U.S. Department of Education

Identifying and Addressing Priority Education Needs

Mid-Atlantic
Regional Advisory Committee

December 2023

MSG
MANHATTAN STRATEGY GROUP

Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the activities and results of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), authorized under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA) (Pub. L. 107-279; 20 U.S.C. § 9605). The 10 RACs were established to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Education (Secretary) regarding the educational needs of one of the ten regions served by the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) for input regarding technical assistance activities described in Section 203 of the ETAA and how those needs would be most effectively addressed. The Secretary sought recommendations for nominations to serve on the RACs from the Chief Executive Officers of States, Chief State School Officers, and education stakeholders within each region and appointed members to the RACs in August 2023. The activities discussed in this report took place from August to November 2023.

RAC members reviewed a regional profile comprised of educational statistics and other relevant data to inform their individual assessments of the challenges and educational needs in the region. The RACs additionally sought input from Chief Executive Officers of States; Chief State School Officers; REL Governing Boards; and other education stakeholders through processes including informal surveys, focus groups, and public comment solicitations. The goal of these processes was to solicit the views and needs of schools (including public charter schools), educators, parents, teachers, administrators, local education agencies (LEAs), librarians, businesses, state education agencies (SEAs), and other customers within the region regarding the need for the activities described in 20 U.S.C. sections 9564 and 9602 and how those needs would be most effectively addressed. In total, the Mid-Atlantic RAC convened three focus groups, conducted one survey, and received 82 public comments, further described in the Data Collection section of this report.

The Mid-Atlantic RAC held three virtual meetings to discuss and conduct its needs assessment. During the first meeting, held on September 7, 2023, the RAC reviewed educational data and public comments, deliberated, and made recommendations to address the needs of the region. During the second meeting, held on October 17, 2023, the RAC reviewed additional data, deliberated on the educational needs of the region, and voted on the top five recommended priorities to be included in a final needs assessment report. A final meeting was held on November 16, 2023, to review the subcommittees' written recommendations and vote to approve the final needs assessment report for submission to the Secretary.

The three priorities identified by committee members and discussed in further detail in this report are:

- ➢ **Priority 1:** Academic Performance of the Region's Students
- ➢ **Priority 2:** Services to English Learners
- ➢ **Priority 3:** The Educator Workforce

Priority 1: Academic Performance of the Region's Students

All states in the Mid-Atlantic region showed a significant decrease in their students' reading and math proficiency scores since the previous assessment year, except for the District of Columbia and New

Jersey which showed no significant difference in 8th grade reading scores since the previous assessment year. In addition, the Mid-Atlantic RAC received 24 comments related to the category "Supporting Strong Instruction and Academic Achievement." Ten comments specifically referenced improved reading, math, basic skills, or evidence-based instruction and three comments referenced more general improvements to pedagogy or teacher preparation.

Technical assistance recommendations include translating evidence-based practices, such as those aligned with the science of reading and learning, into educator-friendly tools, resources, and training. Technical assistance can also help identify new and emerging technologies that educators and families can use to help support students' growth in literacy and math.

Priority 2: Services to English Learners

Slightly below the national average of 10.3%, the English learner (EL) demographic is one of the fastest growing cohorts in our region's schools and continues to increase both within and outside the Mid-Atlantic region. Data from the U.S. Department of Education shows that Maryland and the District of Columbia are among the 10 states with the lowest EL graduation rates (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2023).

Technical assistance recommendations include practices for data disaggregation, identifying how to disaggregate data that is already being collected, and how to use these data to better differentiate EL instruction and services. Technical assistance could also be provided to assist with providing clarity around the terminology used to describe the EL student subgroup and to support the development of definitions of specific populations such as newcomers.

Priority 3: The Educator Workforce

Data shows that our school systems are currently struggling in three areas pertaining to the educator workforce: teacher recruitment, teacher retention, and teacher training. Through teacher reports, educators attribute the mass exodus to multiple institutional conditions. In a data-rich educational culture, teachers are often asked to perform more analytical tasks for which they may not have been fully trained. They are not well versed in using the multiple types of assessment data to adjust their instruction to differentiate for all students.

