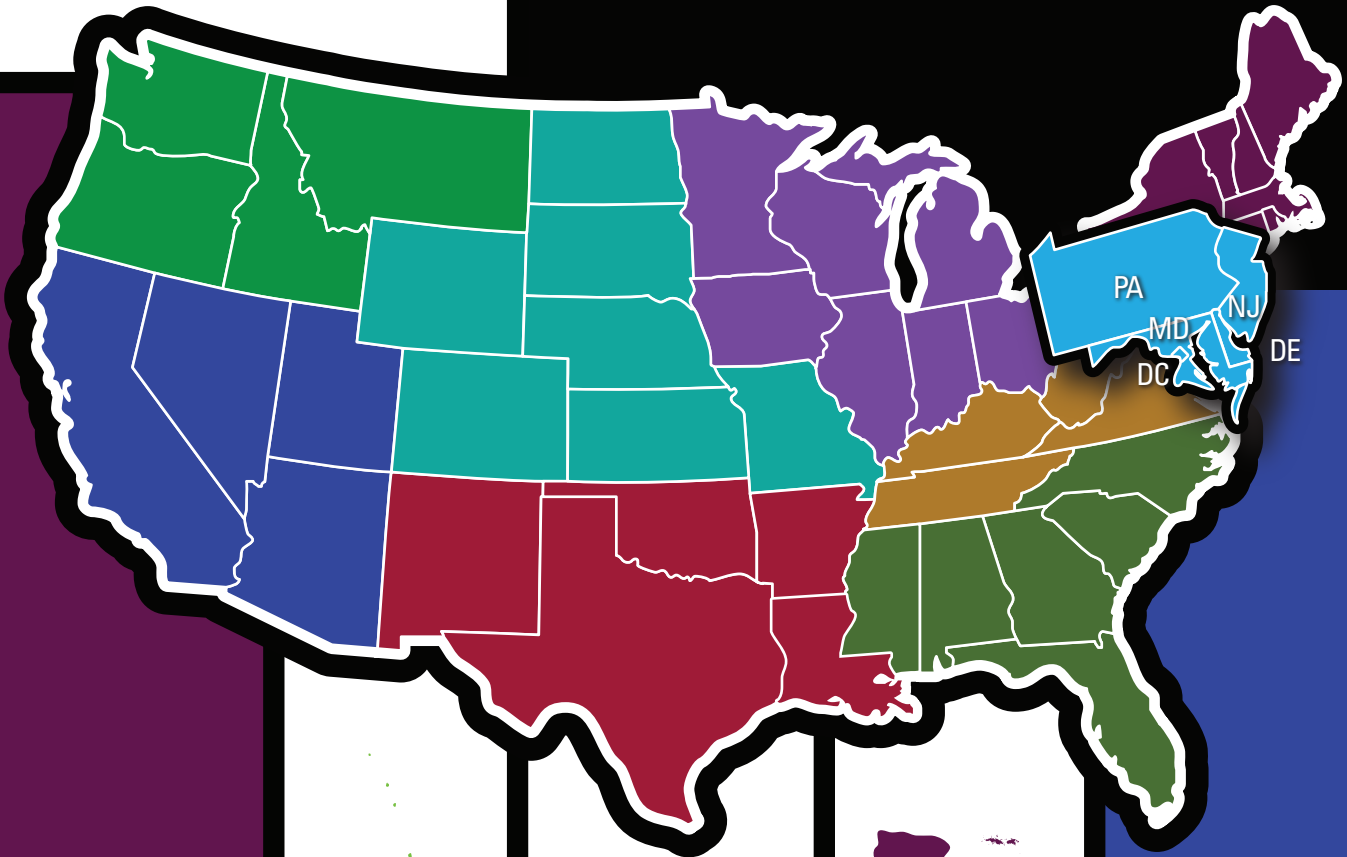# MID-ATLANTIC REGION:
A REPORT IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

PA

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U.S. Department of Education
Regional Advisory Committee
(RAC)

July 2011

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PREFACE

This report presents the deliberations of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), one of 10 RACs established under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. sections 9601 et. seq.) to assess the educational needs of the region. The committee's report outlines the educational needs across the District of Columbia and Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Committee deliberations took place May 23, 2011, through June 16, 2011.

Mid-Atlantic RAC members represented local and state education agencies; institutions of higher education; parents; practicing educators, including classroom teachers; and organizations serving youth, educators, or both. Members included:

Regional Chair

- Christopher Ruszkowski, Deputy Officer, Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit, Project Management Office, Race to the Top; Delaware Department of Education, DE

RAC Members

- Felicia DeHaney, President & CEO, National Black Child Development Institute, DC
- Adam Hackel, Educator and Band Director, PA
- Robert McGarry, Director of Training and Curriculum Development, Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, NJ
- Bryan O'Black, Director of Technology and Assessment, Shaler Areas School District, PA
- Daniel Oscar, President & CEO, Princeton Center for Leadership Training, NJ
- Rachel Pereira, Director to Truancy Prevention, Philadelphia District Attorneys Office, PA
- Patrick Shaw, Educator, SAIL Public Charter School, DC
- Graciela Slesaransky-Poe, Associate Professor in Special Education, Arcadia University, PA
- Darla Strouse, Executive Director, Office of Partnerships, Development, and Recognition, Maryland State Department of Education, MD
- Jill Thompson, Associate Professor, School Counseling Coordinator, University of District of Columbia, DC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002, authorizes the Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), which includes the District of Columbia and the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, to identify and prioritize the region's educational needs and to recommend strategies to address and meet those needs.

Between May 23 and June 30, 2011, the Mid-Atlantic RAC conducted three public meetings and collected public and constituency input through online methods. The first meeting was held May 23rd - 24th in Arlington, VA; the next two meetings were online webinars held on June 9th and 16th respectively. During each meeting, the Mid-Atlantic RAC discussed information and views on the region's educational needs and how to best meet those needs.

To determine current performance measures the committee reviewed the Mid-Atlantic Regional Profile (Appendix A) that included educational data for each location in the region. The committee also relied on the expertise of its own members who represented: teachers; administrators; counselors; families of students with disabilities; students with truancy issues; gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth (GLBTQ); higher education faculty; local education agencies; state education agencies; and early childhood. Finally, the committee considered input from the public and stakeholders through their comments on the Mid-Atlantic RAC website and two surveys the committee created and distributed through Survey Monkey.

From this material, the committee crafted a vision statement to frame their work: *The Mid-Atlantic committee believes that ALL students, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic background, abilities, family composition, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, country of origin, and/or religion, must have equitable access to quality education in order to become productive contributing citizens of our global and ever changing society.*

While the Mid-Atlantic RAC utilized this vision statement to center their work, the committee spent the majority of its discussion time determining four major areas of need on which they believe the Secretary of Education, and the broader education community, should focus time, money, and resources. From an initial list of nearly a dozen critical needs, the committee worked to narrow their list to four main educational needs for the Secretary's review:

1. Transforming educator development (both pre-service and in-service).
2. Developing uniform systems for measuring student success at all levels.
3. Strengthening family and school collaboration.
4. Reshaping school cultures and environments.

The Mid-Atlantic RAC determined that the region should deepen its focus on reforming pre-service and in-service professional development models for educators. While both elements of educator development (pre-service and in-service) were separate priority areas during committee discussions, the common thread throughout the proceedings was that all educator development should be timely, aligned to the most current work and standards in the field, focused on both skill-building and disposition-building, and able to meet the individual educator's identified

needs. If this happened systemically, the committee believes that the region would witness improved instructional delivery for all students.

The committee also determined that the region must define student success as academic, personal, and social growth while creating uniform systems to measure student success in these areas. The committee noted that progress has been made in establishing plans to develop uniform measuring systems and that continuing this progress at the national, state, and local levels is critical. The transition from pre-K to elementary and its corresponding assessments was one area where the committee felt substantial attention should be given.

The third area of need that the committee believed would engender the vision would be to strengthen family involvement in schools by offering authentic avenues for collaboration. Family and school collaboration should foster academic achievement, the committee noted, but not at the expense of encouraging acceptance and affirmation of the diversity often found in school communities in the Mid-Atlantic region. These ideas are not mutually exclusive; one should foster the other. The committee noted that there are many examples of strong family and school collaboration, however, there is still room to improve this aspect throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

The fourth area of need, reshaping school cultures and environments, aligns tightly with the third area of strengthening family and school collaboration. The committee's vision could be achieved if the Mid-Atlantic region focused on reshaping the culture and climate of schools to be more student-focused and family-friendly. Reshaping school culture and environments was also linked, and in some ways predicated, on success in transforming educator development, which was discussed above as the first area of need. Yet even with its interdependence on the other educational need areas, the committee believed that this should be a stand-alone category. More research must be conducted and attention paid to sharing and scaling best practices in school culture; rewarding schools and school systems that invest in reshaping school environments; ensuring that the power of student leadership is unleashed; and protecting the rights and expression of individual students who are all too often marginalized.

The committee also spent time making general recommendations for each identified need area. Recommendations include technical assistance that the region should develop or strategies for the region to implement, or both. Other recommendations include those for local, state, or federal policy and procedural changes, and recommendations for organizations and agencies that collaborate with schools to improve education for all students. Using the Mid-Atlantic RAC's vision statement as the lens through which to view the region's educational needs, the committee believes all students, families, and educators in the region will be better served.

This report represents the regional needs assessment of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Mid-Atlantic region, which includes the District of Columbia and Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The Mid-Atlantic RAC members conducted outreach activities to obtain input from various constituencies on regional needs and how to address those needs, used statistical data from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Profile (Appendix A), and deliberated during three public meetings from May 23 through June 16, 2011.

Legislative Background

There are ten Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) authorized by the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. sections 9601 et. seq.). The RACs are governed by the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (Public Law 92-463). Each RAC also has a charter that defines the RAC's roles and responsibilities.

Regional Background Information

There is a wealth of educational data on the Mid-Atlantic region. A regional profile (see Appendix A) provided a descriptive statistical snapshot of the Mid-Atlantic states and Washington D.C.'s educational status in various areas. The Mid-Atlantic RAC drew upon member expertise, information from the profile, and input from various regional constituencies to identify the region's most pressing needs. The four priority need areas the Mid-Atlantic RAC included were:

1. Transforming educator development (both pre-service and in-service).
2. Developing uniform systems for measuring student success at all levels.
3. Strengthening family and school collaboration.
4. Reshaping school cultures and environments.

The committee used the following to identify all needs and devise potential strategies to address the needs:

Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status. Figure 1 shows the percentage of school districts in the Mid-Atlantic Region that are located in urban, suburban and rural areas. A rural area is a territory that is away from an urbanized area or urban cluster. An urban metro area is a territory that is inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city. A suburb is a territory that is outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area.

Figure 1: Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status

Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status

■ Urban   ■ Suburban   □ Rural

State	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Delaware	25.0	46.9	28.1
District of Columbia	100.0	0.0	0.0
Maryland	4.2	66.7	29.2
New Jersey	5.2	94.7	0.1
Pennsylvania	13.9	60.1	26.0
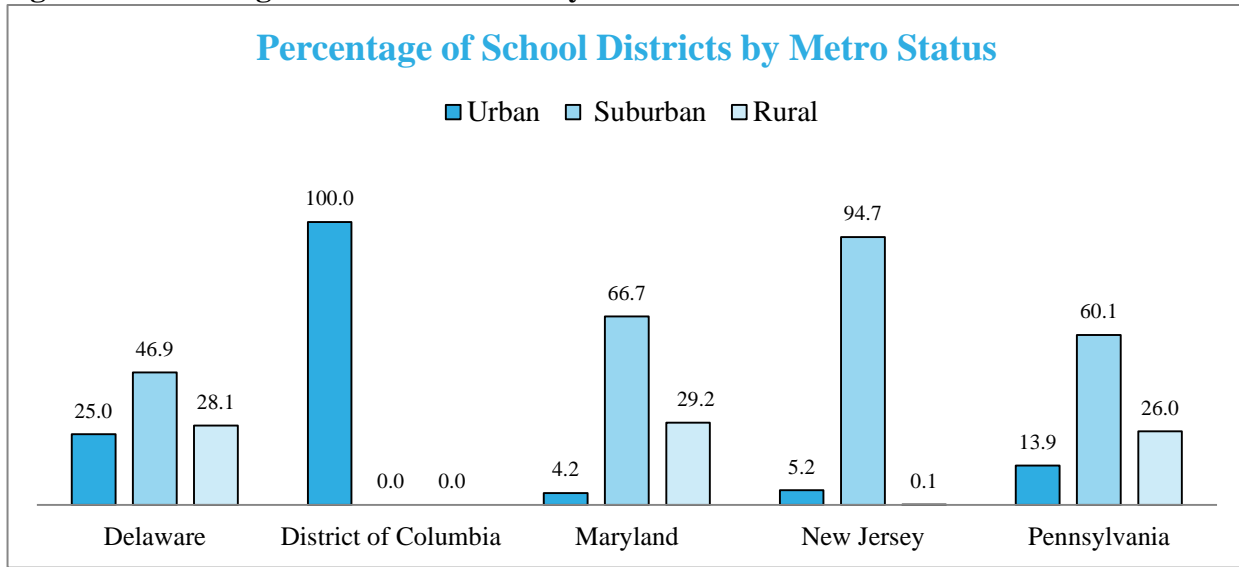
SOURCE: Common Core of Data, 2003-2004.

