

INTRODUCTION AND EDITING BY MELISSA TOOLEY

# PAINTING THE ESSA CANVAS

Four Ideas for States to Think Big on  
Educator Quality

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## About the Editor



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# INTRODUCTION

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The December 2015 enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the latest reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965<sup>1</sup>, gives states the opportunity to meaningfully revisit their work in supporting strong systems of learning in their public schools.

As states are developing the plans required under ESSA, many have been focused on the new school accountability provisions of Title I. But states would be remiss if they neglected another major area of ESSA which holds significant potential for providing higher-quality learning experiences for students. Part A of Title II, which is focused on “preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers, principals, or other school leaders,” outlines 21 separate explicitly-allowable uses of state funds in supporting this goal. Many of these uses are new, and create a space to employ innovative and evidence-based strategies for improving educator quality in our elementary and secondary schools. Even for activities that states have previously funded with Title II, there is an opportunity to move away from business as usual.

Under the previous iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, states could mostly “paint by number,” but ESSA has given states more of a blank canvas. The allowable uses of Title II-A are broad and provide far more flexibility for states to determine their own courses of action. To guide states’ Title II

brushstrokes, New America interviewed\* experts in educator quality policy, selected for their individual and organizational expertise, to provide clear, actionable ideas and examples of where states can “think big” in employing ESSA Title II-A funds. Each interview digs into an area explicitly highlighted in Title II-A, and provides contours of what a high-potential, high-quality state effort to re-envision (or double down on) work in that area could look like. These four areas are: **1) educator preparation; 2) educator recruitment and retention; 3) educator evaluation and support systems; and 4) comprehensive professional learning systems.**\*\*

The respective contributors to this brief are, by organization:

- 1) Deans for Impact (Austin, TX): Benjamin Riley
- 2) Public Impact (Carrboro, NC): Stephanie Dean and Bryan Hassel
- 3) New Leaders (New York, NY): Alexandra Broin and Margaret Young
- 4) Learning Forward (Oxford, OH): Melinda George and Janice Poda

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\*Organizational interviews took place by phone between February 24 and March 2, 2017.

\*\*The fourth interview area is derived from interview content. Unlike the first three interview areas, no section of Title II-A explicitly references “comprehensive professional learning systems.”

# KEY THEMES AND REFLECTIONS

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Several key themes emerge from these interviews.

First, states will need to provide substantial assistance to districts<sup>\*\*\*</sup> to develop and implement plans to improve educator quality, as many lack the capacity to do so on their own. States should consider this in choosing what work to undertake and promote at the local level, given that state education agencies (SEAs) often do not have a lot of capacity themselves. Alexandra Broin and Margaret Young at New Leaders urge states to reimagine themselves as partners in this work with districts, and to deal with capacity constraints by first offering assistance to those districts that need it most. And states should keep in mind that the language in ESSA allows for any or all of a state's Title II-A funds to go toward "fulfilling the State educational agency's responsibilities concerning proper and efficient administration and monitoring of the programs carried out under this part, including provision of technical assistance to local educational agencies."<sup>2</sup>

Second, with the gift of additional flexibility, ESSA has also bestowed additional responsibility on

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<sup>\*\*\*</sup>The ESSA statute language refers to "local education agencies" (LEAs). However, for ease and consistency, we will use the term "district" when referring to districts, including public charter schools.

states. Several interviewees note that getting this flexibility to pay off will require efforts that are more synchronized, rather than siloed, and also fewer one-off actions, with a greater emphasis on comprehensive approaches. For example, Melinda George and Janice Poda at Learning Forward push states to coordinate efforts across various SEA departments to create a new systems approach to professional learning.

One area in particular where interviewees urge states to do more to coordinate and think holistically about their efforts is in connecting Title I and Title II. They recommend that states link their Title II-A efforts to activities around school improvement and ensuring equitable access to effective educators. Even interviewees who do not mention equitable access specifically, such as Stephanie Dean and Bryan Hassel of Public Impact, clearly promote state Title II-A approaches that would help meet this goal. In fact, these types of synchronized efforts are a *requirement* in ESSA: section 2101(d)(3)(C) mandates states to "coordinate the State's activities under this part with other related strategies, program and activities being conducted in the state."

Third, states must adequately assess the evidence base for any approaches they are considering, but also not be afraid to innovate and test new approaches that appear to hold strong potential,

such as the educator preparation academies that Benjamin Riley from Deans for Impact holds up. And several of the “explicitly allowable” uses of Title II-A are written broadly enough to include just about anything a state could create a theory of action around. So while each interview makes a case for taking a specific approach to improving educator quality, they also advocate for states to think beyond “paint by numbers” in designing and implementing that approach.

States should recognize that, although the four areas of educator quality covered in these interviews account for about half of the explicitly-allowable uses of Title II-A, the ideas included here constitute only a small portion of the diverse approaches states could take to improve educator quality through

federal funds, such as supporting educators with students’ transition to elementary school.”\*\*\*\* While just the tip of the iceberg, states should consider the thoughtful, high-potential approaches outlined in these interviews—and the themes that arose throughout—as they reflect on how to best paint their Title II-A canvas to improve educator quality in their context.

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\*\*\*\* For more on the use of ESSA funds for early learning, see the New America Education Policy program report, [Unlock ESSA's Potential to Support Early Learning](https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/). Look for more on the topic of Title II-A uses from New America’s Education Policy program in the coming months at <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/>.



## **BENJAMIN RILEY OF DEANS FOR IMPACT: EDUCATOR PREPARATION**

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**New America: We'd like you to help states think outside the box on employing ESSA's explicit state uses of funds related to educator preparation [see statutory language below]. If you were going to provide states with one idea for how to think big about improving educator quality within those areas of the Title II statute, what would it be?**

**Benjamin Riley:** The educator preparation academies have the potential, if used properly by states, to elevate and transform educator preparation effectiveness—and consequently teacher effectiveness, and consequently student learning—in fairly dramatic ways.

Educator preparation has traditionally been very compliance-oriented, and focused on inputs such as how many PhDs are on faculty. I am hopeful that we will see some daring states consider moving away from some of that compliance burden and mentality and embrace preparation academies as a way to focus on contextualized outcomes that programs voluntarily commit to delivering on. By “contextualized outcomes” I mean instead of states having blanket expectations for all programs, letting some programs determine their strengths and then try to amplify them. Or, work on improving a particular program aspect where the program has identified room to do so. States would then hold these academy programs responsible for making good on their commitments as ESSA requires.

For decades we have been complaining about the lack of STEM teachers, the lack of special education teachers. Right now, a lot of preparation programs just sort of do what they can, but they aren't really aligned with the bigger needs of the elementary and secondary education system. ESSA requires states to authorize academies to prepare teachers to serve in high-needs schools, but states can also focus their academies on preparing teachers for hard-to-staff subjects, or frankly whatever priorities the state education system may have. We have also been unable to develop any good evidence demonstrating which components of teacher preparation are leading to greater effectiveness.