To address the need for the teacher recruitment component of this priority, the committee recommends technical assistance in developing, implementing, and evaluating "grow your own" programs. Other technical assistance recommendations include helping LEAs provide differentiated and research-based professional learning opportunities to both new and experienced teachers specific to the needs and within the context of their unique districts and/or schools.

Introduction

The Secretary of Education (Secretary) established ten Regional Advisory Committees (RACs), authorized by the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA) (20 U.S.C. sections 9601 et. Seq.) and governed by the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (Public Law 92-463). The purpose of the RACs is to collect information on the education needs of each region and how those needs may be addressed through technical assistance activities provided by the Comprehensive Centers Program described in section 203 of the ETAA and other Department technical assistance activities.

RAC members are appointed by the Secretary based on recommendations from Chief Executive Officers of States, Chief State School Officers, and education stakeholders within each region. Mid-Atlantic RAC membership is comprised of both Special Government Employees (SGEs) and representatives of organizations or recognizable groups of persons including state education agencies (SEAs), local education agencies (LEAs), including rural and urban LEAs, institutions of higher education, parents, practicing educators, including classroom teachers, principals, other school administrators, researchers, and individuals from the business community. For a complete list of Mid-Atlantic RAC members, please see Appendix B.

Each RAC sought input on regional educational needs from Chief Executive Officers of States, Chief State School Officers, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Governing Boards, and other education stakeholders in the region and the public. The Mid-Atlantic RAC conducted outreach activities such as focus groups 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 C), and deliberated during public meetings from September 7 through November 16, 2023. The RAC established three subcommittees to draft a report summarizing the results of the needs assessment and their recommendations. A final public meeting was held to review the subcommittee's recommendations and vote to submit the final educational needs assessment report to the Secretary.

This report is based on the assessment of educational needs within the Mid-Atlantic, which includes the following states: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The analysis and recommendations herein represent the findings of this assessment and the advice of the Mid-Atlantic RAC to the Secretary.

Data Collection

The Mid-Atlantic RAC reviewed the state profiles provided to the committee for the five states in the region (Delaware, District of Columbia [DC], Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey), as well as the regional and national data made available. Two interviews with representatives of state executives (the Governor's office in Delaware and New Jersey) took place. Committee members also reviewed input from the REL Governing Board for the Mid-Atlantic region; 82 public comments were submitted as part of the RAC public meeting process, and those were also included in review for analysis and discussion.

RAC members themselves conducted three focus groups and one survey. Data and responses from those efforts were shared and reviewed by the entire RAC.

- Nora Durant, Mid-Atlantic RAC member and Delaware educator, convened a focus group of six Delaware educators (three teachers, one special education coordinator, one school counselor, and one administrative intern).

- Megan Gierka, Mid-Atlantic RAC member and higher education representative, held a focus group with four representatives from Pennsylvania (one superintendent, one high school principal, one high school teacher, and one substitute and assessment coordinator) and one from New Jersey (United Federation of Teachers).

- The third focus group was convened by Elizabeth Raff, Mid-Atlantic RAC member and 2022 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. Raff brought together seven award-winning teachers from across the Mid-Atlantic region for that focus group. The group included the 2023 Teachers of the Year from Delaware, DC, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; the 2022 Teachers of the Year from New Jersey and Maryland; and a Physics and Nanoscience Presidential Awardee from New Jersey.

- Amaya Garcia, Mid-Atlantic RAC member and researcher representative, surveyed two individuals who work for a DC school district and two who work for DC-based policy organizations.

Summary of Findings

Mid-Atlantic RAC members synthesized information from various RAC members, their constituencies, and public comments (see Appendix D) to determine the highest-priority educational need areas within the region and to recommend strategies to address the needs.

