/engagement?***
- Ideas for inviting student voice into your planning process
 - Survey students
 - Shadow students
 - Hold student focus groups
 - Create student profiles



Surveys

- Some great instruments out there!
- Some surveys are free; some cost money.
- It's worth considering if a district already has a survey tool—perhaps your school just hasn't been administering it to students or there was a low return rate.
- Think about whether you are looking for a diagnostic tool or a progress tracker (a survey you would administer annually to track growth).



Shadowing Students

- How do we best understand who our students are and how they experience school?
- Pick a student to spend the day shadowing.
- Record your observations. Do not evaluate; instead strive for immersion.
- Reflect and question all your assumptions.
- Check out www.shadowastudent.org for more resources and ideas!



Student Focus Groups

- Limit group participation—small groups are better!
- Make sure only one person talks at a time. Don't allow interruptions.
- Make sure no one dominates the conversation and everyone has a chance to speak.
- Ask neutral, open-ended questions. Avoid binary yes/no questions and leading questions.
- Opposing perspectives are welcomed but stay focused on the idea—not the person expressing it.



Student Focus Groups: Interview with Empathy

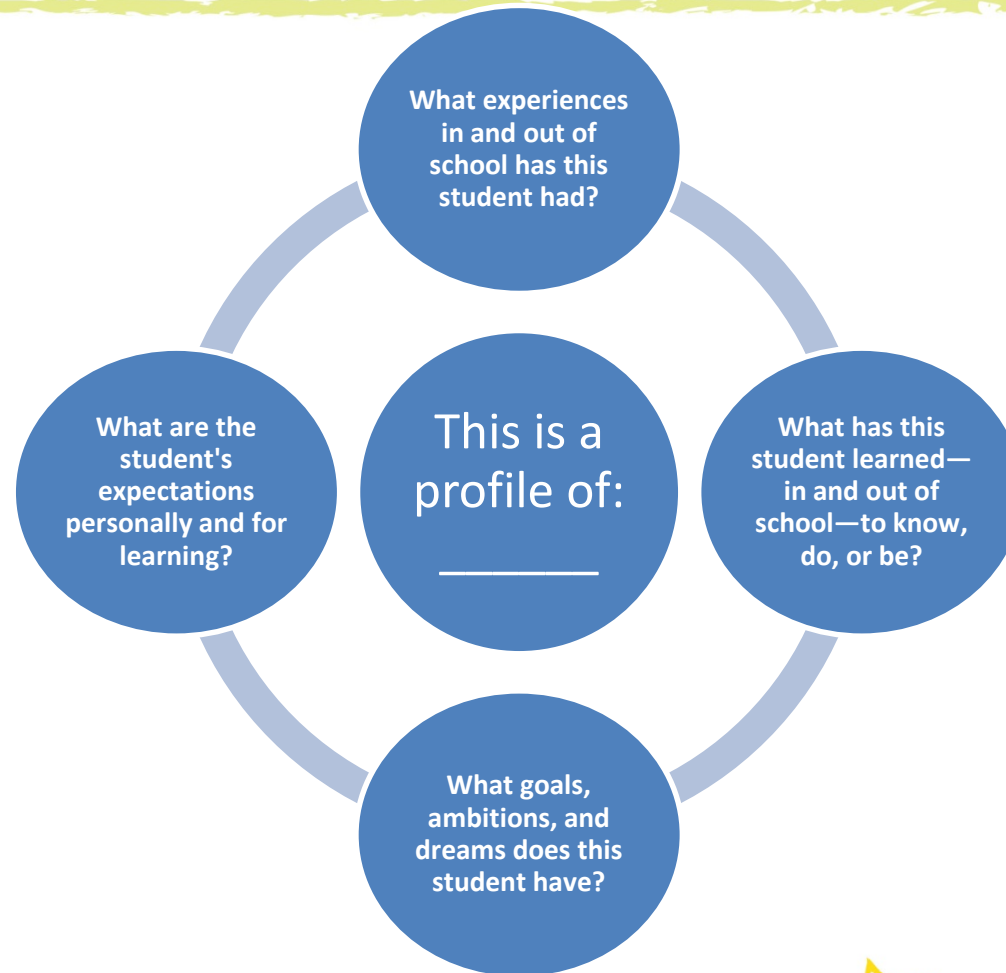


Create Student Profiles

- Through interviews, shadows, and surveys, schools can develop a portfolio of profiles that reflects the composition of their student population and will help explore both the variety and nuances of their prospective students' experiences.
- Use these profiles to inform all of your work, even your goal setting.
- Ensure that every student profile is being well served in the decisions you are making.



Model for Student Profiles



Engaging Students in School Improvement

- Creating space for student voice and an active role in problem solving
 - Student Ambassadors: staff recruit students to play new leadership roles in the school; not the typical student government or student council representatives; act as an ongoing source of information/reality check for staff
 - Attendance “Audit”: students help school design solutions for chronic absenteeism; could provide a model for how to engage students around a specific issue
 - Classroom Circles: balance the air time between adults and youth; provide opportunities for new/different ways to interact; build community and trust



Practice a Classroom Circle

- Classroom circles are often conducted at the opening and closing of a school day or an individual class.
- Their purpose is to build community and trust, create a sense of open dialogue, and ultimately support restorative practices.
- At your tables, one participant should volunteer to act as facilitator and pick a question off the sample check-in document on your table.
- Take turns going around the table and answering the question. A person can pass if not ready to participate.
- Then debrief the process:
 - Any insights into the effect of classroom circles after participating in this circle?
 - What would circles do for students? For teachers?
 - Would classroom circles be hard to implement at your school (or do you do anything similar now)? Why or why not?



Who is Talent Development Secondary?

- Talent Development Secondary is a national school partner and a leader in secondary school reform housed at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education. Its mission is to provide evidence-based models, tools, and supports to the most challenged secondary schools serving the most vulnerable students across the country.
- Built on four pillars of school success, Talent Development Secondary is a partner in districts, schools, and classrooms. On-site staff provide consistent help in implementing the schedule, curriculum, and instruction that will make a difference in how students learn and teachers teach. Professional development is continual, consistent, and specific to the needs of each school and its staff.
- Talent Development Secondary supports schools in the use of real-time early warning indicator data, validated by the research of Dr. Robert Balfanz and predictive of on-time high school graduation and postsecondary success, to structure student interventions and supports.



Questions? Thank you!

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Organizations that we work with:

Everyone Graduates Center: <http://new.every1graduates.org>

Attendance Works: <http://www.attendanceworks.org>

MENTOR: <http://www.mentoring.org>

My Brother's Keeper Alliance: <https://www.mbkalliance.org>

Jobs for the Future: <http://jff.org>

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