Selected Student Subgroups. Table 1 displays data, such as the percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL), the percentage of students identifying as English language learners (ELLs) and the percentage of students considered homeless.

Table 1: Selected Student Subgroups

State	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced-Price Lunch[1]	Percent of Students in ELL/LEP[1]	Percent of Students With an IEP[1]	Number of Migrant Students[2]	Number of Homeless students[2]
Delaware	39.5	5.7	15.1	114	2,598
DC	67.1	8.5	15.5	N/A	950
Maryland	34.7	N/A	12.2	388	10,676
New Jersey	30.0	3.9	16.6	2,031	7,890
Pennsylvania	33.4	2.6	16.6	5,331	12,438

SOURCES: [1]Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009; [2]Consolidated State Performance Reports: SY2008-2009.

Socioeconomic Indicators. Table 2 shows the total number of families, the percentage of families below the poverty level and the percentage of families with children below the poverty level.

Table 2: Socioeconomic Indicators

State	Total Number of Families[1]	Percent of Families Below the Poverty Level[1]	Percent of Families With Children Below the Poverty Level[1]	Percent of Children With at Least One Parent With a Postsecondary Degree[2]	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch[3]
Delaware	220,100	7.1	12.0	44.7	39.5
DC	110,035	14.9	24.0	36.7	67.1
Maryland	1,400,415	5.5	8.3	52.3	34.7
New Jersey	2,182,640	6.5	9.8	54.4	30.0
Pennsylvania	3,206,184	8.3	13.7	47.4	33.3

SOURCES: [1]American Community Survey, 2005-2009: U.S. Census Bureau; [2]EPE Research Center, 2011; [3]Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009.

Educational Standards. Table 3 displays data such as high school graduation rate, percentage of students receiving high Advanced Placement (AP) test scores and the number of credits required to earn a standard diploma.

Table 3: Educational Standards

State	High School Graduation Rate, SY2007-2008[1]	Advanced Placement High Test Scores (3 or Above) Per 100 Students in Grades 11 and 12 for 2009[2]	Total Number of Credits Required To Earn Standard Diploma[2]	Alternative Credential for Not Meeting All Standard Requirements[2]	Basis for Alternative Credential [2]	State Has Exit Exam[2]	State Finances Remediation for Students Failing Exit Exams[2]
Delaware	81.9	19.2	22.0	✓	Disabilities		
DC	75.5	12.5	23.5	✓	Disabilities		
Maryland	85.1	42.1	21.0	✓	Disabilities	✓	✓
New Jersey	95.9	25.6	22.0			✓	
Pennsylvania	89.3	15.2	N/A				

SOURCES: [1]EDFacts/Consolidated State Performance Report, 2008-2009; [2]EPE Research Center, 2011.

Meeting Requirements to Establish Standards. Table 4 displays whether states and D.C. are meeting requirements to establish state standards in the areas of reading, math and science or have agreed to adopt Common Core State Standards. The table indicates that all locations have established content standards, yet the Mid-Atlantic RAC notes that there are still major gaps in achievement among sub-groups and tensions around standardized testing.

Table 4: Meeting Requirements To Establish Standards

State	Reading[1]	Mathematics[1]	Science[1]	Agreed To Adopt Common Core Standards[2]
Delaware	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	Partial	Partial	Yes	Yes

SOURCES: [1]Education Commission of the States NCLB database, downloaded March 2011; [2]Common Core State Standards, downloaded March 2011.

Professional Development. Table 5 displays whether the Mid-Atlantic states and D.C. have formal professional development standards or not, whether or not these are financed by the state or D.C. and whether or not the state or D.C. requires districts to align professional development with local priorities and goals. Again, while data indicate most of the Mid-Atlantic states and D.C. have standards and even fund their professional development efforts, the RAC notes that professional development is still a challenging area that needs to be addressed in the coming years to render it more effective and viable for educators.

Table 5: Professional Development

State	State Has Formal Professional Development Standards	State Finances Professional Development for All Districts	State Requires Districts To Align Professional Development With Local Priorities and Goals
Delaware	✓	✓	
DC			
Maryland	✓	✓	✓
New Jersey	✓		✓
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓
SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010.			

DATA COLLECTION: PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Mid-Atlantic RAC held three public meetings. During these meetings Mid-Atlantic RAC members identified eleven regional educational need areas based on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Profile (see Appendix A), committee members' expertise and experience, and input they received from constituent groups and public comments made at the meeting. The ultimate goal was to reach consensus on key educational needs and provide potential solutions to addressing those needs with some priorities for technical assistance. Using all information resources, the Mid-Atlantic RAC members revised and narrowed the identified need areas from eleven to four.

DATA COLLECTION: OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The priority of the Mid-Atlantic RAC's needs assessment was to contact numerous constituencies including teachers, principals, state and local education administrators, institutes of higher education, administrators of federal education programs, youth organizations and business leaders. Mid-Atlantic RAC members developed an outreach strategy to elicit input from stakeholders via the RAC website, online surveys (using Survey Monkey), personal phone calls, and one-on-one meetings. This strategy consisted of drafting personal e-mail invitations to constituent groups to take the Survey Monkey survey or visit the RAC website to leave open-ended comments or both. Ultimately, the RAC members created two surveys using Survey Monkey. The first survey was launched after the first Mid-Atlantic public meeting requested feedback on the eleven need areas identified by the committee. The second survey was launched after the Mid-Atlantic RAC's second public meeting and elicited feedback on the four need areas synthesized from the original list of eleven. Tables 6 and 7 summarize online response data captured from both Survey Monkey surveys and all RAC website comments combined.

Table 6: Members of the Public Submitting Comments, Responses by Affiliation

Role	N
Business	1
Librarian	25
Local Educational Agency	0
Other	18
Parent	10
School Administrator	17
State Education Agency	14
Teacher	40
TOTAL	125

Table 7: Comments Intended for Particular Locations
Responses by location(s) being considered when answering survey questions. Respondent could choose more than one location.

Locations	N
DC	18
DE	14
MD	63
NJ	27
PA	24
TOTAL	146

Mid-Atlantic RAC members reviewed the comments and found that most were aligned with and validated the RAC's assessment of the most pressing needs in the region. A list of verbatim public comments appears in Appendix B.

CROSS-CUTTING CHALLENGES IMPACTING REGIONAL NEEDS

The two topics below ("Committee Vision for Student Success" and "Role of High Stakes Testing") represent themes underlying much of the committee discussion. Since neither represented a specified educational need per se, the committee determined that a primer discussion on both topics should precede the bulk of the report. The importance of a vision for student success and the acknowledgement of an ongoing tension within the education community on high-stakes testing (whether false or real) are underscored herein as cross-cutting challenges with impact on all regional needs.

Committee Vision for Student Success
Does the Mid-Atlantic region have a shared vision for student success? Should it? These questions were part of the committee's dialogue, and thus the committee felt compelled to include a vision here.

The foundation of the vision statement is the committee's discussion about culturally responsive and culturally competent educators. The Mid-Atlantic RAC is committed to promoting effective teaching in culturally diverse classrooms where teachers create authentic relationships with students and become familiar with students' background, interests, and academic strengths. Many committee members believe that this idea is not mutually exclusive with students' attainment of proficient and advanced scores on standardized exams (see next section). Through the lens of the teacher-student relationship, culturally responsive teachers can create learning events that engage and motivate students and foster students' persistence when challenged by learning. Culturally competent educators respond positively to diverse classrooms because they have an awareness of their own assumptions, values, and beliefs and use this knowledge to welcome acceptance and inclusion. This thinking framed the Mid-Atlantic RAC's assessment of the region's educational needs and strategies to meet those needs.

The Mid-Atlantic committee's vision is that ALL students, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic background, abilities, family composition, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, country of origin, and religion, must have equitable access to quality education in order to become productive contributing citizens of our global and ever

changing society. The committee believes that this vision is critical to shaping both the educational needs and solutions of the region, and that educators must consider student success in any educational effort.

Terminology: The Mid-Atlantic RAC purposefully used the word "abilities" in the vision statement instead of discussing "disabilities." This decision conveys a sense that all students have skills and knowledge, and that educators must build on students' strengths instead of working from a deficit model that seeks to *fix* students. The Mid-Atlantic RAC purposefully enumerated the various categories of student characteristics to be as explicit as possible in emphasizing equitable access to quality educational opportunities for *all* students. In identifying and addressing the region's educational needs, this perspective was taken into consideration.

The Role of High-Stakes Testing
Constituents that the committee engaged in this process had myriad opinions on this issue, as did committee members themselves. The dialogue over the role of high-stakes testing is alive and well among many of the constituents that the committee spoke with, and the tension around the issue (which some committee members believe is a false tension—see below) pervades the committee's discussions on many of the stated educational priorities. This section outlines the continued discussion on the role of high-stakes testing.

The Mid-Atlantic RAC deliberated about high-stakes testing and its influence on the educational community many times and in various contexts. While the committee members did not identify high-stakes testing as a specific regional need per se, they did want to acknowledge the topic and present the various perspectives within the high-stakes testing conversation, especially when juxtaposed against the need to meet students' academic, personal, and social needs.

Some committee members believe that high-stakes tests do not measure student progress in ways that align with the high expectations educators should hold for students. From their perspective there is a need for teaching the 21st century skills of critical thinking and problem solving, and that these skills should drive standardized testing measures that are less rigid. Many standardized tests reflect the testing strategies used 30 years ago and do not measure 21st century skills. When standardized tests drive student curriculum and teachers' instruction, the focus is on knowledge and skills not relevant to today's world. Too often the current test data system punishes schools and does not capture students' academic, personal, and social development in a manner that conforms with the committee's definition of student success.

Other RAC members reported that high-stakes testing and high expectations for students in all realms of life are not mutually exclusive. Instead, much of the existing tension is due to educators', administrators' and policymakers' narrow interpretation of testing and student learning. This in turn often leads to a fact-based, test preparation curriculum instead of a curriculum that addresses students' academic, personal, and social needs. This perspective limits the dialogue around student achievement and student outcomes and does not focus on meeting students' academic, social, and personal needs. RAC members gave examples of situations where schools are using evidenced-based practices with curriculum in ways that do meet students' academic, social, and personal needs, and where students are performing well on standardized tests because of, not in spite of, this rigorous approach.

Assessment and accountability, the committee noted, can be a positive presence in schools when they are authentic, appropriate and support the educational process. The tension comes when some educators or school community members do not perceive the testing as authentic, appropriate and supportive of the educational process. Again, the Mid-Atlantic RAC wanted to acknowledge the tension among some constituents in the educational community and recognize the need to continually address the issues of high-stakes testing to foster a shared understanding of what is best for our students. Despite having different opinions about the role of high-stakes testing, the Mid-Atlantic RAC was resolute in their perspective that a high quality education must address all students' academic, social and personal needs in order to provide the maximum preparation possible for productive citizenship in a global society.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE NEEDS

Mid-Atlantic RAC members synthesized information from various RAC members, their constituencies, and public comments (see Appendix B) to determine the four need areas and strategies to address the needs. The needs, presented below in hierarchical order, include:

1. Transforming educator development (both pre-service and in-service).
2. Developing uniform systems for measuring student success at all levels.
3. Strengthening family and school collaboration.
4. Reshaping school cultures and environments.

For each need presented below, the committee summarized the needs, and generated strategies to meet the needs.

1. Transforming Educator Development (both pre-service and in-service)

The Mid-Atlantic RAC members believe that transforming educator development occurs in a continuum across time. Dispositions and skills begin to develop with initial preparation and continue to grow through professional development opportunities.

Considerations for Transforming Educator Development
The Mid-Atlantic RAC members considered the following dispositions when recruiting and retaining qualified educators and noted what it might take to consider an educator *qualified*:

1. Be prepared to understand the complex needs of students and families.

2. Demonstrate culturally sensitive and responsive dispositions towards all students and families.

3. Be prepared to understand and effectively teach content.

4. Be effectively prepared to teach all students using evidence-based techniques.

5. Be well versed in interpreting and using state or D.C. student data to plan appropriate and tailored instruction.

6. Be prepared to be instructional leaders to help faculty and staff support students' academic, social, and personal needs.

Pre-Service Teacher Preparation Programs
The committee discussed the need for all educator preparation programs (teacher, administrator, counselor, etc.) to include disposition, knowledge, and skills that address meeting the needs of students with disabilities. All professional development curricula should foster ongoing self-examination by educators of their own backgrounds and dispositions towards diversity.

The committee also stressed effective preparation to teach specific content. Clinical practice should be integrated throughout the preparation program and include knowledge and experience with district and state evaluation and data systems. Educators should understand how to develop, implement, and assess by utilizing student-centered instructional techniques that engage students' participation in their own learning and foster student leadership and knowledge contribution. This is discussed further in the second need area below.

Continuing In-Service Professional Development
Educators need continuous professional development on interpreting and using assessment data for tailoring instruction to meet identified needs and build on identified strengths. The Mid-Atlantic RAC felt strongly that all professional development must be tailored to the educators' identified needs and be ongoing, continuous, and job-imbedded to ensure the educator had support when implementing new skills and knowledge. The committee rejected the notion of one-day workshops because there was no follow-up and feedback. Professional development providers, whether private, district or state, should be accountable for their services, products, and outcomes and should be held to consistent professional development standards.

Recommended Strategies to Address Transforming Educator Development (both pre-service and in-service)
The Mid-Atlantic RAC discussed the following potential strategies to address the challenge of transforming educator development. The following summarizes the public comments and the committee's thoughts for meeting this need:

1. Provide educators with proper mentoring and ongoing, individualized coaching.

2. Develop an assessment system to measure educators' skills, knowledge, and dispositions and to tailor professional development to educators' identified needs.