The priority needs, voted on by committee members during a public meeting on October 17, 2023, are:

- ➢ **Priority 1:** Academic Performance of the Region's Students
- ➢ **Priority 2:** Services to English Learners
- ➢ **Priority 3:** The Educator Workforce

Each priority need is presented below. The committee summarized the needs and their analysis, and generated strategies to meet the needs through technical assistance.

Recommendations

Priority 1: Academic Performance of the Region's Students

Outcomes and Findings

A comprehensive needs sensing matrix was utilized to complete a thorough analysis of data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education. These data included state profiles and national disaggregated reports showing student demographics, academic performance, in-school suspension rates, graduation rates, mental health services, and per-pupil expenditures in public elementary and secondary schools. In addition, a data collection process was executed which included a survey, three focus group sessions, and commentary from both members of the public and regional education leadership.

The results of these needs sensing activities showed that multiple stakeholder groups identified evidence-based instructional practices as a priority need area related to increasing student academic performance. Table 1 shows reading and math proficiency rates for the Mid-Atlantic Region's 4th and 8th grade students as reported in the most recent report of the National Assessment of Education Process (NAEP) (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2022). All states in the Mid-Atlantic region showed a significant decrease in their students' reading and math proficiency scores since the previous assessment year, with the exception DC and New Jersey which showed no significant difference in 8th grade reading scores since the previous assessment year.

Table 1a: Mid-Atlantic Region 2022 NAEP Reading Scores at or Above Proficiency (NCES, 2022).

State/Jurisdiction	4th Grade	8th Grade
Delaware	25%	24%
District of Columbia	26%	22%
Maryland	31%	33%
New Jersey	38%	42%
Pennsylvania	34%	31%

Table 1b: Mid-Atlantic Region 2022 NAEP Math Scores at or Above Proficiency (NCES, 2022).

State/Jurisdiction	4th Grade	8th Grade
Delaware	26%	18 %
District of Columbia	24%	16%
Maryland	31%	25%
New Jersey	39%	33%
Pennsylvania	40%	27%

The results of four survey-based interviews and three focus groups revealed some common themes related to the prioritization of evidence-based instructional practices. Commentary notes from interviews conducted by the Mid-Atlantic RAC with two school district staff members and two members of a policy organization based in DC included feedback that in-service professional development is often needed to address gaps related to pre-service teacher preparation programs. These respondents noted that ongoing professional development needs to be differentiated to specific educational roles such as teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals, and that it should help educators translate research into effective assessment and classroom instructional practices.

One focus group conducted by the Mid-Atlantic RAC, consisting of five members including a superintendent, a high school principal, a high school teacher, and a substitute and assessment coordinator from Pennsylvania and a member of the United Federation of Teachers in New Jersey, noted that the "science of reading" should be the primary focus area for the region and that other states outside the Mid-Atlantic region have already prioritized professional development initiatives and programs that are grounded in evidence-based practices. The term "science of reading" has been broadly understood to represent an interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research that provides an overview of contemporary knowledge about reading and writing (Snowling and Hulme, 2005; The Reading League, 2022). A second focus group conducted by the Mid-Atlantic RAC, consisting of six former and current teachers of the year and one award-winning teacher, all from the Mid-Atlantic region, noted that prioritizing the needs of teachers supports students' academic growth. They highlighted that professional learning and development should help teachers understand evidence-based, classroom practices best implemented to meet the diverse needs of students. This group also indicated that high-quality professional development needs to attend to teacher agency while being in alignment with the district curriculum, implementation, coaching, family engagement, and data systems to track improvement and interim results. While not addressing student academic performance or evidence-based practices directly, a third focus group conducted by the Mid-Atlantic RAC consisting of six members including three teachers, a special education coordinator, a school counselor, and an administrative intern in Delaware, noted that professional development needs to be differentiated and tied to more comprehensive, system-wide supports, such as increased planning/prep time and job-embedded coaching or residency experiences.