States, through preparation academies, could create a process that would address both of these issues. States could specifically identify the workforce needs that need to be filled when authorizing academies, and then collect results on effectiveness of teachers being prepared by these academies to determine whether they will retain their authorization.

## Educator Preparation Provisions within ESSA Title II, Part A section 2101(c)(4)(B)

“(i) Reforming teacher, principal, or other school leader certification, recertification, licensing, or tenure systems or preparation program standards and approval processes to ensure that— “(I) teachers have the necessary subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills, as demonstrated through measures determined by the State, which may include teacher performance assessments, in the academic subjects that the teachers teach to help students meet challenging State academic standards; “(II) principals or other school leaders have the instructional leadership skills to help teachers teach and to help students meet such challenging State academic standards; and “(III) teacher certification or licensing requirements are aligned with such challenging State academic standards;” ...

“(iv) Carrying out programs that establish, expand, or improve alternative routes for State certification of teachers [especially for teachers of children with disabilities, English learners, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or other areas where the State experiences a shortage of educators], principals, or other school leaders, for— “(I) individuals with a baccalaureate or master’s degree, or other advanced degree; “(II) mid-career professionals from other occupations; “(III)

paraprofessionals; “(IV) former military personnel; and “(V) recent graduates of institutions of higher education with records of academic distinction who demonstrate the potential to become effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders;” ...

“(xi) Reforming or improving teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation programs, such as through establishing teacher residency programs and school leader residency programs;” [and/or]

“(xii) Establishing or expanding teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academies, with an amount of the funds described in subparagraph (A) that is not more than 2 percent of the State’s allotment, if— “(I) allowable under State law; “(II) the State enables candidates attending a teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academy to be eligible for State financial aid to the same extent as participants in other State-approved teacher or principal preparation programs, including alternative certification, licensure, or credential programs; and “(III) the State enables teachers, principals, or other school leaders who are teaching or working while on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials to teach or work in the State while enrolled in a teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academy.”



By doing this, you can start to have a process to fill the needs that schools have and start to develop the data that we need to understand how to improve programs. States can also shine a light on those programs that are willing to embrace the approach of focusing on the effectiveness of their teachers after they leave the preparation program and go into the field.

**NA: What evidence exists to support this idea? Can you point to examples of any states or districts currently employing this strategy (or a similar one)?**

**BR:** There is no evidence of this in the higher education space. But that's not remarkable because there is no evidence that what we are doing *right now* on educator preparation is having the impact that we would like it to have either. It is actually pretty scary to try to make an empirically-defensible case about teacher preparation generally. There are a few examples, but when you have the big data sets, it's hard to tease out whether or not the things that are being required of people before we allow them to teach actually matter. That doesn't mean I think teachers don't need any formal preparation. Anyone who thinks that you can just go in and teach hasn't been in a classroom in a really long time. You put your kid in that classroom with a teacher with no preparation and tell me how confident you feel about what is going to happen with his or her education. So I am very much against the notion that we should just completely deregulate.

What I think we need to do instead is develop a science of teacher preparation so that we have some evidence. Candidly, this is a hypothesis that is in need of testing but I think that it is worth testing. There is evidence from other fields of what happens when you strengthen the rigor of the process. You only have to look at the transformation of the medical field to see that when the medical schools got serious and rationalized the system by getting rid of the bad actors, and they made the process to completion longer and more rigorous, we started to see a tremendous improvement in outcomes. We now have what is widely regarded as one of the best medical education systems in the world, and I think we can do the same in teacher education.

There *are* lessons from the public charter school movement. When you have strong public charter authorizing with the right focus—which is “are you serving high-need communities?” and “how will you demonstrate that you are providing the education that those students need?”—we've seen some positive stories of schools that are effective at meeting both of these goals. When there's been weak authorizing with a lack of focus on important outcomes, we have problems.

**NA: How do you see this area of Title II intersecting with other areas of ESSA (or other relevant federal laws)?**

**BR:** One area of intersection is with the language in ESSA Title II referring to residency programs. Despite the fact that there is additional language unique to residencies, it's a false dichotomy to think about residencies and academies as being an either/or, as residencies are one type of program that could be an academy (as the National Council on Teacher Residency organization has affirmed).

There is a lot of language around evidence-based practices in ESSA. I am always interested in getting people in the room who know the evidence that should be influential in the shaping of policy. I spent some time in New Zealand, where the education ministry essentially has a chief education science advisor. The idea is that you have a very senior person at the table when a policy discussion is going on who can tell you about the science on the topic at hand. If you think about that concept at the state level, I would love if a governor had a chief education science advisor that could say “you’re thinking about policy XYZ, here is what the evidence says about that.” It doesn’t have to cost a lot of money, although you’d want to make it attractive enough so smart people want to go into that role. I see so many education policies in place that have potential to run afoul of our best understanding of cognition, of good instructional practice. So it would be nice if there was someone in the room that would say, “you might want to do it anyway because of the politics, but just do so knowing that this is what the evidence says.”

**NA: What are potential obstacles or challenges to implementation that states should be aware of, and can you provide any suggestions for side-stepping them?**

**BR:** The big challenge will be that a lot of traditional programs at institutions of higher education (IHEs) will see educator preparation academies as threatening, given the extent that this sort of process could make it easier for non-IHE-based programs to proliferate. But one of the things it says in the ESSA law is *any type of institution* should be eligible to offer an educator preparation academy, including a traditional IHE. It should not be where there is one route for these schools and another route for the others.

A second element of the law is that academies are intended to be voluntary. As such, I wouldn’t advise states to make every program use the preparation academy process—that wasn’t the intent of ESSA. The idea behind the academies is for states to be able to say, “if you are willing to meet this higher bar, we are here to identify you as such, provide some resources to help you meet that higher bar, and feed you information to let you know if you are on the right track to hit that bar.” In a recent brief, [From Chaos to Coherence](#),<sup>3</sup> Deans for Impact makes the analogy of educator preparation academies to LEED green building certification. If you have to satisfy building code, that’s the state accreditation process. If you want to be LEED certified, there is a whole extra set of things you have to meet, but no one has to do it. There are plenty of buildings in the world that are not LEED certified, but it’s become something that a lot of people voluntarily do because they want to be able to use that label. I’d like to see the same happen for educator preparation.

One other big challenge is how to connect a state’s preparation academy work to other requirements. Part of the flexibility offered by being an academy is that accreditation isn’t required. But if you are a traditional IHE program offering an academy, do you still have to go through accreditation? If so, that might mean IHE-based programs might feel that they are doing too much, and shy away from offering academies. States have to think about where they want to sit with that. Perhaps states could offer to suspend certain reporting requirements if traditional programs opt to become academies—I am thinking of an educator-preparation program in Texas that was asked to provide documentation of faculty meeting minutes as precisely the sort of thing we need less of.

