Parents as Advocates: Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act

National Black Child Development Institute Parent Power BootCamp

May 18, 2016
The Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC)

• The DSC challenges the systemic problem of pushout in our nation’s schools and works to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.

• The DSC builds power amongst parents, youth, organizers, advocates and educators to transform their own communities, support alternatives to a culture of zero-tolerance, punishment, criminalization and the dismantling of public schools, and to fight racism and all forms of oppression.

• We bring together over 100 organizations in 26 states through direct action organizing, public policy advocacy & leadership development.
Advocates for Equity in Schools
I Vote for Me
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)

- Litigated Brown v. Board of Education, which was ruled upon by the U.S. Supreme Court 62 years ago.
- Even today, the work of Brown is far from finished. Over 200 school desegregation cases remain open on federal court dockets; LDF alone has nearly 100 of these cases.
- Recent Supreme Court decisions have made it harder to achieve and maintain school desegregation. As a result of these developments and other factors, public school children are more racially isolated now than at any point in the past four decades.
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Overview

• Signed into law Dec. 10, 2015, (Public Law 114–95)

• Replaces No Child Left Behind (which expired in 2007) and waivers that 42 states and D.C. are currently receiving

• States set “challenging academic standards”: and identify schools beginning in 2017–2018 (and every 3 years) “in need of improvement”

• States must draft State plans outlining accountability indicators that they will use to measure school quality and student success and improvement
Agenda

- Introduction and Overview of ESSA
- ESEA as a Civil Rights Bill: History and Legacy
- Key Provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Parent and Stakeholder Opportunities to Shape Equity
- Tips on Parent advocacy—Empowerment
The School-to-Prison Pipeline*

“School-based policies, practices, conditions, and prevailing consciousness that facilitate criminalization within educational environments and the processes by which this criminalization results in the incarceration of youth. Disproportionately affects youth of color.”

- In loco parentis*
- HOW discipline is administered
Road to ESEA

- 1896: Plessy v. Ferguson:
  - “Separate, but Equal”
- 1954: Brown v. Board of Education
- 1955: Brown II:
  - “All Deliberate Speed”
- Massive Resistance
  - Cooper v. Aaron (1958); Green v. County School Board (1968); Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg (1971):
    - “Root and Branch”
- 1964: Civil Rights Act
- 1965: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

- Access to quality education regardless of zip code or income

- "Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty." - President Lyndon Johnson

- Large federal footprint: $23.3 Billion in K-12 federal funding
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>Public Hearings and Comment Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>March/April 2016</td>
<td>Negotiated Rulemaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 1, 2016</td>
<td>Waivers under No Child Left Behind Expire</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Transition Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Once state plans are submitted, ED will convene Multi-Disciplinary Teams to review them</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>New Accountability Systems Take Effect</td>
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Key Opportunities for Elevating School Climate and Discipline Reform in ESSA

• State Plans

• Accountability Indicators: Optional Indicator measuring School Climate and Safety

• Funding of Discipline Alternatives
How Stakeholders Shape State ESSA Implementation:

1. Participate in drafting State Plans: Communicate to state what school climate and safety indicator should look like
   - Promote funding for alternative discipline programs (state decides what programs to use federal funds to support)

2. Participate in Multi-Disciplinary federal Peer Review teams that will meet to review submitted state plans (ensure that plans promote positive and inclusive school climates)

3. After implementation of state plans and identification of low-performing schools—Influence district-level needs assessments and implementation of interventions

4. Advocate for states and districts to use ESSA funding for alternatives to punitive discipline practices (i.e. fund restorative practices, professional development, school-based mental health, trauma-informed services)
Indicators of School Quality and Student Success:

States can choose 5 indicators to measure school quality and student success:

1. Performance on annual tests
2. Four-year high school graduation rates
3. Progress of English language proficiency
4. Optional, may include:
   1. Student engagement
   2. Educator engagement
   3. Student access to and completion of advanced coursework
   4. Post-secondary readiness
   5. School Climate and Safety
5. Another indicator of the state’s choosing

Schools cannot succeed if students are pushed out. No evidence supporting argument that pushing some students out boosts the performance of other students. **ALL students** must have opportunity to learn and succeed.
AFTER State plans are drafted:

Opportunity to Review State Plans

Department of Education must establish Multi-disciplinary Peer Review teams to review state plans. (p. 40, ESSA)

Philanthropy can support inclusive representation of organizations in Multi-Disciplinary Review teams

These teams will:

• Review state plans this fall and provide guidance/feedback
• Members of these teams must include: parents, teachers, principals, other school leaders, and community stakeholders.
• Funders can reach out to ED to ensure inclusion of diverse stakeholders in peer review teams.
• Must ensure meaningful involvement of stakeholders.
Throughout the Process: Ensure Parent and Family Engagement (p. 174)

- Local Education Agencies (LEAs—i.e. districts) must examine barriers to parent and family engagement
- Parents and Families must be involved in evaluating parent and family engagement policies
- (p. 580) Financial assistance to develop and strengthen family engagement policies
- (p. 582) Establishment of Statewide Family Engagement Centers
Before receiving funding from the state, LEAs must conduct a **comprehensive needs assessment** (to identify areas for improvement), including:

- School conditions for student learning in order to create a healthy and safe school environment

This could include targeting funding for discipline alternatives (like SWPBIS) and professional development (like classroom management training).
Funding of Discipline Alternatives

(p. 477)

- School-based mental health services
- Ongoing Professional development
- Trauma-informed practices
- Bullying and Harassment prevention
- Partnerships with Community-based services
- Effective classroom management
- Crisis management and conflict resolution
- Funding to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practices
- Schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS)
Education for System-Involved Youth
(Part D, p. 262)

The State Educational Agency (SEA) must establish procedures for the timely re-enrollment of system-involved youth in secondary school or re-entry program. The ESEA must also ensure:

• That program leads to credits that are transferable
• That the student is able to earn a regular high school diploma
• That coursework in facilities must be aligned with state’s academic standards

Many students end up in the juvenile justice system because of overly punitive disciplinary responses (often for minor offenses).
Questions???