A review of the public comment tabulation for the Mid-Atlantic region from October 9, 2023, revealed some of the same themes identified above. There were 24 comments related to the category "Supporting Strong Instruction and Academic Achievement." Ten comments specifically referenced improved reading, math, basic skills, or evidence-based instruction and three comments referenced more general improvements to pedagogy or teacher preparation. Twelve comments related to the category "Supporting Specific Student Populations," of which two comments referenced specially designed reading and/or math instruction for students with disabilities and one referenced a general need for professional development to address low achievement. In the category "Other," one of the 23 comments was related to improving reading and writing instruction. Overall, the term "science of reading" was included in five of the comments advocating for improved instruction.

A review of the survey responses received from the Delaware and New Jersey Governors' Offices, as well as the Mid-Atlantic REL Governing Board, revealed some common themes related to students' achievement and access to effective instruction. Both State Governors identified priorities around improving elementary literacy proficiency rates, with a specific focus on what they also termed as the "science of reading." In addition, both state governors' offices and the region's REL Governing Board reported priorities related to data collection and analysis processes to inform actionable instructional decision-making as well as to inform on the efficacy of current pedagogical processes and instructional practices as they relate to student outcomes. These stakeholders also indicated that historically underserved and vulnerable populations, such as economically disadvantaged students, special education students, Black/African American and Hispanic students, and English learners, remain the most in need of targeted academic support.

In conclusion, the comprehensive needs sensing activities conducted by the Mid-Atlantic RAC unveiled a consensus among various stakeholders on the imperative need to prioritize evidence-based instructional practices, with a particular focus on the "science of reading." While math was not referenced as often as reading or literacy, the RAC members discussed the need to include math in this priority focus at the October 17 committee meeting. These results, supported by data from NAEP, underscore the urgency of addressing declining reading and math proficiency rates in the region. Furthermore, the feedback from surveys, focus groups, and public comments highlighted the demand for tailored professional development, differentiated support for teachers, and enhanced system-wide measures to improve student academic performance, particularly among historically underserved and vulnerable populations. The findings emphasize the critical role of research-based strategies and targeted interventions in enhancing education outcomes within the Mid-Atlantic region.

Priority Needs

Fueled by pandemic-era learning loss, school districts within the Mid-Atlantic Region are beginning to overhaul their instructional practices and programming to support equitable access to Tier 1 curriculum. Educators across the region reported a significant focus on both math and reading, as recent national, state, and district data show worsening proficiency rates, as evident in Table 2:

Table 2: NAEP Scores within Mid-Atlantic Region (NCES, 2022)

State/Jurisdiction	4th Grade Reading At or Above Proficient	8th Grade Reading At or Above Proficient
Delaware	25%	24%
District of Columbia	26%	22%
Maryland	31%	33%
New Jersey	38%	42%
Pennsylvania	34%	31%

Poor student outcomes are a result of systemic failures and inequities within the current teacher preparation and training programs. A June 2023 report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (Ellis, et al., 2023) cited over 40% of teacher preparation programs are still teaching multiple reading practices, in contradiction to the research base.

Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. Significant knowledge in the components of reading instruction, as well as the effective instructional principles for delivering that instruction, are required. Prioritizing literacy instruction and teacher preparation has been a strong focus across the southern states, with a heavy focus on evidence-based practices that align with the science of reading. The science of reading, as defined by The Reading League, is below.

> The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties. (TRL, 2022).

Few states within the region have transitioned practices to follow the national landscape around the science of reading, and additional guidance is needed to support our region's students. While foundational research affirms evidence-based practices and has been published through the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides much of this work has yet to be translated into educator-friendly tools and training (U.S. Department of Education, various dates).

Technical Assistance Recommendations

Based on the data outcomes, findings, and discussions of the RAC that support Priority #1: Academic Performance of the Region's Students, focused on evidence-based practices in literacy and math, the Mid-Atlantic RAC makes the following recommendations for technical assistance supports:

- **Professional Development for Educators**: Translate evidence-based practices, such as those that are aligned with the science of reading and learning, such as the science of reading, into educator-friendly tools, resources, and training. Provide the same translation for research-based practices in math.