**NA: In your earlier comparison of educator preparation academies to public charter schools, you referenced evidence around authorization and potential challenges to doing that well. Are there other authorization issues states should be thinking about for preparation academies?**

**BR:** We have some insights born from the public charter school movement on what makes strong authorizing versus not. This includes trying to move away from too many input-based requirements while also not letting the fox guard the hen house—you should not have the authorizer be the same as the entities who are being evaluated. You need to have independence in the area of evaluation and this could be a challenge for the academies idea. The entities that are allowed to be involved in the state authorization process are numerous, and it is up to states to designate who will be part of that process. My hope is that states will give entities that are downstream in the arc of teacher preparation, such as school districts, more visibility in this process as they are able to speak more directly to programs about what their needs are.

**NA: If states institute educator preparation academies, what is their role in ensuring their success?**

**BR:** States have the primary responsibility for approving the programs that prepare teachers in their state and there are public resources that flow to many programs that do that. So states should be the ones that are ultimately part of, if not the main player in, holding programs to their responsibility of preparing effective educators. I haven't seen a lot of capacity for states to help programs. It's hard to foster collaboration if people think that they are being watched or evaluated. It's hard to be vulnerable and let your guard down if the entity that could shut you down has people at the table.

That's why I believe the state authorizers that approve academies should set a bar and hold programs to it, but let organizations like ours help programs figure out what they need to do to meet that bar.

*Deans for Impact is a national nonprofit organization that supports and advocates on behalf of leaders in educator preparation who are committed to transforming the field and elevating the teacher profession. Learn more at <https://deansforimpact.org/>.*



## STEPHANIE DEAN AND BRYAN HASSEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT:

# EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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**New America:** We'd like you to help states think outside the box on employing ESSA's explicit state uses of funds related to educator recruitment and retention [see statutory language below]. If you were going to provide states with one idea for how to think big about improving educator quality within those areas of the Title II statute, what would it be?

**Bryan Hassel:** Public Impact's recommended focus would be on creating high-paid, high-impact teacher leadership roles in every high-need school in the state.

What do we mean by "high-paid, high-impact" teacher leader roles? High-paid means enough of a supplement above normal teacher pay that it can really change who stays in the profession over time and induces the best professionals to take these roles. So not \$500, but thousands of dollars. In Public Impact's [Opportunity Culture](#) sites nationally, the average supplement is \$12,000...so enough to change someone's mind about what they're doing, career-wise. High-impact means a lot of things...but it primarily means the teacher leader role is organized in such a way that lets an excellent teacher have a deep impact on the teaching of a team of teachers and the learning of the team's students. They have defined authority to lead a team of teachers (but a size they can deeply impact; three to eight, not 20 to 40 like many coaches have), have time in their schedule for the leadership work, and are responsible for the advancement of teachers on their team as well as their students' learning.

**Stephanie Dean:** The most important thing is leveraging the skills of excellent teachers. If the strategy isn't extending the reach of those teachers to impact more students, then it's falling flat.

**BH:** Why focus on teacher leadership? We see it as a lynchpin that affects a lot of different key talent levers at once.



## Educator Recruitment and Retention Provisions in ESSA Title II, Part A section 2101(c)(4)(B)

“(v) Developing, improving, and implementing mechanisms to assist local educational agencies and schools in effectively recruiting and retaining teachers, principals, or other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement, including effective teachers from underrepresented minority groups and teachers with disabilities, such as through— “(I) opportunities for effective teachers to lead evidence-based (to the extent the State determines that such evidence is reasonably available) professional development for the peers of such effective teachers; and “(II) providing training and support for teacher leaders and principals or other school leaders who are recruited as part of instructional leadership teams.”

“(vii) Developing, or assisting local educational agencies in developing— “(I) career opportunities and advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and emphasize multiple

career paths, such as instructional coaching and mentoring (including hybrid roles that allow instructional coaching and mentoring while remaining in the classroom), school leadership, and involvement with school improvement and support; “(II) strategies that provide differential pay, or other incentives, to recruit and retain teachers in high-need academic subjects and teachers, principals, or other school leaders, in low-income schools and school districts, which may include performance-based pay systems; and “(III) new teacher, principal, or other school leader induction and mentoring programs that are, to the extent the State determines that such evidence is reasonably available, evidence-based, and designed to— “[aa] improve classroom instruction and student learning and achievement, including through improving school leadership programs; and “[bb] increase the retention of effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders.”

One, it provides advancement opportunities for your best teachers, so they can continue teaching but get a promotion. Helping them move on in their careers without becoming administrators is potentially a retention strategy for your best teachers.

Two, it's a potential recruitment strategy in high-need schools because if they can offer a career path with higher pay, it looks like a better place for teachers to work when they are shopping around for a position.

Three, it provides a mechanism to offer much deeper and richer support to new and developing teachers. Often we rely on principals and instructional coaches to play that role, but they are stretched across so many teachers it's hard to provide meaningful support. A smaller team led by an excellent teacher has more opportunity for daily, job-embedded, real-time coaching, planning together, and professional development that's really geared towards the needs of teachers.

Finally, it provides a way for more students in a school to have access to its best teachers. If those best teachers are being held responsible for those students' learning, and for guiding the teaching of those students, then those students will benefit more, both directly and indirectly.

**NA: What evidence exists to support this idea? Can you point to examples of any promising states or districts currently employing this strategy?**

**BH:** New Leaders' [study of 100 high-gaining, high-poverty schools](#)<sup>4</sup> found that all the schools had multiple teacher leaders helping to "elevate teaching." And the Center on International Benchmarking's [research](#)<sup>5</sup> concluded that in high-performing systems globally, accomplished teachers served as mentors and led teaching teams via observation, feedback, data review, and more.

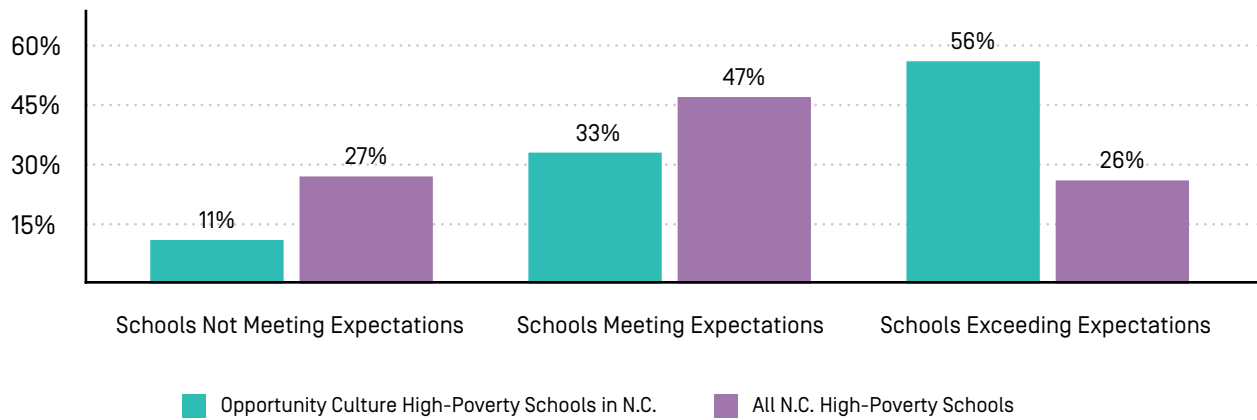
**SD:** Public Impact has also seen evidence in our Opportunity Culture work with 17 districts across the country. These districts have 115–120 schools between them that are designing and implementing these types of teacher leader (TL) roles. Among the schools that are a few years into this work, we are seeing [great trends in student growth](#)<sup>6</sup> on state tests compared to those that aren't implementing these TL models. Students at implementing schools, including high-poverty schools, are exceeding growth expectations at twice the rate of other schools and are less than half as likely to show low growth (see **Figure 1**).