3. Create an assessment system based on professional development standards to hold professional development providers and participants accountable for educators' outcomes.

4. Include continuous critical self-examination of the philosophies and practices of educators to help them understand that differences among people in general, and marginalized differences among people in particular, are socially constructed, and as such, open to change.

5. Ensure that all teachers are involved in ongoing professional development provided by organizations with expertise involving the following content areas: developing

dispositions towards diversity, inclusiveness, and parent engagement; assessment; literacy; instructional technology; culturally responsive classroom management; writing authentic and meaningful IEPs; data-driven planning; differentiated instruction; and English language learner instruction.

6. Pair data coaches with educators to learn how to interpret and use data for tailoring instruction to individual students and groups of students.

2. Developing Uniform Systems for Measuring Student Success at All Levels

The Mid-Atlantic RAC members believe that educators need uniform systems to reliably measure students' academic, social, and personal development across their K-12 schooling, with particular emphasis on *readiness* at pivotal transition points (i.e. K into first grade, third grade into fourth grade, eighth grade into ninth grade, and graduating seniors). The Mid-Atlantic RAC discussed the inequitable access to, and quality of, education across and within the states and D.C. that result in high school diplomas representing very different types of preparation. The committee cited the need for a district and/or state schedule of uniform, formative assessments at the classroom level that could include flexible measuring systems like portfolios. These data points would inform decision making for allocating resources to existing programs by indicating their progress, or for initiating new programs by providing validating information. The data also would help each teacher tailor instruction to the needs of individual students or small groups of students. The committee discussed that with a consistent and common, valid and reliable benchmarking system, each state or district could diagnose students' readiness levels throughout K-12 schooling and render more consistent criteria across high school diplomas.

Challenges
Challenges to developing uniform systems for measuring student success at all levels include the need to:

1. Devise a system that actually captures valid and reliable data based on curriculum and child development.

2. Devise a system for teachers to use transitional data for the identified transition periods (i.e. K into first grade, third grade into fourth grade, eighth grade into ninth grade, and graduating seniors) to plan appropriate, tailored instruction to ensure students' academic, social, and personal growth and development.

3. Use assessments already in place, when at all possible, to avoid reinventing the wheel.

4. Consider common standards and criteria for assessing student work and products as part of a flexible and authentic transition assessment system that measures and indicates readiness levels.

Recommended Strategies to Address Developing Uniform Systems for Measuring Student Success at All Levels
The Mid-Atlantic RAC discussed some potential strategies to develop a uniform system that benchmarks student success and provides useful data to tailor instruction for individual and/or

small groups of students. Again, in line with the Mid-Atlantic RAC's vision statement, "student success" is viewed as authentic and appropriate growth in academic, social and personal measures. The following represents the public comments and the committee's thoughts for meeting this need:

1. Re-conceptualize and articulate a definition of *success* to include students' academic, social, and personal growth and development.

2. Develop a national strategy for summative measures for students' academic, social, and personal growth and development.

3. Develop a reasonable and viable system that creates a way in which teachers can closely monitor academic, social, and personal progress without it being overly burdensome.

4. Develop guidelines and exemplars for local development and use of formative assessments for students' academic, social, and personal transition readiness to detect early warning indicators that are universal in nature.

5. Design an efficient data reporting timeline that provides data early enough in the school calendar for staffing and instructional decision making.

6. Design a report format for summative assessments that is user-friendly to school leaders for making staffing and professional development decisions.

7. Develop standards and criteria for growth limits for each transitional period with standardized assessment to measure growth.

3. Strengthening Family and School Collaboration

To the Mid-Atlantic RAC members, family and school collaboration represents the many partnership opportunities that can support and enrich students' learning and deepen a community's impact on its young citizens. The committee discussed the importance of understanding and responding positively to diverse cultural backgrounds of families in a school community. Improved and effective communication with families about their children, school initiatives, vision, and school issues should be accessible and regular throughout the school year. Designing innovative and informal ways to involve families in the life of the school is important throughout K-12 schools and particularly important in high need school communities for families of *at-risk* youth. Engaging students to design and lead activities such as book groups or family learning nights might garner more attendance and participation. Providing families with guiding questions based on the topics discussed at meetings will help families participate in the meetings and may increase attendance and participation. The committee also discussed the positive and rich interactions that occur when home visits are part of a school's regular practice. Finally the committee discussed the need to develop school and family accountability measures for family involvement in schools but acknowledged the difficulty in identifying criteria for family involvement along with valid and reliable tools that would capture the requisite data.

Challenges
There are many challenges to strengthening family and school collaboration, including the following needs:

1. Improve communication with families who have students identified within special populations (disabilities, English language learners, gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgendered-questioning youth, low socioeconomic status, children of sexual minority parents, and minority status).

2. Improve services to students identified within special populations.

3. Address responsibility and accountability of families for their students' attendance, participation, and success.

4. Develop authentic avenues of collaboration that work to improve students' academic, social, and personal outcomes.

Recommended Strategies to Strengthening Family and School Collaboration
The Mid-Atlantic RAC discussed potential strategies to address developing and maintaining authentic, collaborative partnerships with families and school community members with an emphasis on serving families with students identified as members of special populations. Strategies include:

1. Provide additional support and guidance to parental information and resource centers and similar parent engagement and training programs.

2. Provide training to districts and schools to understand how they can better utilize and report on Title I funding that is dedicated to parent involvement activities, specifically around supporting best practices that are culturally relevant and age-specific, and reach beyond the traditional means of involvement and communication.

3. Implement programs that create multi-faceted webs of community-based programs to address the comprehensive needs and strengths of children and families.

4. Support the implementation of home visiting programs that deliver support services to low-income parents with young children and improve children's outcomes in health, development, language, and literacy.

5. Create opportunities for teachers and families to work together to set academic, social, and personal goals for their children.

6. Create open and transparent systems for sharing information and reporting on student academic, social, and personal progress and success.

7. Build family engagement strategies upon good, culturally responsive practice, such as including children's extended family members; engaging in summertime, home-visiting; leading school-based play and work groups; encouraging parent-led workshops; and holding regular cultural celebrations that result in sustaining strong home-school

relationships beginning before children enter school and continuing throughout their K-12 schooling.

8. Develop system-wide interventions (e.g., social services, schools, and family courts) to assist families in distress in order to increase student attendance in school and participation by students and families in school activities.

9. Develop a task force or committee of family, community and school members to develop meaningful sanctions for students who are truant or do not comply with compulsory school laws.

10. Provide supports for school systems whereby incentives are offered to keep students from dropping out.

11. Increase accountability for alternative education schools to meet students' academic, social, and personal needs.

4. Reshaping School Cultures and Environments

The Mid-Atlantic RAC members conceptualized school environments as the many factors that make up the environment. This need area emerged from discussions about educators' unquestioned cultural biases with regard to different groups of students, including culturally and linguistically diverse students, urban environments, the LGBTQ community, and students with disabilities. The committee discussed the general disengagement of students, particularly at the secondary level, because of teachers' low expectations for student achievement and because of the lack of evidence-based instructional practices in schools. Many schools have poor climates without access to related arts opportunities, athletics, or after-school programs that often interest students to stay in school. Community factors such as race, low socioeconomic levels and lack of culturally competent educators working with diverse populations inhibit equitable access to quality education, and continue to maintain or widen the achievement gap and disproportionate minority representation in special education programs. Few schools offer opportunities for vocational training, and many are not maximizing available technology to offer innovative learning opportunities for students. On the other hand, partnerships with public libraries will help to improve or enrich the school environment for younger students by supporting early literacy through story time, and for older students by maintaining knowledge and skills learned in the schools through summer programming.

Challenges
There are many challenges in this area; Mid-Atlantic RAC members identified the following needs to meet the challenges:

1. Make schools and surrounding neighborhoods safe for all students regardless of student background and neighborhood environments.

2. Instill and model a school climate and culture that demands respect from all adults and students towards each other.

3. Engage and support educators to address areas of concern identified by the school

community and promote culturally responsive interactions among all school community members.

4. Restructure school environments to include appropriate and adequate physical space with up-to-date technology and materials.

Recommended Strategies to Reshaping School Cultures and Environments
The committee generated potential strategies to address the need of developing and maintaining productive school environments to emphasize serving students and families often marginalized in schools by harassment and bullying. There was also much discussion about the differences in quality and quantity of resources available to schools across and within the states and D.C. based on the socioeconomics of school communities that impact school cultures and environments. The following strategies represent the public comments and the committee's thoughts for meeting this need:

1. Provide technical assistance to schools implementing school-wide, positive, behavior support programs that focus on building a sense of community.

2. Develop initiatives to keep schools safe and free from bullying and harassment by instituting policies and procedures that address anti-bullying and anti-discrimination with enumerated categories of school members that they are protecting to include students, families, and educators with any one or more of the following attributes: non-conforming gender identity and expression, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer or questioning; along with students with disabilities, students from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, and any other marginalized group specific to their school community.

3. Modify student curriculum in K-12 settings and curriculum for educator professional development to include such topics as gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disabilities, as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds to be taught, discussed, and celebrated as part of the school community.

4. Update all schools physically and ensure every school has access to the latest technology to help focus on learning in a context that values and includes students' worldviews.

CONCLUSION

This report represents the Mid-Atlantic RAC's findings as authorized by the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 through the Mid-Atlantic Charter governing their work. The Mid-Atlantic RAC identified regional educational needs and recommended strategies to meet those needs. Relying on each member's expertise, along with public and constituency input, the committee prioritized four areas of need to be:

1. Transforming educator development (both pre-service and in-service).
2. Developing uniform systems for measuring student success at all levels.
3. Strengthening family and school collaboration.
4. Reshaping school cultures and environments.

This report described each need and presented recommendations for meeting those needs through technical assistance, policy and procedural changes, and other types of attention from local, state or federal agencies, as appropriate. All of the needs and recommendations were considered through the lens of the committee's vision and recognized tension (whether it be real or false) around high-stakes testing. The Mid-Atlantic RAC is committed to its vision that *all* students, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic background, abilities, family composition, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, country of origin, and religion, must have equitable access to quality education in order to become productive, contributing citizens of our ever changing society. The Mid-Atlantic RAC also wanted to acknowledge the tension that was highlighted among some constituents in the regional educational community and to recognize the need to continually address the discussion around continued high-stakes testing. Through these conversations and the field work conducted by the committee, all recommendations center on how to drive toward this vision and foster a shared understanding of what is best for our students in helping them reach their academic, social and personal growth and development potential.

The Mid-Atlantic RAC was highly engaged in the process of collecting input from the public and constituencies to inform the region's needs and recommendations. Given more time, the committee would have been able to produce greater specifics around needs or clearer recommendations with respect to specific regulations, funding formulas, and LEA or SEA educational policies. Committee members who were embedded in some of this work that is happening in real time assured other committee members on many occasions during deliberations that many of the ideas and issues being formulated in the Mid-Atlantic RAC were already underway through the Race to the Top federal initiative and other state and local initiatives in the region. While much of the work happening at the school, local, and state level is promising in the region, the committee members ultimately stood behind the fact that the four areas of need they identified required further, and in some cases more dramatic, attention and action.

The committee cannot stress enough the need for continued collaboration and leadership at all levels — federal, state and local — in order to bring true reform to the education process. It is only through a strong community committed to working together to improve education and dedicated to providing all students with high quality educational experiences, that lasting reform will be achieved. The Mid-Atlantic region's students deserve nothing less than educators willing to work hard, creatively, and tirelessly on their behalf and policy leaders and elected officials at all levels willing to support them.

APPENDIX A

Regional Profile

MID-ATLANTIC REGION EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

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SCHOOL AND STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Tables 1 through 5 display the number of schools; location of those schools by metro status; student racial characteristics; selected student subgroups, such as percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL); measures of cultural fluency, such as number of students enrolled in English Language Learners (ELL) programs; and socioeconomic indicators, such as percentage of households with children below the poverty level for **Delaware**, the **District of Columbia**, **Maryland**, **New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania**. This data can be found below.

Number of Schools. Table 1 exhibits the number of public, private and charter schools collected in the five Mid-Atlantic Region states. During the School Year (SY) 2008-2009, **Pennsylvania** had the highest number of public schools (3,248), with **New Jersey** following closely behind (2,588). Also, **Pennsylvania** had the largest number of private schools (2,503) during SY2007-2008. **Delaware** had an approximately equal number of public and private schools (240; 214). **New Jersey**, with nearly 600 fewer public schools, had 400,000 students fewer than **Pennsylvania**. **Maryland** had 44 charter schools collected in 2011, while the **District of Columbia** had 108, giving it the largest ratio of public-to-private schools among all five states.