- **Family Engagement:** Evidence-based practices, such as those aligned to the science of reading and learning, are new for educators and are also new for families. Develop ways to get information out to families to help improve student outcomes. The U.S. Department of Education has produced the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships as a resource for schools to chart a path toward effective family engagement efforts linked to academic achievement. Ensure schools and educators have access to this framework and training to implement it (Mapp & Bergman, 2019).

- **Special Populations/English Learners:** Support for using evidence-based strategies with special populations. For example, ELs may need different types of guidance or tactics compared with native English speakers. This is an area with which many districts struggle. Emphasis should be placed on language/literacy connection in alignment with the science of reading and learning, with an understanding of how language is structured, and capitalize on students' language backgrounds within the classroom (Lesaux, et al., 2008, 2019)

- **New and Emerging Technologies**: Help identify new and emerging technologies that educators and families can use to help support students' growth in literacy and math. For example, chat-

based tutoring or other tutoring instruction in a student's native language might be a good tool, but states and districts need support understanding when and how to leverage such a tool.

Priority 2: Services to English Learners

Outcomes and Findings

Growing Demographic

English learners are a rapidly growing demographic in the United States and in the Mid-Atlantic region. In 2000, 8.1% of the school population was classified as ELs. Almost two decades later in 2018, the percentage rose to 9.5% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Currently, in the Mid-Atlantic region, ELs represent approximately 8.8% of all students, slightly below the national average of 10.3% (See Appendix C). Table 3 below represents the disaggregated data by jurisdiction. This demographic is one of the fastest growing cohorts in our schools and continues to increase both within and outside the Mid-Atlantic region. Notably, the states within the Mid-Atlantic region use different terms to describe this student population. New Jersey and Maryland use the term multilingual learners, while the other states use the term English learner. These differences in terminology create some confusion.

Table 3: English Learners (Fall 2020) Mid-Atlantic Profile (Appendix C)

State/Jurisdiction	Total	Percentage of Total Enrollment
United States	4,963,388	10.3%
District of Columbia	9,347	12.0%
Delaware	14,581	10.7%
Maryland	88,834	10.3%
New Jersey	95,042	7.2%
Pennsylvania	71,571	4.2%

Insufficient Educator Training and Professional Development

Educator certifications have not met the demand. In the last twenty years, one and a half million English learners have been added to our classrooms, yet only 3% of U.S. educators have the specific qualifications, in the form of an endorsement or certificate, to teach English as a second language (Rahman et al., 2017). General education educators often do not receive coursework and clinical experience related to supporting EL students. Some educators participating in a Mid-Atlantic RAC focus group denoted frustration and lack of resources, stating that there is "very limited knowledge and training to support these students" despite the program models present.

School districts offer professional development for educators on a regular basis but educators are not always able to incorporate those trainings into their practice. As an instructional coach shared during a focus group, "educators are overwhelmed and not able to think about what they've learned and how to apply that to their classroom practice… there's no time to internalize it and think about what it means for your classroom of 20 kids, 10 of whom are ELs, two who are newcomers, and the rest are native English speakers." Some concerns were shared that students identified as ELs are being placed in special

education services or specific pipelines due to their home language. By building a better understanding of ELs among educators, some of these concerns may be ameliorated.

Uneven Achievement and Supports

English learners have lower high school graduation rates than their non-EL peers (see Table 4 below). But rates vary among the states in the Mid-Atlantic region, with Delaware and New Jersey having higher EL graduation rates than Maryland and the District of Columbia, in particular. Data from the U.S. Department of Education shows that Maryland and the District of Columbia are among the 10 states with the lowest EL graduation rates (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2023). These metrics do not present a full picture of EL achievement. Data from the 2022 NAEP assessment shows that 4th grade and 8th ELs' reading performance has been growing incrementally (NCES, 2022). As one survey respondent shared with the Mid-Atlantic RAC there is a need for better disaggregation of data among the EL subgroup (former ELs, newcomers, students with limited or interrupted formal education, etc.). Many states within the region have adopted a response to intervention framework, commonly referred to as a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). Unfortunately, many school districts are not sure how to support ELs in an MTSS model. This is likely due to lack of training, familiarity, and preparedness to teach diverse populations (Zacarian, 2011). Elaborating on this student group, a governor in the Mid-Atlantic region stated: "Our historically underserved [students] remain the most in need of academic and wrap-around supports, and those gaps were worsened by the pandemic."