Also, we've been getting great feedback when we interview staff at those schools—not just from the teacher leaders, but the teachers they support—about a culture shift, where people feel more supported.

**NA: Are there states that have made it easier for this kind of work to occur?**

**SD:** Districts creating high-paid, high-impact TL roles need to be able to carve out sustainable sources of funding. This is easiest in states where funding flows to districts in a flexible manner, and more challenging where allotment for funding is tied to teacher positions in the state, or bogged down in restrictions on categorical funding.

**Figure 1 | Student Growth in High-Poverty North Carolina Schools, 2015–16**



Adapted from: Public Impact, “N.C. Opportunity Culture Schools Beat State Rates of Student Growth,” news release, September 14, 2016.

**BH:** In addition to clearing those barriers, another role for states is incentivizing or stimulating the work of the districts to make changes that allow those roles to work. I can offer three state examples. First, during Race to the Top, New York made Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (STLE) grants available to districts and specified the funding could be used to rethink teacher roles and leader pathways; Syracuse is one district that chose to do so. Second, the Texas Education Agency earmarked improvement dollars for technical assistance to schools to revamp in this way. Roughly 20 Texas schools in five districts are now using this model. Finally, the North Carolina legislature passed a competitive district pilot program on “advanced roles” for teachers. Six districts were chosen to create advanced teacher roles that other districts could learn from.

So several different concepts of “let’s create a competition, find funding, put forth some parameters inducing schools to try things that are different.”

**NA: Do you see this area of Title II intersecting with other areas of ESSA? If so, how should states think about coordinating their efforts here? Are there examples of states already doing this?**

**BH:** The main connection I would make is with Title I’s focus on struggling schools. These schools are arguably most in need of this kind of teacher leadership, and the evidence cited above suggests employing this method could be particularly powerful there.

States could blend Title I and Title II funds for this purpose. For example, Title I funds being put out for comprehensive school improvement plans could also focus on funding transitions

to new teacher leadership models as part of the strategy for turnaround. Or they could provide technical assistance to schools wanting to move in this direction, as Texas did.

**SD:** I want to emphasize the importance of turnaround work beginning with getting a powerful talent structure in place. Having that framework sets the foundation for a school to drive any type of instructional coaching or behavioral model it believes will lead to improvement.

**NA: What are potential obstacles or challenges to implementation that states should be aware of, and can you provide any suggestions for side-stepping them?**

**SD:** When dollars are available for funding these types of teacher leadership roles, there is a tendency to structure them as an add-on to what currently exists. So really helping districts commit to designing and implementing models like this sustainably is one of the biggest challenges.

**BH:** That is a big one. And the solution to that is for states to focus the funding they have on the *temporary transition costs* rather than the *ongoing costs* of operating a teacher leadership model. So instead of giving districts a big lump of money to use toward teacher salary bonuses, say to them, “here are some funds to put a staff member in place, or hire a technical assistance provider to help you transition your model to teacher leadership-centered staffing out of your own funds, so you can keep doing it forever after that.”

The other challenge we have seen is it is easy to proliferate low-paid and low-impact or poorly designed teacher leader roles. So the flipside of everything we mentioned earlier about what an effective teacher leadership role should look like: little or no pay bump; an unclear role; spread too thin, not really responsible for anyone’s learning; not given the time to lead. So how could you guard against that as a state? For one, as Public Impact has outlined in our [The Whole Package](#)<sup>7</sup> brief, states can set some parameters for what they mean by “high-impact, high-paid teacher leadership,” while leaving flexibility for districts to customize. And that could be for any activities, whether directly funded by states or where states are passing federal funds through to districts.

Two, states could provide schools with a lot of ideas and examples of what could work (what Federal Education Group calls “Activity-Based Guidance”). Three, states can provide or fund technical assistance aligned to these parameters and guidance. So third parties can help schools that want to move in this direction so they are not going it alone.

Finally, gathering data that show what is happening, what is the impact, where leaders and laggards are, and then sharing that information with districts statewide.

**NA: Besides offering parameters and guidance and the other things you have just mentioned, are there other things can states do to ensure that these models are implemented well at the local level?**

**BH:** Creating some kind of community among the leading districts and/or schools could be valuable, where they convene and share lessons learned. In North Carolina, this is done



by [BEST NC](#), a nonprofit coalition of business leaders focused on improving education, but could also be done by the state.

**SD:** One more thing for states to think about is teacher evaluation and how students are assigned to teachers. We tend to design accountability assuming “one teacher to one classroom.” But when you have teachers who are responsible for the learning of an entire teacher team’s students, you need to consider how to share accountability accordingly. Often, teacher leaders are just kind of figuring out with their team what percentage of responsibility to take on for each student. It would be better if states could offer models for how to assign students to teacher leaders that are also assigned to individual classroom teachers.

**NA:** **One thing I haven’t heard you mention is the role of principals in schools where these models are being put into place and any kind of assistance of guidance they need in helping implement these models. I’m curious whether you think there is a role the state can or should play here?**

**SD:** It’s definitely a shift for school leaders to distribute leadership and become an instructional leader who works through a team of teacher leaders. So training and support in figuring out how to do this well is important. States could specify some funds for schools transitioning to these models to be used for that kind of training and support.

*Public Impact is a national education policy and management consulting firm aimed at dramatically improving learning outcomes for all students. Learn more at <http://publicimpact.com/>.*



## **ALEXANDRA BROIN AND MARGARET YOUNG OF NEW LEADERS:**

# **EDUCATOR EVALUATION AND SUPPORT**

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**New America:** We'd like you to help states think outside the box on employing ESSA's explicit state uses of funds related to educator evaluation and support [see statutory language below]. If you were going to provide states with one idea for how to think big about improving educator quality within those areas of the Title II statute, what would it be?

**Margaret Young:** We would recommend states specifically focus on how to make evaluation and support systems work for principals.

**Alexandra Broin:** The ideas we offer on what it takes for principal evaluation and support to really work were drawn from the teacher evaluation space, where we often saw districts and states get tripped up by a few, consistent challenges, the foremost of which was failing to focus the systems on supporting teachers' work.