Table 1: Number of Schools

State	Public School Students, SY2008-2009[1]	Public Schools, SY2008 2009[1]	Private Schools, SY2007-2008[2]	Charter Schools Collected, 2011[3]
Delaware	125,430	240	214	21
District of Columbia*	68,681	230	92	108
Maryland	843,861	1,457	823	44
New Jersey	1,381,420	2,588	1,441	82
Pennsylvania	1,775,029	3,248	2,503	155

*The District of Columbia is considered a state for purposes of this profile.
SOURCES: [1]Common Core of Data, 2008-2009; [2]U.S. Department of Education, Private School Universe Study, 2007-2008; [3]Center for Education Reform (www.edreform.com), 2011

Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status. Figure 1 shows the percentage of school districts in the Mid-Atlantic Region that are located in urban, suburban and rural areas. For the purposes of this report, the **District of Columbia** is considered to be a 100 percent urban, single district state. In the state of **Delaware**, a quarter of the school districts were considered urban (25 percent), whereas in **New Jersey**, nearly all school districts were located in suburban areas (95 percent). The percentage of school districts located in rural areas was approximately the same for **Delaware**, **Maryland** and **Pennsylvania**. A rural area is a territory that is away from an urbanized area or urban cluster. The subcategory of locale may vary based on population size. An urban metro is a territory that is inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city. The subcategory of locale may vary based on population size. A suburb is a territory that is outside a

principal city and inside an urbanized area. The subcategory of locale may vary based on population size. [1]

Figure 1: Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status
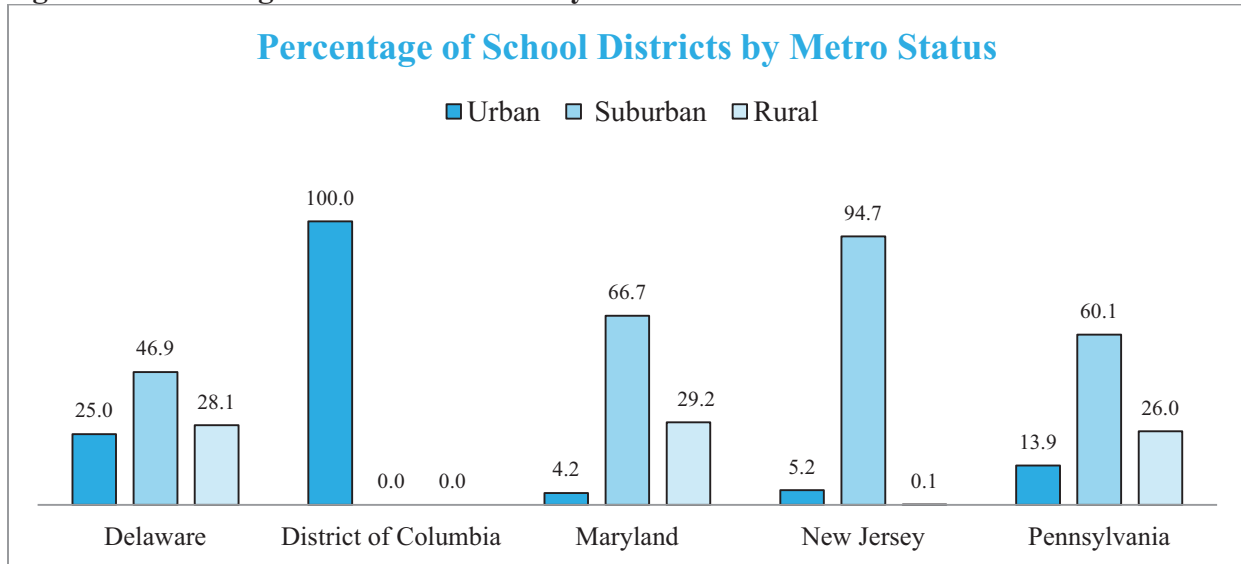
SOURCE: Common Core of Data, 2003-2004

Percentage of Public School Students Racial Characteristics. Table 2 presents the percentage of students identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, black (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, white (non-Hispanic), or "two or more races" in Region 2 public schools. In the **District of Columbia**, the majority of public school students were black (82 percent), whereas in **Pennsylvania**, a majority of public school students were white (74 percent). **Delaware**, the **District of Columbia** and **Maryland** had an approximately equal percentage of Hispanic students in their public schools. The state of **New Jersey** had students identifying as "two or more races" in its public school system.

Table 2: Percentage of Public School Students by Racial Characteristics

State	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	White, Non Hispanic	Two or More Races
Delaware	0.4	3.4	33.2	10.9	52.1	Not Applicable
District of Columbia	0.1	1.6	81.5	10.8	6.0	Not Applicable
Maryland	0.4	5.9	38.0	9.5	46.2	Not Applicable
New Jersey	0.2	8.5	17.1	19.9	54.0	0.3
Pennsylvania	0.2	2.9	15.8	7.5	73.6	Not Applicable

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009

Selected Student Subgroups. Table 3 displays data, such as the percentage of students receiving FRPL, the percentage of students identifying as ELLs and the percentage of students considered homeless. During SY2008-2009, 67 percent of students in the **District of Columbia** received FRPL, although the percentage for the other four Mid-Atlantic states each exceeded 30 percent

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[1] NCES's urban-centric locale categories, released in 2006: http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/page2.asp. Last accessed on May 5, 2011.

of the total number of students in school. During this school year, **Pennsylvania** had over 5,000 migrant students, whereas **Delaware** had 114. Each of the five states had an approximately similar number of students with disabilities.

Table 3: Selected Student Subgroups

State	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch[1]	Percent of Students in ELL/LEP[1]	Percent of Students With an IEP[1]	Number of Migrant Students[2]	Number of Homeless students[2]
Delaware	39.5	5.7	15.1	114	2,598
District of Columbia	67.1	8.5	15.5	N/A	950
Maryland	34.7	N/A	12.2	388	10,676
New Jersey	30.0	3.9	16.6	2,031	7,890
Pennsylvania	33.4	2.6	16.6	5,331	12,438

SOURCES: [1]Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009; [2]Consolidated State Performance Reports: SY2008-2009

Linguistic Indicators. Table 4 focuses on the percentage of the population that is foreign born, the percent of people aged 5 and over who speak a language other than English, the percentage of children whose parents speak English fluently, the percentage of the population aged 5 through 17 that speak a language other than English at home and the percentage of students identifying as ELLs in Mid-Atlantic Region schools. As seen below, 20 percent of **New Jersey's** population was foreign born, and **New Jersey** also had the highest percent of people who spoke a language other than English (27.6 percent). All five states had approximately the same percentage of children whose parents spoke English fluently. The **District of Columbia** had the smallest percentage of the population aged 5 through 17 that speak a language other than English at home, but also had the highest percentage of students identifying as ELLs (9 percent).

Table 4: Linguistic Indicators

State	Percent of Population: Foreign Born[1]	Percent of People Aged 5 and Over Who Speak Language Other Than English[1]	Percent of Children Whose Parents Are Fluent English Speakers[2]	Percent of Population Aged 5 17: Speak Language Other Than English at Home[1]	Percent of Public School Students in ELL/LEP[3]
Delaware	7.8	11.6	89.1	19.4	5.7
District of Columbia	12.5	14.2	90.6	12.2	8.5
Maryland	12.3	14.9	89.3	17.6	N/A
New Jersey	19.7	27.6	80.7	17.2	3.9
Pennsylvania	5.3	9.4	93.2	19.5	2.6

SOURCES: [1]American Community Survey, 2005-2009: U.S. Census Bureau; [2]EPE Research Center, 2011; [3]Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009

Socioeconomic Indicators. Table 5 reveals data such as the total number of families, the percentage of families below the poverty level and the percentage of families with children below the poverty level. **Pennsylvania** had the highest number of families (>3,000,000), as well as the highest percentage of families with children below the poverty level (14 percent). The **District of Columbia** has the smallest percentage of children with at least one parent having a postsecondary degree (37 percent), and also the highest percentage of families below the poverty level (15 percent).

Table 5: Socioeconomic Indicators

State	Total Number of Families[1]	Percent of Families Below the Poverty Level[1]	Percent of Families With Children Below the Poverty Level[1]	Percent of Children With at Least One Parent With a Postsecondary Degree[2]	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch[3]
Delaware	220,100	7.1	12.0	44.7	39.5
District of Columbia	110,035	14.9	24.0	36.7	67.1
Maryland	1,400,415	5.5	8.3	52.3	34.7
New Jersey	2,182,640	6.5	9.8	54.4	30.0
Pennsylvania	3,206,184	8.3	13.7	47.4	33.3

SOURCES: [1]American Community Survey, 2005-2009: U.S. Census Bureau; [2]EPE Research Center, 2011; [3]Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009

INDICATORS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Tables 6 through 10 and Figures 2 and 3 contain indicators of student achievement, such as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data; proficiency of 4th grade students in math and reading as measured by performance on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests; measures of educational standards, such as total number of credits required to earn a standard diploma; whether the states of **Delaware**, the **District of Columbia**, **Maryland**, **New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania** are meeting requirements to establish state standards; and the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool for these Region 2 states.

Adequate Yearly Progress. Table 6 shows the number and percentage of schools that failed to make AYP in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In the **District of Columbia**, 142 schools (75 percent) failed to make AYP during SY2008-2009. In **Maryland** and **Pennsylvania**, 23 percent and 22 percent of their respective schools (315 and 670) failing to make AYP.

Table 6: Adequate Yearly Progress

State	Number and Percent of Schools That Failed To Make AYP in SY2008-2009
Delaware	65 (33.8%)
District of Columbia	142 (75%)
Maryland	315 (23%)
New Jersey	814 (35%)
Pennsylvania	670 (21.5%)

SOURCE: ED Data Express, State Snapshots, SY2008-2009

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Math Test. Figure 2 demonstrates the percentage of 4th grade students proficient in math, as determined by the most recently administered NAEP test. In the **District of Columbia**, a majority of white students were proficient in math (81 percent), whereas in **Delaware** 50 percent of white 4th graders were considered proficient. Among black students, performance across four states — **Delaware**, **Maryland**, **New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania** — ranged from 17 percent proficient to 21 percent proficient, while 9 percent of black students were judged proficient in math in the **District of Columbia**. The performance of Hispanic students was similar across all five states.

Figure 2: National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Math Test: Percentage Proficient or Above

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade
Math Test: Percentage Proficient or Above

■White ■Black □Hispanic

State	White	Black	Hispanic
Delaware	50.0	17.0	22.0
District of Columbia	81.0	9.0	24.0
Maryland	60.0	21.0	32.0
New Jersey	63.0	19.0	25.0
Pennsylvania	53.0	17.0	23.0
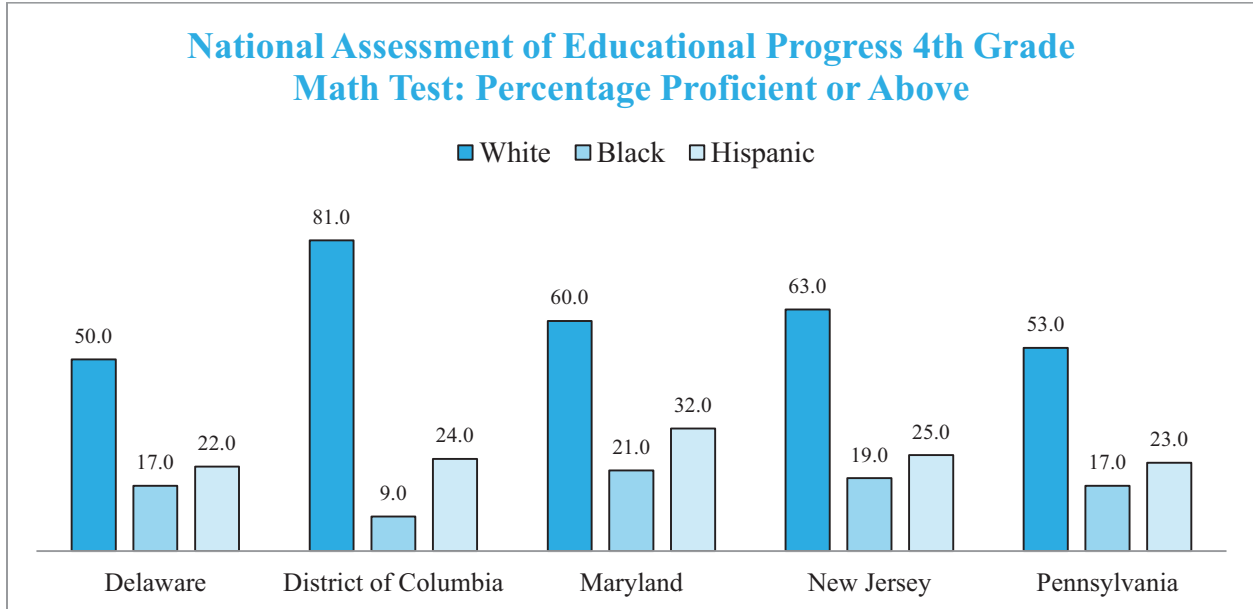
SOURCE: NAEP State Profiles, 2009

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Reading Test. Figure 3 demonstrates the percentage of 4th grade students proficient in reading, as determined by the most recently administered NAEP test. During SY2008-2009, only 11 percent of black 4th grade students in the **District of Columbia** were proficient in reading, as opposed to 75 percent of white students. The performance of Hispanic students was best in **Maryland**, with nearly 30 percent passing the NAEP reading test. With the exception of white students in the **District of Columbia**, less than half of white, black and Hispanic students passed the 4th grade reading test in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Figure 3: National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Reading Test: Percentage Proficient or Above

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Reading Test: Percentage Proficient or Above