States must intentionally make principal evaluation systems about support from the very beginning. That is, if you were to ask school leaders about the purpose of this system, they would tell you it is to help principals grow and improve and hone their craft.

**MY:** States can do two things to meet this goal. The first big pillar is helping school principals engage with and "buy into" the system. States should consult with principals and experts in the field as they are designing and implementing systems, and adapt the systems as they learn from experience. States can consider: Do school leaders feel they're able to inform development and implementation of evaluation systems? Do they feel the systems are creating valid results?

States can consider: How can we ensure the system is implemented well rather than serving as a compliance exercise? What are the expectations for principal supervisor jobs? What does the job-embedded training of principal supervisors look like so that they are able to observe principals, find relevant evidence, and provide meaningful feedback? How are we

## Educator Evaluation and Support Provisions in ESSA Title II, Part A section 2101(c)(4)(B)

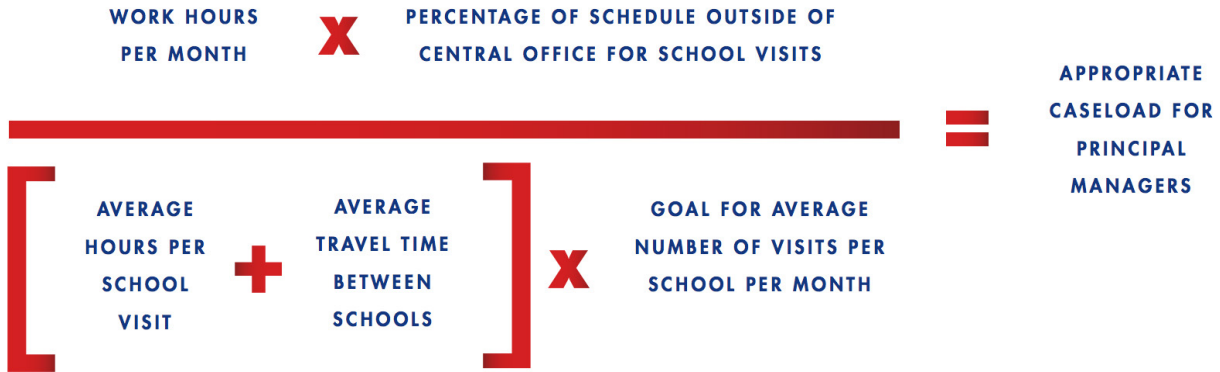
“(iii) Developing, improving, or providing assistance to local educational agencies to support the design and implementation of teacher, principal, or other school leader evaluation and support systems that are based in part on evidence of student academic achievement, which may include student growth, and shall include multiple measures of educator performance and provide clear, timely, and useful feedback to teachers, principals, or other school leaders, such as by— “(I) developing and disseminating high-quality evaluation tools, such as classroom observation rubrics, and methods, including training and auditing, for ensuring inter-rater reliability of evaluation results; “(II) developing and providing training to principals, other school

leaders, coaches, mentors, and evaluators on how to accurately differentiate performance, provide useful and timely feedback, and use evaluation results to inform decision-making about professional development, improvement strategies, and personnel decisions; and “(III) developing a system for auditing the quality of evaluation and support systems;”

“(viii) Providing assistance to local educational agencies for the development and implementation of high-quality professional development programs for principals that enable the principals to be effective and prepare all students to meet the challenging State academic standards.”

making sure that principal supervisors are going on leadership walks and norming data across schools? Do districts have the right manager-to-staff ratios? (See **Figure 2**.)

**Figure 2 | Recommended Formula for Calculating Principal Manager Caseload**



Source: Gina Ikemoto, Lori Taliaferro, Benjamin Fenton, and Jacquelyn Davis, [Great Principals at Scale: Creating District Conditions that Enable All Principals to be Effective](#) (New York: The George W. Bush Institute and New Leaders, June 2014).

Getting this role right for principal supervisors so they can focus on improving principal capacity is critical, but challenging.

The second big pillar necessary to build supportive systems is to create real connections within and across schools. States can consider: How can we create communities of practice where principals with similar needs connect with one another and receive tailored support? How can we leverage other instructional leaders within schools for observing principal practice? How can we include members of the full instructional leadership team in development activities?

**NA: Can you discuss the role for states in ensuring that this is carried through at the local level?**

**MY:** Assuming a state already has a robust evaluation and support system in place and is ready to support high-quality local implementation and continuous improvement, states can help set up the conditions for district success by shifting their relationship with districts from one of compliance to one of collaboration and collective responsibility.

A primary way states can do this is by partnering with districts to meet state requirements while remaining flexible and focused on outcomes. States could provide some resources and supports to all districts--for example, developing guidance on principal supervisor ratios for evaluation, and reviewing district plans with that guidance in mind. But in other areas,



states could use a differentiated approach to empower districts that are setting conditions for school leader success with more autonomy and provide more intensive support to districts with less capacity and poorer student outcomes.

Another area where states are well positioned to harness collaboration and collective responsibility is by designing data systems to collect information about local implementation of principal evaluation systems (where state law allows). States can then review the data collected to intervene in places where they are not seeing the desired outcomes. States can also use these data to help create or convene communities of practice across districts that allow principal supervisors and other district leaders to learn from each other. In particular, states can use data to partner or cluster districts that are strong in one area of implementation with districts struggling in that same area. Making these connections is especially helpful for smaller, single supervisor districts.

**AB:** Additionally, states are in the best position to showcase exemplars and examples to help districts generate ideas. States can celebrate districts where effective and innovative principal evaluation and support work is happening and to disseminate these examples to other districts. States can also provide a menu of examples of how districts have adopted—and where districts can apply for waivers of certain state requirements, adapted—state requirements in ways that meet their unique local contexts.

**NA: What evidence exists to support this idea? Can you point to examples of any promising states or districts currently employing these strategies?**

**MY:** The evidence that greater state and district attention needs to be focused on principals is strong. Research shows that well-prepared, well-supported principals have a huge influence on teacher practice and student success. Moreover, outstanding school leaders attract and retain great educators, with teachers citing principal quality as the most critical factor to their retention and career decisions.

And school leaders transform the lowest-performing schools, where the positive effects of strong leadership on student achievement are most pronounced. In fact, a [landmark study](#) found “virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”<sup>8</sup>

**AB:** While there is some available research on principal evaluation, overall there is not a rigorous research base—yet!—directly connecting principal evaluation and support systems with improved student outcomes. We *do* know from the research that, in terms of fostering principals’ development and growth, the design of the system is not as important as how well evaluations are carried out. And we know from our experience working with thousands of school leaders across the country that trust between principals and their evaluators is key to strong, consistent implementation of the observation and feedback cycle.