Legend: White, Black, Hispanic

- Delaware: White 47.0, Black 19.0, Hispanic 24.0
- District of Columbia: White 75.0, Black 11.0, Hispanic 17.0
- Maryland: White 50.0, Black 19.0, Hispanic 30.0
- New Jersey: White 51.0, Black 18.0, Hispanic 19.0
- Pennsylvania: White 42.0, Black 15.0, Hispanic 14.0
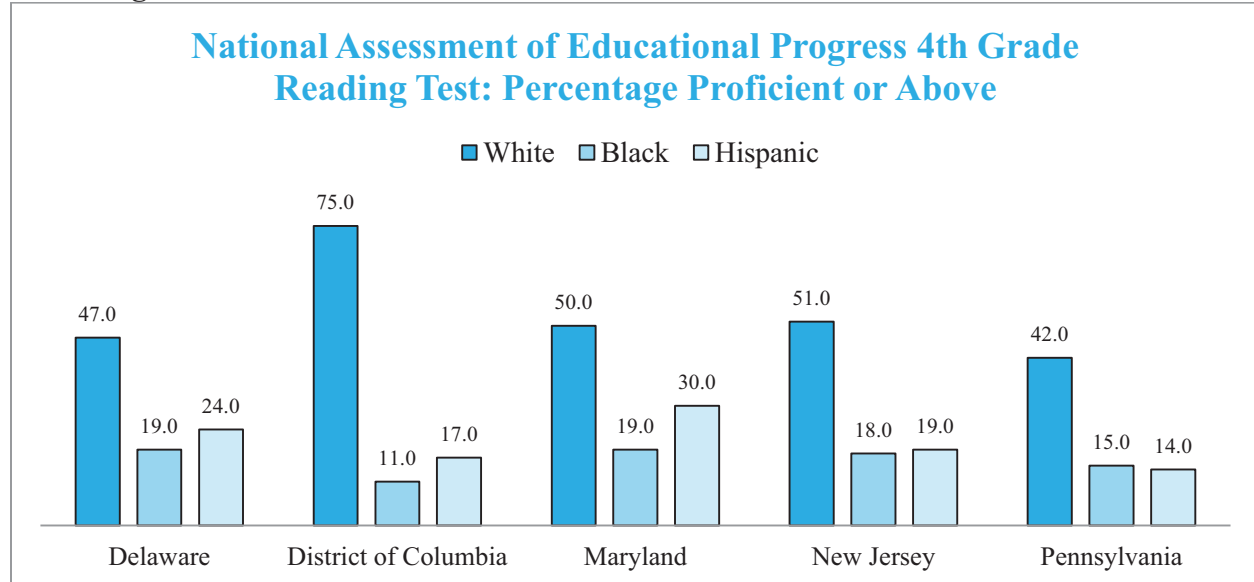
SOURCE: NAEP State Profiles, 2009

Educational Standards. Table 7 displays data such as high school graduation rate, percentage of students receiving high AP test scores and the number of credits required to earn a standard diploma. **New Jersey** had the highest graduation rate (96 percent), whereas the **District of Columbia** had the lowest (76 percent). **Maryland** had the highest percentage of 11th and 12th grade students scoring 3 or above on the AP test (42 percent). Only **Maryland** and **New Jersey** required exit exams, although only **Maryland** financed remediation for students who failed them. Only 12 percent of 11th and 12th grade students who took an AP test, scored 3 or above in the **District of Columbia**.

Table 7: Educational Standards

State	High School Graduation Rate, SY2007-2008[1]	Advanced Placement High Test Scores (3 or Above) Per 100 Students in Grades 11 and 12 for 2009[2]	Total Number of Credits Required To Earn Standard Diploma[2]	Alternative Credential for Not Meeting All Standard Requirements[2]	Basis for Alternative Credential[2]	State Has Exit Exam[2]	State Finances Remediation for Students Failing Exit Exams[2]
Delaware	81.9	19.2	22.0	✓	Disabilities		
District of Columbia	75.5	12.5	23.5	✓	Disabilities		
Maryland	85.1	42.1	21.0	✓	Disabilities	✓	✓
New Jersey	95.9	25.6	22.0			✓	
Pennsylvania	89.3	15.2					

SOURCES: [1]EDFacts/Consolidated State Performance Report, 2008-2009; [2]EPE Research Center, 2011

Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity. Table 8 shows the number of dropouts and the dropout rate for Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania for SY2007-2008. **Pennsylvania** had the highest number of dropouts (>15,000), although the dropout rate was highest in **Delaware** (6 percent). In **Pennsylvania**, the dropout rate was highest among Hispanic students (7 percent), whereas in **Delaware** it was highest (9 percent) for American

Indian/Alaska Native students. Graduation and dropout rates do not add up to 100 percent, because they are based on different groups of students. Graduates are counted based on a single freshman class, whereas dropouts are calculated based on all students in any year.

Table 8: Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

	Dropout Rate and Number of Dropouts (#)	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
Delaware	6.0% (2,212)	9.4% (12)	N/A	8.2% (232)	7.7% (913)	4.9% (1,024)
District of Columbia	5.5% (1,175)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maryland	3.6% (9,816)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	1.7% (6,320)	2.7% (16)	0.5% (137)	3.1% (2,116)	2.8% (1,877)	1.0% (2,158)
Pennsylvania	2.6% (15,288)	4.1% (38)	1.6% (237)	6.9% (2,387)	5.7% (4,901)	1.7% (7,660)

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2007-2008

Meeting Requirements to Establish Standards. Table 9 displays whether states are meeting requirements to establish state standards in the areas of reading, math and science or have agreed to adapt common core standards. **Pennsylvania** had partially fulfilled requirements for reading and math, although it had fulfilled them for science. All five states had adopted common core standards in the above mentioned subject areas.

Table 9: Meeting Requirements To Establish Standards

State	Reading[1]	Mathematics[1]	Science[1]	Agreed To Adopt Common Core Standards[2]
Delaware	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	Partial	Partial	Yes	Yes

SOURCES: [1]Education Commission of the States NCLB database, downloaded March 2011; [2]Common Core State Standards, downloaded March 2011

Preschool. Table 10 contains data on the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool in the five Mid-Atlantic states, and whether the state provides or funds programs for children not meeting school readiness expectations. Across all five states, at least half of all 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in preschool, the highest percentage in **New Jersey** (66 percent). **Maryland**, **New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania** provided or funded programs for children not meeting school readiness expectations, whereas **Delaware** and the **District of Columbia** do not.

Table 10: Preschool

State	Preschool Enrollment (Percent of 3 and 4 Year-Olds Enrolled in Preschool)	Readiness Interventions: State Provides or Funds Programs for Children Not Meeting School-Readiness Expectations (2010 2011)
Delaware	49.4	
District of Columbia	64.6	
Maryland	50.8	✓
New Jersey	65.9	✓
Pennsylvania	49.2	✓
SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011		

TEACHER PREPARATION, QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Tables 11 through 16 display data on the number of teachers and teacher salaries, percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers, licensure requirements, evaluation criteria of teacher performance, teacher performance incentives and professional development standards for **Delaware**, the **District of Columbia**, **Maryland**, **New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania**.

Number of Teachers and Teacher Salaries. Table 11 shows the number of teachers, average teacher salary during SY2008-2009 and teacher pay-parity (i.e., teacher earnings as a percentage of salaries in comparable professions) for the five states. **New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania** had the highest number of teachers, and **Pennsylvania** also had the most equal teacher pay-parity, which is defined as teachers earnings as a percentage of salaries in comparable occupations requiring a comparable educational background and work experience (96 percent). Teacher pay-parity was the same in **Delaware** and **Maryland**.

Table 11: Number of Teachers and Teacher Salaries

State	Number of Teachers[1]	Average Teacher Salary, SY2008 2009[2]	Pay Parity (Teacher Earnings as a Percent of Salaries in Comparable Occupations, 2008)[3]
Delaware	8,322	$56,667	83.3
District of Columbia	5,321	$62,557	84.0
Maryland	58,940	$62,849	83.3
New Jersey	114,713	$63,111	84.6
Pennsylvania	129,708	$57,237	96.2

SOURCES: [1]Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009; [2]NEA's Rankings of the States 2009 and Estimates of School Statistics 2010 Report; [3]EPE Research Center, 2010

Teacher Quality Indicators. Table 12 exhibits the percentage of core classes taught by highly qualified teachers and the overall percentage of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) teachers in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Nearly 100 percent of core classes in **New Jersey** were taught by highly qualified teachers, whereas only 61.8 percent of core classes in the **District of Columbia** were taught by highly qualified teachers. In 2011, **Delaware** had the highest percentage of NBC teachers (5 percent). According to the U.S. Department of Education, teachers considered as highly qualified must have a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure and must prove that they know each subject they teach.[2]

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[2] U.S. Department of Education: http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/methods/teachers/hqtflexibility.html. Last accessed on May 5, 2011.

Table 12: Teacher Quality Indicators

State	Percent of Core Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers[1]	National Board Certified Teachers as a Percent of All Teachers[2]
Delaware	93.3	5.3
District of Columbia	61.8	1.2
Maryland	88.5	3.3
New Jersey	99.7	0.2
Pennsylvania	95.9	0.6

SOURCES: [1]Consolidated State Performance Reports: SY2008-2009; [2]National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, April 2011

Teaching Profession. Table 13 presents initial licensure requirements for all prospective teachers during SY2009-2010. In all states except **New Jersey**, prospective teachers had to pass a written basic skills test, while only the **District of Columbia** and **Maryland** required prospective teachers to pass subject-specific pedagogy written tests. **Delaware** did not require substantial formal coursework in the subject areas taught.

Table 13: Teaching Profession

State	Initial Licensure Requirements for All Prospective Teachers (2009-2010)						
	All New Teachers Are Required To Participate in a State Funded Induction Program	State Requires Substantial Formal Coursework in Subject Area(s) Taught	Prospective Teachers Must Pass Written Tests			State Requires Clinical Experiences During Teacher Training	
			Basic Skills	Subject Specific Knowledge	Subject Specific Pedagogy	Student Teaching (Weeks)	Other Clinical Experiences (Hours)
Delaware	✓		✓	✓			
District of Columbia		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Maryland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	20	
New Jersey	✓	✓		✓		15	
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓	✓		12	190

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

Evaluation of Teacher Performance. Table 14 shows that for SY2009-2010, only **Delaware** teacher evaluations were tied to student achievement, although teachers in this state are not evaluated on an annual basis. **New Jersey** and **Pennsylvania** evaluated their teachers on an annual basis and required their evaluators to receive formal training.

Table 14: Evaluation of Teacher Performance

State	State Requires All Teachers' Performance To Be Formally Evaluated	Teacher Evaluation Is Tied to Student Achievement	Teacher Evaluation Occurs on an Annual Basis	State Requires All Evaluators To Receive Formal Training
Delaware	✓	✓		✓
District of Columbia				
Maryland	✓			
New Jersey	✓		✓	✓
Pennsylvania	✓		✓	✓

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010 (SY2009-2010)

Teacher Performance Incentives. Table 15 reveals that the **District of Columbia** and **New Jersey** did not provide incentives or rewards to teachers to earn their NBPTS certification. The **District of Columbia** and **New Jersey** had no pay-for-performance program, no formal recognition of differentiated teacher roles and no incentives to work in hard-to-staff assignments, for NBC teachers to work in targeted schools, and for principals to work in targeted schools.

Table 15: Teacher Performance Incentives

State	Has Pay for-Performance Program or Pilot Rewarding Teachers for Raising Student Achievement	Formally Recognizes Differentiated Roles for Teachers	Provides Incentives or Rewards To Teachers for Taking on Differentiated Roles	Provides Financial Incentives for Teachers To Earn National Board Certification	Provides Incentives to Teachers Who Work in Targeted Hard-To-Staff Assignments		Provides Incentives for National Board Certified Teachers To Work in Targeted Schools	Provides Incentives to Principals Who Work in Targeted Schools
					Targeted Schools	Hard-To Staff Teaching Assignment Areas		
Delaware		✓	✓	✓				
District of Columbia								
Maryland		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Jersey								
Pennsylvania				✓	✓	✓	✓	

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

Professional Development. Table 16 displays whether the Mid-Atlantic states have formal professional development standards or not, whether or not these are financed by the state and whether or not the state requires districts to align professional development with local priorities and goals. **Maryland** and **Pennsylvania** scored a "yes" across all three above mentioned areas, whereas the **District of Columbia** scored a "no" on all three categories.

Table 16: Professional Development

State	State Has Formal Professional Development Standards	State Finances Professional Development for All Districts	State Requires Districts To Align Professional Development With Local Priorities and Goals
Delaware	✓	✓	
District of Columbia			
Maryland	✓	✓	✓
New Jersey	✓		✓
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

SELECTED FUNDING RESOURCES AND STUDENT EXPENDITURES

Tables 17 through 19 show measures of school finance data such as the adjusted per-pupil spending and source of funding, school finance, and, U.S. Department of Education funding by grant.

Adjusted Spending Per Student and Source of Funding. Table 17 contains data such as per pupil expenditures and percentage of taxable resources spent on education in 2008. Although per pupil expenditures were similar across all five states, they were highest in **New Jersey** (>$15,000) during 2008. One hundred percent of students in **Delaware**, the **District of**

Columbia, **Maryland** and **New Jersey** were located in districts with per pupil expenditures at or exceeding the U.S. average. **Maryland** and **New Jersey** spent the highest percentage of total taxable resources on education in 2008.