One example of a district doing innovative work in the principal supervisor space is Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). With support from the Wallace Foundation and its [Principal Pipeline Initiative](#),<sup>9</sup> MPS has begun to reduce the number of schools that principal supervisors support and to focus supervisors’ work on developing and coaching principals

well (rather than simply complying with evaluation requirements). One example is that, instead of a taking a wholly geographic approach to grouping schools, principal supervisors oversee networks of schools based on need. In particular, all “high-priority” schools tackling similar turnaround issues report into one supervisor. In addition, the district has reimagined how supervisors spend their time, resetting expectations and reallocating responsibilities at the central office to ensure principal supervisors can spend as much time as possible in schools. The Wallace initiative, which includes five other districts, will result in an evaluation that assesses whether and how investments in principal supervisors influence principal effectiveness, further building our collective knowledge of what works in principal evaluation and support.

**NA: What are potential obstacles or challenges to implementation that states should be aware of, and can you provide any suggestions for side-stepping them?**

**MY:** A big challenge is inertia—getting people to spend their time and resources differently is always difficult. While Title II has a long history of being primarily spent on teachers, the new three percent set-aside option for school leaders gives states the opportunity to mix things up and focus on areas like principal evaluation and support (see Appendix). One argument for making the increased investment is that excellent leaders affect student achievement primarily by supporting improved teacher effectiveness, such that an investment in principals is a cost-effective way to create schools where teachers thrive and students succeed.

Another pitfall to avoid is thinking the work is finished once an evaluation and support system is created. States need to continue to collect and review data, to gain feedback on the system and its implementation, and to use that information to improve the system. This requires a strong data system and capacity for using it well. It also requires feedback from educators—not just making them feel heard, but making meaningful adjustments, and planning for that from the beginning.

**AB:** The stakeholder engagement process that states have already been going through for ESSA planning could be a big opportunity for states to think about the work groups they brought together and make sure they continue to follow up. States that opted for public forums should consider setting up formal work groups that include practicing principals and other leaders now so school leader engagement is embedded in how they do their work moving forward.

**NA: Do you see this area of Title II intersecting with other areas of ESSA? If so, how should states think about coordinating their efforts here? Are there examples of states already doing this?**

**MY:** In addition to the 3 percent set aside and other uses of funds in Title II, there are three big buckets that intersect with principal evaluation and support within Title I:

First, tailoring a talent strategy to school improvement in Title I. Our lowest-performing schools need great leadership the most. States can provide guidance for districts to use evaluation data to inform hiring decisions, expect districts to develop plans to attract high-

quality principals, and partner with districts to provide ongoing support to leaders in schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement.

Second, taking a look at Title I school accountability systems and their components. Principals are being held accountable for the performance of their schools. They are also the face of the state report card for an individual school. Evaluation systems for principals and accountability systems for schools should be aligned so principals receive consistent messages on what they should be focused on and how they should be spending their time.

Finally, equitable access to educators in Title I. While mostly focused on teachers, states have flexibility to include school leadership. States can tie evaluation data into the effectiveness section of the equitable distribution reporting and look across the state and district to make sure talent is where it is needed most.

**AB:** It is our hope that states are looking at Title I and Title II across the board in their comprehensive plans. Thoughtful principal evaluation and support systems are a critical tool states can use to improve instruction, particularly in schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement, and ultimately, achieve better outcomes for all students.

*New Leaders is a national nonprofit organization that recruits and prepares education leaders to deliver results in high-need schools and advocates for policies that advance strong school leadership. Learn more at <http://newleaders.org/>.*



## MELINDA GEORGE AND JANICE PODA OF LEARNING FORWARD: COMPREHENSIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SYSTEMS

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**New America:** We'd like you to help states think outside the box in employing two of ESSA's less specific uses of state funds: “[*x*] Providing training, technical assistance, and capacity-building to local educational agencies that receive a subgrant under this part” and/or “[*xxi*] Supporting other activities identified by the State that are, to the extent the State determines that such evidence is reasonably available, evidence-based and that meet the purpose of this title.”

**If you were going to provide states with one idea for how to think big about improving educator quality within these two sections of the Title II statute, what would it be?**

**Janice Poda:** As most Title II, Part A funds—92–95 percent—will flow to districts, the best thing that states can do is work directly with schools and districts to ensure that they are developing effective professional learning (PL) systems that enable teachers to continuously grow and improve.

[While ESSA no longer allows states to directly provide teachers with professional development (PD) with Title II-A funds,] states can provide examples, training, and support for their schools and districts, and ask the right questions to get them to think deeply about the PD they are offering and what they can continue to do to improve its effectiveness. There are five key questions we think states should ask districts as part of the ESSA planning process, as they relate to educators’ professional learning. First, districts’ vision and how it aligns with the new professional development definition in ESSA (see Appendix). Second, how districts use data for goal-setting and for identifying areas for needed improvement. Third, how districts are prioritizing resources to focus on the areas of greatest need. Fourth, how districts are building leadership capacity at all levels to lead a new kind of professional

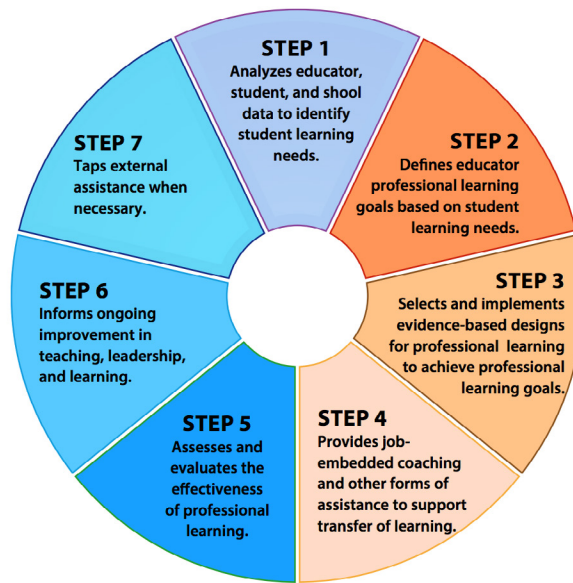


development. And finally, how districts can sustain the implementation of professional learning that meets the definition of PD in ESSA.

States can have the most impact here by providing a strong template for districts to develop their ideas and plans for how they will use their Title II-A funding—specifically in the area of professional learning. A good example of what this could look like is included in Learning Forward and Education Counsel’s recent ESSA toolkit, [A New Vision for Professional Learning](#).<sup>10</sup>

By using a template built on the questions above, districts will be able to assess, analyze, plan, and implement a system of professional learning. It also gives districts a process they can use to strategically conduct a cyclical review, similar to the cycle of continuous improvement developed by Learning Forward (see **Figure 3**), to refine their professional learning plans.

**Figure 3** | Cycle of Continuous Improvement



Source: *A New Vision for Professional Learning: A Toolkit to Help States Use ESSA to Advance Learning and Improvement Systems* [Oxford, OH: Learning Forward, January 2017].

Then, if states ask the districts to provide progress reports each year about what they have accomplished, they have accountability and a process to reflect on modifications needed. Of course, it’s not entirely about accountability because states should want districts to try new things, like empowering teachers to demand effective professional learning.

**Melinda George:** Once district plans and progress reports are submitted, states can spotlight promising and effective district practices for others to learn from. States can also use the results to determine what further steps they need to take, such as developing the capacity of the district staff leading PL efforts.

**NA: What evidence exists to support this idea of developing professional learning systems? Can you point to state or district examples?**

**JP:** Few places have put comprehensive professional learning systems in place, but there are a few examples where the work is beginning to happen. As discussed in our ESSA toolkit, Fort Wayne Community Schools' definition of professional learning serves as a vision for supporting its educators and meeting its goals for students. Fort Wayne has created quality improvement teams that include cabinet members, principal leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers. The superintendent modeled a commitment to learning by making public her professional learning goals, and established district learning communities with school leaders focused on defining effective leadership and designing and implementing professional learning. In these learning communities, principals co-observe and discuss problems of practice together, and teachers engage in regular peer collaboration to plan lessons and assessments and analyze student data together.

And Delaware is a good example of a state trying to help schools put this type of PL model into practice. Beginning with Race to the Top funds, the state invested in essential training and support in making the transition to the Common Core standards. Annually, the state releases a request for proposal (RFP) to schools to support the implementation of the Common Core standards through professional learning that is grounded in the Learning Forward professional learning standards, and a cycle of inquiry focused on continuous improvement. For participating schools, Delaware provides training in building teacher leader and principal capacity, in addition to strategic consulting partners and other follow up supports to help schools plan, implement, review, and then modify plans based on what they've learned.

Delaware is also helping schools focus less on educators' *reactions* to the training and more on the *impact* of that training on teacher practice and student learning. In 2016–17, 21 schools participated in the initiative and used Thomas Guskey's [five critical levels of professional development](#) evaluation (a deliberate process to evaluate if the PD being offered is having an impact) to assess their efforts.<sup>11</sup> These schools will convene to share their findings toward the end of the school year, and a report on the outcomes of the initiative will be released later this year.

**MG:** States can review a recent report from The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, [What Matters Now: A New Compact for Teaching and Learning—The Evidence Base](#)<sup>12</sup> to see how professional learning systems can work. And Learning Forward has developed the [Oxford Bibliographies](#)<sup>13</sup> that highlight evidence-based PD strategies.

Included in these resources is a key piece of evidence, from an Institute for Education Sciences review of research, showing that a sustained focus on professional learning works.<sup>14</sup> They found that PD strategies that involved 30–100 hours of focused learning over the course

of 6–12 months boosted student learning by about 21 points. But they also found that 14 hours or less of PD had no impact on student learning.

**NA: Do you see this area of Title II intersecting with other areas of ESSA? If so, how should states think about coordinating their efforts here? Are there examples of states already doing this?**

**JP:** The term professional development is used over 60 times in ESSA and is threaded through all the Titles. And professional learning is at the heart of school improvement work. Often support for school improvement relies on new technology, new curriculum materials, and short-term leaders to work with school principals, but seldom do those supports focus on building the capacity of teachers that are already there. To help schools improve student learning, professional learning must first improve teacher practice.

**MG:** It's important for states to take the lead on thinking about how the different components throughout ESSA intersect. State leaders should be rethinking how state education agencies and districts have traditionally been staffed, and instead of the traditional silos, start thinking about these entities as one big learning system. Establishing a learning system is about integrating the different strands within the education system: for example, bringing together people from Curriculum & Instruction and Human Capital departments to focus on teaching and learning.

**JP:** Tennessee has done good work on effectively aligning resources for PL. The state created a [comprehensive guide](#)<sup>15</sup> for districts on coordinating funds from multiple sources. It includes a detailed overview of funds for a wide variety of goals, including improving literacy and numeracy, providing instructional coaches, redesigning school time, and upgrading curriculum. The guide also identifies potential barriers to coordinating funds and helps districts navigate these barriers.

**NA: What are potential obstacles or challenges to implementation that states should be aware of, and can you provide any suggestions for side-stepping them?**

**MG:** One big obstacle is time. You don't often see sufficient time provided to do the necessary reorganization, and this is prevalent at all levels: school, district, and state. I would argue though, that you could cut back tremendously on the time needed if you simultaneously worked with all of the levels to make a system-wide change instead of doing it through a trickle-down process (that is, first state, then district, then school). States can build the capacity of leaders at every level to participate in the change process, and by doing so, get closer to creating this learning system rather than advocating for it from one level to the next, and then to the next.

**JP:** The greatest problem—and where states and districts experience the biggest challenges—is in the actual implementation of these systems and sustaining of that implementation.

States can assist districts with implementing the strategies in their ESSA plan by utilizing change management. States and districts should take the time upfront to reflect on and audit what they have been doing for professional learning and determine what meets expectations

and should be continued, and what needs to be changed. States and districts should outline how evidence of impact of professional learning will be collected and analyzed to ensure they are making a difference in teacher practice, and ultimately, student improvement.

A recent report from Frontline Education, *[Bridging the Gap](#)*,<sup>16</sup> stated that only about 20 percent of current PD being offered in districts meets the new definitions of professional learning in ESSA. So, after reflecting on what kind of PL states and districts are currently offering and where they are seeing impact, states should consult the new definition to see where remaining gaps are and strategize best practices for changing their PL accordingly.

This will help states get started, but they need to make sure that they continuously look at the results of professional learning to determine the strengths and weaknesses and the impact it is having on teaching practice.

*Learning Forward is the only national nonprofit membership association focused solely on ensuring success for all students through effective professional learning and school improvement. Learn more at <https://learningforward.org/home>.*

## Interviewee Biographies

**Alexandra Broin, director of policy and advocacy, New Leaders.** Broin leads the organization's federal advocacy strategy, including its work to engage the New Leaders alumni community in influencing national policy decisions and conversations. Previously, she oversaw New Leaders' partnerships with national foundations, worked in policy development at the U.S. Department of Education, and supported legislative affairs and constituent services in the U.S. Senate. She has taught middle school in Denver Public Schools and holds a B.S. in education and social policy from Northwestern University.

**Stephanie Dean, consulting manager and vice president of teaching and learning policy at Public Impact.** Dean's work focuses on identifying and cultivating state policy conditions that help schools extend the reach of excellent teachers. She has written and advised clients on teacher preparation, teacher evaluation, school leadership, technology in rural education, competency-based assessment systems, and the development of "learner positioning systems" to create a platform for personalized learning. She holds an M.A. in public policy from Duke University.

**Melinda George, director of policy and partnerships, Learning Forward.** George leads Learning Forward's national and state policy agendas as well as its work in building strategic partnerships. Previously, George was president of the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future. She has served as the senior director of Education Strategic Relations at PBS and was the first executive director of the State Educational Technology Directors Association. George began her career in education as a fourth and fifth grade teacher in D.C. Public Schools.