Table 17: Adjusted Spending Per Student and Source of Funding

State	Per Pupil Expenditures (PPE), Adjusted for Regional Cost Differences (2008)	Percent of Students in Districts With PPE at or Above U.S. Average (2008)	Spending Index (2008)[1]	Percent of Total Taxable Resources Spent on Education (2008)
Delaware	$11,949	100.0	95.2	2.5
District of Columbia	$13,311	100.0	100.0	N/A
Maryland	$12,239	100.0	100.0	4.5
New Jersey	$15,598	100.0	100.0	5.0
Pennsylvania	$12,320	52.8	95.2	4.2

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011; [1]Per-pupil spending levels weighted by the degree to which districts meet or approach the national average for expenditures (cost and student need adjusted)

School Finance. Table 18 displays the Wealth-Neutrality Score, the McLoone Index, the Coefficient of Variation and the Restricted Range of school finance for the Mid-Atlantic Region. In 2008, the wealth-neutrality score, defined as the relationship between district funding and local property wealth, was lowest in **New Jersey**, indicating proportionally higher funding for poorer districts than in the other states. The McLoone Index, the actual spending as percent of amount needed to bring all students to the median level was 93% in **Maryland** and 86.5% in **Delaware**. The coefficient of variation, the amount of disparity in spending across districts, was lowest in **Maryland**, indicating greater equity in spending across districts in that state. Finally, the restricted range, the difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles, was lowest in **Maryland** and highest in **New Jersey**.

Table 18: School Finance

State	Wealth-Neutrality Score (2008)[1]	McLoone Index (2008)[2]	Coefficient of Variation (2008)[3]	Restricted Range (2008)[4]
Delaware	0.295	86.5	0.144	$4,642
District of Columbia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maryland	0.201	93.0	0.109	$3,784
New Jersey	-0.002	90.9	0.189	$8,657
Pennsylvania	0.154	89.3	0.166	$5,017

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011; [1]Relationship between district funding and local property wealth (negative value indicates higher funding for poorer districts); [2]Actual spending as percent of amount needed to bring all students to median level; [3]Amount of disparity in spending across districts (lower value indicates greater equity); [4]Difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles

U.S. Department of Education Funding by Grant. Table 19 contains U.S. Department of Education grant funding by state. During FY2007-2010, ED awarded grants such as Special Education, Title I, Education Technology, and School Improvement, and funded such programs as Migrant State Agency Program, Rural and Low Income Schools, and Small Rural School Achievement Programs.

Table 19: U.S. Department of Education Funding by Grant

State	Language Acquisition State Grants[1]	State Agency Grant-Migrant[1]	Special Education Grants[1]	ESEA Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies[1]	Improving Teacher Quality Grants[1]	Education Technology Grants[1]	Reading First Grants[1]	Rural and Low Income Schools Grant[1]	Small Rural School Achievement Grant[1]	Race to the Top Grant[2]	Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grants[3]	School Improvement Grant[1]	Safe and Supportive School Grants[4]
Delaware	$1,220,192	$303,693	$31,680,482	$38,379,960	$13,987,032	$1,294,335	$935,641	$142,902	$0	$119,122,128	$0	$1,346,638	$0
District of Columbia	$1,027,423	$0	$15,929,040	$47,294,927	$13,987,032	$1,294,335	$935,641	$0	$0	$74,998,962	$5,738,500	$1,653,767	$0
Maryland	$8,539,384	$536,665	$190,291,037	$192,239,408	$41,357,474	$3,495,228	$4,176,515	$0	$0	$249,999,182	$11,680,904	$6,615,396	$3,093,212
New Jersey	$18,602,562	$2,081,716	$343,527,756	$286,765,181	$65,311,095	$5,212,744	$7,005,733	$0	$2,082,453	$0	$0	$9,950,346	$0
Pennsylvania	$11,325,615	$9,309,914	$405,950,138	$565,517,553	$115,223,435	$10,453,630	$12,963,676	$974,256	$296,464	$0	$24,395,895	$19,981,916	$0

SOURCES: [1]U.S. Department of Education , FY2008 budget; [2]Ed.gov Race to the Top Fund; [3]U.S. Department of Education, Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program, 2006-2009; [4]Ed.gov Safe and Supportive School Grants

APPENDIX B
RAC Website Public Comments

www.seiservices.com/rac

6/1/2011 - 6/16/2011

Mid-Atlantic RAC Website
Total – 45 Respondents

Respondent Categories, Percents, and Raw Number
Librarians – 65% (29)
Other – 16% (7)
Parent –4% (2)
Teacher – 16% (7)

Respondent Locations, Percents, and Raw Number
DC – 4% (2)
DE – 4% (2)
MD – 20 % (9)
NJ – 54% (24)
PA – 18% (8)

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	MD	We strongly encourage that school libraries and school librarians be part of any plans on the part of the USDOE. Maryland has made a tremendous investment in Common Core frameworks and school librarians and libraries are an important part of that process as their School Library State Curriculum (aligned to the AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner) and technology literacy standards have been embedded into these frameworks. School librarians are key to student success as they help students and teachers make sense of a world increasingly full of digital media options, help with mastering research and media creation skills laced throughout Common Core, provide a foundation for digital citizenship, and media, technology and reading literacy. School libraries and librarians are especially critical in impoverished communities where students have limited or no access to libraries of any kind except in school. In a meeting with Secretary Duncan in June 2010 where he spoke with the AASL Board of Directors, newly elected board members, and elected leaders from state school library organizations affiliated with AASL at the ALA Conference in Washington, D.C., he sounded a conciliatory note as he acknowledged that the most successful schools generally have great school library programs and librarians, and that school libraries should not have been left out of "A Blue Print for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act." School Libraries and School Librarians are critical to the future success of our students and we hope that this will be recognized as ESEA moves forward and includes both in reauthorization. Maryland Association of School Librarians

Role	State	User Comments
Parent	NJ	Your educational policies are destroying public education and making our kids SICK. There is still time to reverse them. NCLB and RttT are disasters and have done NOTHING to improve our schools. They have only served to set schools up for failure so that corporate America can move in to make a profit. Very undemocracy-like.
Teacher	NJ	Why are these meetings during school times? Will others be scheduled?
Other	PA	PROBLEM: The intense focus on standardized testing, and in particular literacy and math scores, prevents students from becoming well-rounded learners. They spend the majority of classroom time learning content exclusively geared for these two areas of education and how to score well on standardized tests. As a result, students are spending less time on cultivating the skills that will make them successful 21st century learners, such as critical thinking, creativity, innovation, communication, and collaboration. The focus on testing often means limiting programs in art, music, civics, and technology, as well as opportunities to engage in informal learning at museums. SOLUTION: Expanding standards to include 21st century learning skills and informal learning, with required visits to museums, historical societies, botanical gardens, and similar institutions. With access to the internet and/or videoconferencing technology, students from even the most remote portions of the country have access to these institutions and their collections. For example, an eighth grade student studying U.S. History in Alaska can: - Examine portraits of the Founding Fathers at the National Portrait Gallery (http://www.npg.si.edu/exhibit/origins/index.html) - Explore the clothing of the period using Colonial Williamsburg's site (http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_intro.cfm) - Listen to podcasts of renowned historians talking about the founding area at Gilder-Lehrman,(http://www.gilderlehrman.org/institute/era_founding.php) - or examine the art of the period and attempt to create their own using the resources at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, (http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=epage;id=500765;type=803) An elementary school class from any state can: - Explore the connections between math and art through a videoconference lesson with the Philadelphia Museum of Art: http://www.cilc.org/search/content-provider-program.aspx?id=3218, or, if they are located within driving distance, explore these ideas with works of art in our galleries. - Or, they can use art as an inspiration for poetry, narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing: http://www.philamuseum.org/booklets/12_70_160_1.html Including informal learning in the national standards will encourage educators to tap into the vast cultural resources available at institutions across the country so that students may develop their 21st century learning skills in real-world settings. [Name deleted]

Role	State	User Comments
Teacher	PA	The role of the educator has become much more vast as the profession changes. I feel as though we need to teach and train our future educators to be more facilitators than direct instructors. With the use of true facilitating, educators will learn how to lead students on a path to learning. The openness of this type of teaching will allow for more time and focus on cultural and learning differences. In today's classroom where direct instruction is the primary technique, there is little time for teachers to instruct on topics such as emotional well being, character development, tolerance, and cultural diversity. Furthermore, very few instructors who are currently teaching have the background and knowledge to truly differentiated curriculum to meet the needs of all students; including those with low incidence disabilities. By teaching educators how to facilitate instruction and apply a more constructivist approach we open the classroom community to more possibilities. That said, the larger issue we need to tackle is not how to educate our teachers of the futures (at the university level), but how to we reach and educate the teachers who are currently in-service?
Other	DC	When will someone look at the certificate vs diploma track for Special Ed students in Washington DC. There seems to be an unusually high number of students placed on the certificate track and no one is planning for their future. Please address this situation. [Personal comment deleted.]
Librarian	NJ	Librarians are engaged in developing early literacy skills for children from birth to age five. These skills are developed through weekly storytimes that emphasize activities to enhance print awareness and phonological awareness. Preschoolers and elementary school students participate in science based programs at the library where they learn about topics such as light, sound, and air pressure through hands-on experiments and books.
Librarian	NJ	In our public library, we frequently host young children attended by Nannies who are here on Visas from other countries. The nannies are frequently struggling with a new culture and a new language. It would be great to have the funding to be able to simultaneouly offer language programs for the adult caretakers at the same time we have fun programs for pre-schoolers. Even some programs which offer 2nd language skills to both children & adults.

Role	State	User Comments
Other	PA	To ensure that all students have access to top quality education – and, more important, top quality teachers – the IHEs must design teacher preparation guidelines, not the state. For the sake of all students, especially those who need vibrant enriched classrooms, with teachers who offer the highest levels for all our students, we need to let Washington and Harrisburg know that we are the experts in learning and teaching. And we want to prepare our future teachers to our standards – not theirs (which are hideously mediocre). We would never suggest that the students with greatest needs get the most insipid curricula – corrective programs that are mind numbing. Yet, the schools offer this and the state approves. The state believes that teachers will be better prepared by endless hours in classrooms – field! – but the state fails to mandate the quality of the host teacher – who is sometimes the worst possible model of teaching. Finally, there has been much made in the local press about the students who graduate from the SDP and enter CCOP – and are forced to take course after course of remedial work: http://www.thenotebook.org/summer-2011/113725/ready-college
Other	DC	I'm a Head Start Grantee. I am concerned about the continued emphasis on testing and the ramification it has on developmental appropriateness and creating enviornments that are supportive of growth and development. Low income children who do not engage in early learning (0-3) experience greater challenges in the early years. The great drive to quanitify educational outcomes is coming at the expenses of meeting children where they are and allowing them to grow to their potential. health indicators in the District do not support the volume of children labled special needs. The percentage of children in DC that are special needs is 1.5xs that of it's neighbors. Further, the national discussion about the integrity of the DCPS tests result reflect what happens when we don't balance our objectives.We need US Dept Ed speaking both languages. if not you will continue to turn off parents.

Role	State	User Comments
Parent	PA	[Name deleted] Thank you for the invitation to submit commentary on the most critical educational need schools are facing today. I'm a college professor of [subject deleted], with a [state deleted] public school certification in Social Studies. I am a parent of a child about to enter [grade deleted], another child in [grade deleted] and a third child who, thanks to aggressive early interventions, is about to enter [grade deleted] in a top [city deleted] public school district. I founded an [subject deleted] company that provides opportunities to speak to and train teachers and parents across our Commonwealth. Many things we are doing correctly. Some are in dire need of our concern. Pre-K Pennsyvania's Pre-K educational standards are a model for other states in the nation. I am surprised at the number of professionals whom I meet on a weekly basis and who are not aware of the existence of these standards. Increased scrutiny of so-called "preschools" and awareness of these important standards is one key need of this segment of education. The other is to increase awareness, statewide and nationwide, of the irrefutable benefits of early intervention. As the Committee is no doubt aware, early intervention encompasses a body of programs and therapies designed to address issues that are identified during infant and toddler years, with the goal to improve behavior, enhance socialization and, where possible, prepare children for kindergarten and beyond. I will be presenting a seminar in [date deleted] where I will explore a recent study by the [institute name deleted], that identified the long-term savings afforded by the short-term investment in early intervention. K-12 Time and again, parents reinforce my core conviction that the mandate of inclusion is not carried out enough at the K-12 level. As educators, we know there are a myriad of reasons for this. Sometimes the failure to include comes from the District level and sometimes it comes from the teacher. Other times, parents are not aware that their child would benefit from a lesser restrictive educational enviornment such as inclusion. More training for teachers and increased availability of technology would help improve the prevalence and quality of inclusion across the board, and I say this from having been a public school teacher in 5 [state deleted] districts. Post-Secondary It has been my great privilege to have taught Pennsylvania college students at the [name deleted] of [city deleted] for the past 7 years, having been awarded with a Students' Choice Award for Outstanding Faculty for the [year deleted] academic year. In this capacity, I am committed to inclusion of all students at a time when their K-12 IEP's seem to have evaporated. I am a strong supporter of increased inclusion in Post-Secondary education and believe that an affirmative inclusion policy should be incorporated into all secondary education facilities who receive state or federal funding. The need for inclusive secondary education far outweighs the opportunities for students in Pennsylvania and elsewhere to obtain it. Thank you again for the opportunity to summarize the above comments. In the meantime, if I may assist the Committee further or clarify any comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. Regards, [Name deleted]

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	NJ	I am the [Name deleted]. Public libraries are often the first contact a child has with books and reading. Children's librarians are trained professionals who know the literature that is developmentally appropriate. They provide programs that stimulate a child's senses. They model reading behavior. They prepare the groundwork for a literate life Librarians work with families across socio-economic statuses and backgrounds. Children's librarians form bonds with families. Thay are significant adults in young reader's lives. The mission of a children's librarian is to stimulate and engage life long curiosity. Often the public library has the only literacy resources in the community. Children's librarians are committed, imaginative, and the heart and soul of their library communities. As a children's librarian I provided numerous story times for babies (newborn-12 months) and their parents. We sang, we danced, we listened to music and we looked at and shared books. It has been my experience that after only 2 sessions those babies began to anticipate the music and the repetition of nursery rhymes. They had begun to acculturate just as the parents did. It was a learning experience for all of us. Public libraries are vital and children's librarians are essential to the health and well being of their communities.
Librarian	NJ	My library plays a vital role in promoting early literacy in my community. We introduce parents, caregivers and their infants to books, stories, fingerplays, art and music during story time. We also make a quality collection of resource available and provide a safe meeting place for socialization and community interaction. Hundreds of parents return with their teenage children to say what a wonderful impact we had on their children's educational development. Many adults credit their fluency in English to our story times. We are a great resource for homework help and computer access. We are trilled to have hundreds of happy little feet running into the children's room and do not mind that many leave under protest.