**Bryan C. Hassel, co-director of Public Impact.** An expert on charter schools, school turnaround, education entrepreneurship, and teacher and leader policy, Hassel consults nationally with leading public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and

foundations working for dramatic improvements in K–12 education. Hassel holds a PhD in public policy from Harvard University, an MA in politics from Oxford University (where he was a Rhodes Scholar), and a B.A. in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Janice Poda, senior consultant, Learning Forward.** Poda serves on Learning Forward's leadership team and leads their Redesign PD Partnership. Previously, she served as strategic initiative director for the education workforce at the Council of Chief State School Officers, assisting states with developing and implementing coherent and comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness. Her work in South Carolina has included teaching; district administration; leading the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement; and serving as the chief of staff and the deputy superintendent for educator quality at the South Carolina Department of Education.

**Benjamin Riley, founder and executive director, Deans for Impact.** Prior to founding Deans for Impact, Riley conducted research on the New Zealand education system, worked as the policy director for a national education nonprofit, and served as a deputy attorney general for the State of California. He holds a JD from the Yale Law School and a B.A. in business administration and management from the University of Washington.

**Margaret Young, senior director of policy, New Leaders.** Young leads the development of New Leaders' state and federal policy recommendations. Previously, she served as senior policy advisor for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development; director of Government Affairs at Teach for America; and junior legislative aide for the U.S. House of Representative's Committee on Education and Labor. Young has taught third and fourth grade in Chicago and holds a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## Appendix

### *Definition of Professional Development in ESSA*

SEC. 8002 (42): “PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.—The term ‘professional development’ means activities that — (A) are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards; and (B) are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused, and may include activities that— (i) improve and increase teachers— (I) knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach; (II) understanding of how students learn; and (III) ability to analyze student work and achievement from multiple sources, including how to adjust instructional strategies, assessments, and materials based on such analysis; (ii) are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans; (iii) allow personalized plans for each educator to address the educator’s specific needs identified in observation or other feedback; (iv) improve classroom management skills; (v) support the recruitment, hiring, and training of effective teachers, including teachers who became certified through State and local alternative routes to certification; (vi) advance teacher understanding of— (I) effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based; and (II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; (vii) are aligned with, and directly related to, academic goals of the school or local educational agency; (viii) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, representatives of Indian tribes (as applicable), and administrators of schools to be served under this Act; (ix) are designed to give teachers of English learners, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments; (x) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers, principals, and other school leaders in the use of technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and academic subjects in which the teachers teach; (xi) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development; (xii) are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services, to those children, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations; (xiii) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; (xiv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents and families; (xv) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education, including, as applicable, Tribal Colleges and Universities as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)), to establish school-based teacher, principal, and other prospective teachers, novice teachers, principals, and other school leaders with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers, principals, other school leaders, and faculty of such institutions; (xvi) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; (xvii) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in this paragraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom; and (xviii) where practicable, provide jointly for school staff and other early childhood education program providers, to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.”



### *Definition of Preparation Academy in ESSA*

SEC. 2002(4): “TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, OR OTHER SCHOOL LEADER PREPARATION ACADEMY.—The term ‘teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academy’ means a public or other nonprofit entity, which may be an institution of higher education or an organization affiliated with an institution of higher education, that establishes an academy that will prepare teachers, principals, or other school leaders to serve in high needs schools, and that— “(A) enters into an agreement with a State authorizer that specifies the goals expected of the academy, including— (i) a requirement that prospective teachers, principals, or other school leaders who are enrolled in the academy receive a significant part of their training through clinical preparation that partners the prospective candidate with an effective teacher, principal, or other school leader, as determined by the State, respectively, with a demonstrated record of increasing student academic achievement, including for the subgroups of students defined in section 1111(c)(2), while also receiving concurrent instruction from the academy in the content area (or areas) in which the prospective teacher, principal, or other school leader will become certified or licensed that links to the clinical preparation experience; (ii) the number of effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders, respectively, who will demonstrate success in increasing student academic achievement that the academy will prepare; and (iii) a requirement that the academy will award a certificate of completion (or degree, if the academy is, or is affiliated with, an institution of higher education) to a teacher only after the teacher demonstrates that the teacher is an effective teacher, as determined by the State, with a demonstrated record of increasing student academic achievement either as a student teacher or teacher-of-record on an alternative certificate, license, or credential; (iv) a requirement that the academy will award a certificate of completion (or degree, if the academy is, or is affiliated with, an institution of higher education) to a principal or other school leader only after the principal or other school leader demonstrates a record of success in improving student performance; and (v) timelines for producing cohorts of graduates and conferring certificates of completion (or degrees, if the academy is, or is affiliated with, an institution of higher education) from the academy; (B) does not have unnecessary restrictions on the methods the academy will use to train prospective teacher, principal, or other school leader candidates, including— (i) obligating (or prohibiting) the academy’s faculty to hold advanced degrees or conduct academic research; S. 1177–115 (ii) restrictions related to the academy’s physical infrastructure; (iii) restrictions related to the number of course credits required as part of the program of study; (iv) restrictions related to the undergraduate coursework completed by teachers teaching or working on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials, as long as such teachers have successfully passed all relevant State-approved content area examinations; or (v) restrictions related to obtaining accreditation from an accrediting body for purposes of becoming an academy; (C) limits admission to its program to prospective teacher, principal, or other school leader candidates who demonstrate strong potential to improve student academic achievement, based on a rigorous selection process that reviews a candidate’s prior academic achievement or record of professional accomplishment; and (D) results in a certificate of completion or degree that the State may, after reviewing the academy’s results in producing effective teachers, or principals, or other school leaders, respectively (as determined by the State) recognize as at least the equivalent of a master’s degree in education for the purposes of hiring, retention, compensation, and promotion in the State.”

### *Additional Three Percent State Set-Aside for School Leaders Statutory Language in ESSA:*

Section 2101(c)(3): “PRINCIPALS OR OTHER SCHOOL LEADERS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1) and in addition to funds otherwise available for activities under paragraph (4), a State educational agency may reserve not more than 3 percent of the amount reserved for subgrants to local educational agencies under paragraph (1) for one or more of the activities for principals or other school leaders that are described in paragraph (4).”

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Congress. *The Every Student Succeeds Act*. 114<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., 2015. S. 1117. <https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/s/1177/BILLS-114s1177enr.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Statutory language from Title II, Part A section 2101(c)(4) (B)(vi) of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

<sup>3</sup> *From Chaos to Coherence: A Policy for Accessing and Using Outcomes Data in Educator Preparation* (Austin, TX: Deans for Impact, 2016). [http://www.deansforimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/From\\_Chaos\\_to\\_Coherence.pdf](http://www.deansforimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/From_Chaos_to_Coherence.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Jean Desravines, Jaime Aquino, and Benjamin Fenton, *Breakthrough Principals: A Step-By-Step Guide to Building Stronger Schools* (New York: New Leaders, April 2016). <http://newleaders.org/research-policy/breakthrough-principals/>

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