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	NJ	As many public libraries do, we offer storytimes for preschoolers of various ages. They are broken down by age group so as to ensure that each storytime offers developmentally appropriate materials and activities. When children participate in storytime, they and their parents/caregivers are learning on many levels. Caregivers are learning how to read a story aloud to a child so that it's exciting and fun. Children are learning new words by hearing the stories read aloud. They are also learning how to follow directions, and how to behave in a group setting. Often, library storytimes, especially for very young children are a child's first experience of "group interaction." So there is a social component also. Caregivers and parents have the opportunity to meet adults with children the same age as their child--friendships can grow out of these encounters. Our storytimes start as young an newborns (prewalkers) and go up to age 5. One may wonder what a child and/or caregiver can get out of a storytime for newborns. It is amazing how much these babies learn from their first storytime through their 5th or 6th storytime. Reading to children is one of the most fundamental activities an adult can do with a child to prepare that child to more easily learn how to read when that time comes. Libraries play a key role in this learning process.
Librarian	NJ	In my mixed demographic community of 45,000 people my Youth Services department connects daily with children and teens of all ages. One of our primary missions is to connect with preschool children and their parents and provide them with early literacy experience before they begin school. Many parents in our community are also learning to speak and understand English at the same time. We also provided outreach programs to many of the preschools in our town. Reading is an essential life skill and learning to read begins at birth, before school.It is our goal to develop a lifelong love of reading and learning. Our Library also has early education resources and materials that will assist parents in becoming effective teachers for their children right from birth. In addition to literacy programs, we also offer a summer reading club for preschool children, school aged children and teens. This keeps them reading all summer long. We provide exposure to many other experiences for preschool children and their parents. We offer music programs, art programs, science programs and math programs. During this difficult economy some parents are not able to send their children to preschool. So developed a variety of programs that would benefit these children. The parents greatly appreciate all of our programs. Many parents visit us over the years to let us know how their children are doing in school. Many parents have told us that we made a huge impact on their child's life and that they are successful students. I have seen many of these children go on to college and beyond. It is such a great feeling knowing you along with their parents were their first teachers!

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	MD	Public libraries are vital for students of all ages and their families. We are friendly, welcoming, free oases of knowledge and entertainment. We have something for everyone, help fill the gap in summer so reading levels don't regress, expose children and their families to worlds other than their own. Our online resources can be accessed from any computer, here or at their homes. Our public schools in [county deleted] are excellent, but there is a danger that class sizes will get too large. We have dedicated, caring, innovative teachers who strive to reach a wide spectrum of students. One thing that would be helpful-we need a better alternative sschool program-our current program allows way too much free time for students who should be in a complete day program.
Librarian	MD	Our public library has had, for the last 8 years, a welcoming and interactive Birth To Five area brimming with books, interactive toys, a coloring table and 4 extra large chairs a parent and child can nestle into and enjoy a story. We also have a bank of 4 early literacy computers geared for children 3-5. In addition, we offer story times for babies up to 23 months, time for two's and 3-5 year old story times. We know we have succeeded when children often cry because they do NOT want to go home. The literacy skills they are developing are critical to their success in school. We also model for the parents all the best literacy practices to make reading a fun and welcomed part of their life. Parents tell us that the library visit is the best part of their week. Our Children's Department goes overboard when planning the Summer Reading Porgram. The performers and presenters are educational and entertaining. All children can finish the program and win a free book! Sometimes, it is the only book they own. Our teen programs have brought in lots of teens from diverse backgrounds, offering a safe and just-be-yourself environment. We recently installed a color printer so students could turn in their assingments in color as requested by the teachers. These student have no computers and would be lost without the public library. Not everyone can afford to be online. We are vital to success in school lifeong education.
Librarian	NJ	I am a public librarian, managing a small branch of a county library system, where I work as the sole staff person. In addition to handling all functions of the branch, I conduct several storytimes each month for a community preschool, as well as a Headstart program. I also conduct a summer reading program which includes preschool programs. The teachers in these programs obtain most of their books and other materials from my library. They have often commented that they regard the library as indispensible to their work; not does it supply books, but it also provides an opportunity for their preschoolers to visit the library on a regular basis, an experience many of them might not otherwise have. [Name deleted]

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	NJ	I am the Children's Librarian for the [Name deleted] Public Library in [City deleted] NJ, a village of approximately [number deleted]. I, my co-department head, and the Children's Department support staff provide 17-25 programs per week, for children from birth through kindergarten. Most of our programs are 30 minutes long and target a specific age, providing interactive literature-based activities. We use a multisensory approach (music,plush puppets,movement) making our programs especially beneficial to children with special needs. In fact, we offer a once-a-month "Special Needs Storytime", and welcome the members of the [Name deleted] Early Intervention classes, whose parents are otherwise self-conscious about having their children attend a mainstream storytime program. We use fat crayons in our craft programs. This is helpful to children with fine motor difficulties. Our tables are of adjustable height, to accommodate wheelchairs. We have "boppy" cushions to support the backs of young children who cannot sit up on their own. We are able to reach children before they start school, to develop their early literacy skills. We find that children who attend our storytime programs regularly become life-long library users. They attend our programs, use our facilities, and seek employment as library volunteers and paid library pages. Their connection to the Library serves them for the rest of their lives.
Librarian	NJ	Our library is crucial to early childhood development. Our town does not offer preschool for 3 year olds so the library offers programming instead. I have been in my position for about a year now and I have seen drastic changes since we implemented programs at the library. The children are writing their names, associating letters with sounds and so much more. They will be much more prepared for preschool as a result of the programs the public library offers.
Librarian	NJ	The children's librarian of a local public library is usually the person a mother and child come to for their first learning experience. By attending preschool story hour and tiny tot time a venue is provided for toddlers and preschoolers to learn simple concepts such as numbers, letters, shapes and colors through stories, songs, and fingerplays. Also a love of reading can develop from a positive library experience and being exposed to books at an early age. Countless times a parent has come back to the library with comments like "You read my child his first story." or "You werre my child's first teacher." [Name deleted]

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	NJ	As you know Public libraries exist (bricks and mortar) in almost most communities in NJ. Public Libraries are uniquely positioned to connect with parents before their children start school, serving as the parent's first teacher. In fact, children's librarians reach and work with families and children in over 17,000 public libraries and 99,000 school libraries across the nation. My Library offers Babies (and Toddlers) early literacy story time programs on a regular basis. We serve children of all socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds. Having national support for initiatives is vital to the young children of NJ.
Librarian	MD	Public Libraries play an important educational role in their communities and should considered strategic allies in emerging literacy and helping children over the summer months retain the skills they learned during their school year. Libraries continue provide learning opportunies for our citizens through every phase of their lives. In these challenging economic times, they are also playing an important role in helping citizens find jobs and resources to cope with reduced incomes.
Librarian	NJ	I have worked ten years as a Youth Services Librarian and previously was a preschool and Kindergarten teacher. As our nation's test scores continue to plunge and cut-backs are made in the education sector, libraries provide a vital service to parents and their children in giving a solid foundation of early literacy skills. This foundation is key to children having a postive and successful school experience. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 90% of brain development takes place before age 6, making it the most important time to help a child realize his or her potential. Studies continue to show that children who are exposed to a print-rich environment are more successful in schools. And according to the Council for Basic Education there is nearly 90% probability that a child will remain a poor reader at the end of the fourth grade if the child is a poor reader at the end of the first grade. We need to address this lack of attention to early literacy skills. Who better poised than the Children's Librarian to take on the nation's literacy challenge? Everyday we work with parents, preschools and teachers to support early childhood education and help lay the foundation for literacy. With the help of well-funded public libraries and pre-kindergarten programs, Children's Librarians are positioned to reach children before they start school and help develop their early literacy skills.
Librarian	DE	Libraries have been hit so hard in the past few years, in spite of the fact that we are busier than ever. People are looking for jobs and writing resumes, but don't have access or money for personal computers, so they come to us. Caregivers are bringing children to free programs at the library, to foster a love of reading. Summer programs are keeping children focused on maintaining what they learned during the school year. Our databases are increasing their content almost daily.

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	NJ	It is of utmost importance to include public libraries in the loop regarding early literacy. We have many children and parents here for storytimes and for some the library is the first place and only place they have to read a book. We have the opportunity to introduce books to children even before they attend school. Please keep libraries funded so that we can be the place to keep children reading and learning. [Name deleted]
Librarian	NJ	I have been a children's librarian in both the [name deleted] libraries in the state of New Jersey. I have done my upmost to encourage children in both innercity and suburban settings to love learning, enjoy books, and choose the library as a second home. Children today, more than ever, need access to many kinds of learning experiences. Libraries today are a focal point in the community--a place where Moms meet to share child-rearing experiences; toddlers come to enjoy books and educational computer games, and preschoolers get a jump start into reading on their own. Because I feel music plays a big part in early learning, I always incorporate alot of music in my programs. Music and puppetry unlock learning in many children. Please recognize that public libraries continue to serve their communities in a myriad of ways and that they are essential as a resource for early learning in children.
Librarian	NJ	My library offers story programs for newborn babies through preschoolers and their caregivers. The programs incorporate early literacy skills and activities that promote language development and motivation to read through the enjoyment of literature. We also offer periodic workshops for parents and caregivers regarding early literacy skill development. These workshops focus on the skills children need to develop before attending school in order to become stronger readers once they do attend school. In addition, we provide a summer reading program specifically designed for pre-readers to complete in conjunction with their caregivers. Again, the focus is on skill development and enjoyment of literature. The library itself contains many board books that are displayed in low bins so our youngest library users can access them. They are available for checkout. We also feature a wide variety of picture books and early reader books that are available to our community members. This is an essential service in this difficult economic climate. So many families are struggling and may not have the extra income to purchase books for their home. By using the public library, their children will have access to books.

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	NJ	Public libraries exist (bricks and mortar) in almost every community and are primed to connect with parents before their children start school, serving as the parent's first teacher. In fact, children's librarians reach and work with families and children in over 17,000 public libraries and 99,000 school libraries across the nation. · Children's librarians are positioned to work with families across all socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds. · With the help of well-funded public libraries and pre-kindergarten programs, children's librarians are positioned to reach children before they start school and help develop their early literacy skills. Reading is an essential life skill and learning to read begins at birth, before school. · Children's librarians are motivators and help children develop their love of lifelong learning. · The public library effectively engages in providing early literacy parent education and works with community partners to do so. Public libraries have early education resources and materials that will assist parents in becoming effective teachers for their children right from birth.
Librarian	NJ	As the head of children's services, my story time at our public library often serves as the first cultural and linguistic acclimation for an ever growing immigrant population in our area. Both the young children and their parents benefit from our programming. The fact that story time is a free service makes it very attractive to those just starting out in our country when they have few expendable resources. While the children catch on to the new language rather quickly, I always take the time to help their mothers as well so that when their children start school, these mothers are able to help their children at a level comparable to the help provided to children who's parents were born here. [Name deleted]
Librarian	NJ	I am a Youth Services Librarian in a stand-alone public library. With the budget cuts that have occurred our schools no longer have reading specialists or librarians in the elementary schools. (Although in my district there have not been dedicated librarians or media specialists for a long time). There needs to be a way to restore funding for these positons. The Reading Specialists are the ones who are truly dedicated to making sure students have the fullest reading experience possible. Over the past three years I've developed relationships with these specialists to encourage reading at the library over the summer months so children do not lose their skills. This year I've had a much more difficult time making connections with the schools and students as busy principals let my requests fall to the bottom of their to do lists. I've also had to contedn with a 50% cut to my materials budget and a 70% cut to my programming budget. On my own I've been able to do less advertising and promotion, and have had to limit our offerings to six weeks of programs instead of 8-10. This is a diservice to our children who are already underserved.

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	NJ	The public library is many times the first exposure young children have to literature through story programs. We are also essential in helping young students interpret their assignments and make sense of the work they are asked to research
Librarian	NJ	I work in an urban library as a children's librarian. Very often a public library is the first place some of these preschoolers encounter books and knowledge. A public library offers a gateway to a world of learning that is being jeopardized by all these budget cuts...particularly in NJ! I reach out to preschools includding Head Start centers and offer story time to groups year round. We do finger plays using nursery rhymes to get children warmed up. Usually we read two stories and then do an activity such as coloring or a craft. The children enjoy the connection and the time they spend in the library. They usually want to return. Often parents come who speak English at a rudimentary level and need help in reading to their child. We offer suggestions, guidance and inspiration to them. We encourage and teach parents to interact with their child in a positive and animated manner. We support them in their efforts to develop a lifelong habit of reading. Children's librarians incorporate print knowledge, phonetic awareness, letter knowledge and other early childhood literacy skills into their story time We work with parents who are educated and realize the importance of reading. But we also work with parents who are new to parenting and need guidance and some mentoring. We work closely with schools. In fact we have partnered with schools in the past where they bring kindergarten classes to our library for a story time, tour and an activity. We have older students visit the library to get a tour and to understand how research is conducted. Public libraries are pivotal partners with school districts. Most teachers and parents recognize and appreciate them. However, politicians and other administrators are looking to cut an organization that gives you "the most bang for your buck"! Thank you. [Name deleted]
Teacher	MD	PROBLEM/ NEED: Inadequate number of staff members/educators in each building. PROPOSED SOLUTION: Devote less money to technological upgrades and more toward acquiring and retaining teachers and support staff. Our technology is notorious for breaking and becoming useless. In my school, we have at least 5 brand new and now broken SmartBoards that will not be fixed because we only had money in our budget to purchase them and not to maintain them. However, class sizes continue to grow larger each year, and student achievement continues to decline. Technology is not the answer; more personnel for intervention, or simply more teachers to reduce class sizes is a more permanent, effective fix than an interactive white board.

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	MD	State of the Library FY2010 Executive Summary: Opportunity for all: how the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at U.S. Libraries. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. 2010.Over the past year, 45 percent of the 169 million visitors to public libraries connected to the Internet using a library computer or wireless network during their visit, even though more than three-quarters of these people have Internet access at home, work or elsewhere." "Public libraries provide unique and critical support to communities, ensuring that all residents in a community have access to essential technology," said Ron Carlee, COO of ICMA. International City/County Management Association "Libraries are playing a new role in helping people find work. They are becoming a lifeline in communities across the country,but now they are beginning to face challenges of their own." The Today Show, NBC
Teacher	PA	I feel that there should be more quality professional development on including special education students in the regular education classes as well as guidelines on grading these students. They are often expected to be included in regular education classes and then graded on their work in the Core Curriculum areas while functioning 2-5 years below in reading or mathematics. When they are given accomodations and modified work, the regular education teachers don't want to consider the grades from the special education teacher who has provided these accomodations. In addition, I feel it is important to expose the special education students to the Core Curriculum but they must receive the research based programs to improve their basic reading and math levels which is happening in our district but oftentimes the grades for these subjects are not counted towards their total grade. It is here where the student is feeling successful and improving their reading levels so of course the work they do in these periods should count towards their grades. We should be doing more to have teachers know more about how to teach, write IEP's that are meaningful and understand how to accomodate and modify grade level work. We need teachers who can co-teach in the regular education classroom without being used as substitutes when a teacher is out and pulled from their teaching assignment. The teachers that I work with are the most professional hard working teachers in the world who stay after school, work on Saturdays, and do paperwork all weekend to ensure that our students are improving each and every day. It would be nice if these professionals were recognized and applauded for their efforts instead of being blamed for the failures of the school system!

Role	State	User Comments
Other	PA	As an advocate I, on a daily basis, hear from families who are not aware of their rights because school district, preschool and early intervention personnel (including those specifically charged with informing families of such rights)fail to do their jobs. Families face threats and deception rather than support and collaboration from their child's teams. Secondary transition plans are generally ineffective in preparing adolescents for adult life if and when they actually exist at all. When I attend meetings with families they comment about how different the attitude and information is that they are receiving. State complaint processes are too long and far too great time lines are allowed with little or no oversight of corrective actions plans. Federal oversight and intervention is needed to correct these issues and hold State Department of ed responsible for the compliance of Intermediate Units nad local School Districts with all requirements under IDEA.
Other	MD	Equity in education is a serious need in our region. Equity should be discussed in terms of providing access and full opportunity to every student, regardless of background and circumstance.
Teacher	MD	I would like to see money allotted for the schools in [district deleted] to be renovated. It is unfortunate to work in the inner city in deplorable conditions. Many of the schools are not air conditioned and we often have heating problems as well. I would like to see funds for updated technology like smart boards and computer labs. Also, we need updated text books we should not have to use text boooks from the 1970's. Also, PE needs to be part of the curriculum and bring back the arts, music, dance, art. Unfornately, the children in urban cities and rural areas are not given a fair chance at education as their counterparts that live in the suburbs.
Teacher	MD	PROBLEM/ NEED: Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy are epidemic problems in [district deleted]. Kids don't come to school or don't come to all of their classes. PROPOSED SOLUTIONs: 1)Have strict, clear and fair attendance policies that are enforced (ie if a student misses more than 18 days of school, they must recover the hours afterschool, on Saturdays or during the summer. Clearly define what qualifies as an excused absence.) 2)Hold parents accountable to keeping their students in school by fining parents of absent or truant students or make them attend parenting classes that emphasize the importance of sending children to school. 3)Have meaningful opportunities for learning, achievement and enrichment available at all schools. This means that there should be afterschool clubs, elective classes, art classes, music classes, sports, etc. as options for kids to promote school culture.

Role	State	User Comments
Teacher	PA	I teach in the School District of [district deleted]. A major issue surrounding school safety is a lack of resources and direction. Teachers and administration know that schools are rated partially on the number of disciplinary actions taken. As a result, events are grossly under reported. This puts teachers in a situation of having to pick and choose what actions need to be put on a pink slip, setting up a school climate that is unsuccessful from the outset due to consistency. Because there is this unknown quota for suspensions, teachers are reluctant to use one of their granted suspensions on a student who is poisoning the school climate, but not physically threatening or dangerous. The solution I propose is this: change the formula for evaluating schools into a method that rewards schools for actually taking steps to become safer, not appear safer. The most reliable source for data in this area is probably the students. They have no motivation to lie about whether or not they have been disciplined for serious events. This is the flip side of the reality that our students don't care a about standardized tests, they don't care if we make AYP either. Also, institute a safer schools advocate in all school districts. [district deleted] has gone without one for too long, and parents have no independent resource to go to to ensure policies and rules are being enforced and a positive climate is being promoted. Thank you.

APPENDIX C
Survey Monkey Data

Mid-Atlantic Survey Monkey 1 Results

June 9, 2011

Total – 63 Respondents

Respondent Categories and Percents
Parent – 6% (4)
School Administrator – 29% (18)
SEA – 6% (4)
Teacher – 44% (28)
Other – 14% (9)

Respondent Locations and Percents (Respondents could choose more than one)
DC – 16% (10)
DE – 6% (4)
MD – 70% (44)
NJ – 10% (6)
PA – 18% (11)

Percent of Responses by Category for Most Important (Respondents asked to choose three)
1. Family & School Collaboration – 44%
2. Uniform Systems – 43%
3. Assessment Data to Inform Practice – 43%
4. Ongoing Professional Development – 41%
5. School Environments – 33%
6. Resource Allocation – 27%
7. Role of Principal – 13%
8. Educator Preparation – 22%
9. Model Replication – 12%
10. High-Stakes Testing – 11%
11. Re-conceptualizing Role of Student – 10%

Percent of Responses by Category for Least Important (Respondents asked to choose three)
1. Re-conceptualizing Role of Student – 68%
2. High-Stakes Testing – 45%
3. Role of Principal – 39%
4. School Environments – 31%
5. Resource Allocation – 23%
6. Model Replication – 21%
7. Educator Preparation – 18%
8. Uniform Systems – 18%
9. Ongoing Professional Development – 13%
10. Assessment Data to Inform Practice – 11%
11. Family & School Collaboration – 8%

Summarized Categories from Four Need Areas Most Chosen

Family & School Collaboration
- Track family involvement with reading readiness
- Parent Accountability - CA Model-parent involvement measured in hours of time in school or pay out 30% of required hours with real money; model similar to student community service hours requirement
- More home visits
- Parent education programs (learning supports, attendance policies)
- Communication tools developed for use with families, business and community organizations to emphasize importance of interpreting results to inform strategic collaboration plans
- Require schools to develop community collaboration plans
- Joint workshops with teachers and parents and community
- Conferencing and strong volunteer programs
- Encourage PTAs to do more than fund raise and get involved in activities they are passionate about

Uniform System for measuring student success at all levels
- Use a federal minimum and allow states to push it higher
- Use growth models
- Link learning to national core standards - must mirror curriculum
- Realistic expectations for specialized groups
- Link educator certificates to student achievement
- Ensure that instruments reveal valid data by keeping assessments relevant
- Use of SAT for State test

Using assessment data to inform practice
- Focus on student readiness
- Must be on-going
- Combine desktop data with standardized assessment data for complete picture
- Share practices that are working
- Include looking at student work and products (formative and summative data)
- Provide calendar days devoted to this activity

Ongoing PD
- Job-embedded mentoring and coaching (practical and relevant and funded)
- Individualized to teacher needs
- Content: using assessment data to inform instruction; developing creativity and critical thinking in students; cultural proficiency; anti-bullying; instructional strategies for intervention groups; math and science in middle school; instructional strategies for specialized populations
- Teachers share best practices through some kind of collaborative learning group (in person and online)
- Needs to be high quality and not one-day workshops – use of consortiums and online
- Best practice labs

Mid-Atlantic Survey Monkey 2 Results

June 16, 2011

Total – 46 Respondents

Respondent Categories and Percents
Business – 2% (1)
Parent – 15% (7)
School Administrator – 2% (1)
SEA – 30% (14)
Teacher – 39% (18)
Other – 11% (5)

Respondent Locations and Percents (Respondents could choose more than one.)
DC – 17% (8)
DE – 30% (14)
MD – 50% (23)
NJ – 7% (3)
PA – 26% (12)

Respondents asked to choose two out of four areas of need that are most important and offer solutions to meeting the needs.

Topic	#*	Conceptualization	#*	Solutions
Educator Development 86% overall	1	Important to include the voice of the educator receiving the assistance	2	Quality on-going PD on data interpretation and use for tailoring instruction for students' needs
	1	Important to consider that we have "book teachers" with "techno students"	2	PD for improving educators' technology proficiency
	1	PD must be considered important so it is not cut from calendar.	1	PD should be mandated with adequate time and compensation.
	1	Hold preparation programs accountable	2	PD on behavior management and classroom environment
	1	Teachers need to understand child development includes mental and emotional health of student	3	PD on Universal Design for Learning, in particular to support students with disabilities learning needs.
	1	Conceptualize student to be pre-school age.	1	Coaching and technical support for sustainability.

Topic	#*	Conceptualization	#*	Solutions
	1	Articulate that educators include teachers and leaders	4	Rigorous entrance criteria, course and full-year residency field work in preparation programs with practicum evaluation aligned with school system's.
	1	Educators set higher expectations for all students.	1	Provide surveys to educators to demonstrate what they know.
			1	Pay teachers for time spent pursuing additional certificates, degrees or expert training.
			2	Teaching with a differentiated approach.
			1	Promote arts integration to develop cross-curricular connections and site-specific programs.
			1	Eliminate PD "credits" or "seat hours" and replace with high quality technical development by IHEs to ensure skill development and subsidize 90% of tuition by State or LEA.
			1	Link student outcome data to preparation programs.
			1	Offer online PD as a top priority.
			1	Require more special education credits for veteran and novice educators to emphasize that all students must access curriculum in inclusive settings.
			1	Overhaul IEP as a product that reflects less narrow objectives based on general education curriculum.
			1	Align RTT goals in State reform to IHEs receiving funding.

Topic	#*	Conceptualization	#*	Solutions
Uniform Measuring System 50% overall	1	Students with special needs must be considered and addressed throughout the development of measuring student success	1	Create and implement standardized formative assessments for each grade level in all subject areas to consistently monitor student progress.
			1	Assessing students beyond pencil/paper tests for reaching ALL students.
			1	Need better system than Federal IDEA 3-categories. Develop one and try it in each state.
			1	Create nationwide assessment, not just state.
			1	Develop assessment limits for each of transitional grade levels with standardized assessment to measure growth.
			1	Use of student artifacts, perhaps electronic portfolio, along with standardized tests to document and measure student growth.
			1	Include performance-based and observational measures within a breadth of accepted measures.
Family and School Collaboration 36% overall	1	Need specific strategies that have indicated improvement in family and community engagement.	1	Provide workshops, PTO meetings, and partnering with other parent organization to communicate about the school environment and uniform assessment systems with families
			1	School buildings should stay open in the evenings and year round to offer computer lab, media center and gym access as well as times to meet with teachers.

Topic	#*	Conceptualization	#*	Solutions
			1	Offer family trainings in topical and localized specific areas of need.
			1	Expand gifted programs to include real academic challenges and not only games.
			1	Focus on collaboration strategies for academic participation including social, policy, and political strategies that help schools be successful.
				Maintain family involvement at all levels of education.
School Environment 23% overall	1	Should include the physical and emotional health of the child.	1	All schools need up-to-date technology.
	1	Should include underperforming schools or those with disproportionate representation of student subgroups with low achievement or high referral rates.	1	More focus on learning in the classroom.
			1	Use current (DE) climate measure into any new initiatives to measure environment.

*# = Number of comments having similar meaning