Table 4: Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) Mid-Atlantic Profile (Appendix C)

Demographic	United States	District of Columbia	Delaware	Maryland	New Jersey	Pennsylvania
All Students	87%	73%	89%	87%	91%	87%
English Learners (2019-2020)	71%	56%	76%	56%	73%	69%

Need to Support ELs' Home Languages

Delaware has invested in expanding dual language immersion programs that provide content instruction in English and a partner language such as Spanish. These programs are also present in DC and Maryland. New Jersey has a bilingual mandate specifying that if a school district enrolls 20 or more EL students in a single language group, the district is required to offer a full-time bilingual program. One survey respondent shared multiple concerns regarding the availability of dual language immersion programs to ELs in their school district, noting "…with gentrification a lot of ELs are being pushed out of our dual language programs, which is very worrisome in many ways." They also shared concerns about the home language maintenance of ELs.

Also raised during one of the meetings of the Mid-Atlantic RAC was the need for resources related to bilingual education and the need to develop pathways for educators to receive bilingual certification.

Priority Needs

The United States is one of the few advanced countries with an increasing population. Our growth is happening because people from other countries come to live in the U.S. and they have children who then go to American schools. These students bring tremendous assets to our school communities and represent our future voters and workforce. ELs are often viewed from a deficit orientation due to misconceptions about language learning and the reliance on English-dominant instruction and assessment. Many school systems are not fully prepared to support students identified as ELs due to long-standing systemic challenges, including:

- Educators do not receive enough training on how to support ELs' linguistic, academic, and socio-emotional development;
- Reliance on narrow data sources that provide an uneven picture of EL student achievement and a lack of information on how existing interventions incorporate ELs; and
- A lack of home language support and bilingual instruction.

Given that students identified as ELs are a growing part of the student population, we need to ensure they receive the support necessary to help them reach their full potential.

Technical Assistance Recommendations

Based on the findings of our data collection, available quantitative data, and discussions during our RAC meetings, we recommend the following technical assistance supports:

- **Actionable Resources for Supporting ELs:** The U.S. Department of Education has existing resources related to supporting students identified as ELs, including practice guides, toolkits, funded research centers, and related research reports. However, there is a need to ensure that these resources make it down to the classroom level in an actionable way. Technical assistance could be offered to help make these resources more actionable and to support implementation at the school/classroom level.

- **Data Disaggregation:** There is a need for data disaggregation to better understand the EL student population. Within the subgroup there exists significant heterogeneity in terms of English language proficiency, home languages, experience with school, immigration status, and time spent as an EL. There are also differences in academic achievement between current and former ELs. Technical assistance could focus on practices for data disaggregation, identifying how to disaggregate data that is already being collected, and how to use these data to better differentiate EL instruction and services.

- **Clarifying Terminology of ELs and Subpopulations:** Many terms are used to describe the EL learner subgroup, which creates confusion as these terms can vary by state and sometimes even by school district. Technical assistance could be provided to assist with providing clarity around the terminology used to describe the EL student subgroup and to support the development of definitions of specific populations such as newcomers.

- **Highlight Successful Approaches:** States and school districts utilize varying approaches to educating students identified as ELs with varying results. Many practitioners are eager to learn

from others about what is working well and how they might apply similar approaches in their own context. Technical assistance could be provided to highlight local and regional approaches that are evidence-based and producing strong outcomes for EL students.

- **Accountability Systems:** Federal law specifies the civil rights of ELs, broad requirements for identification and reclassification, the provision of language services, accountability, and more. One focus group raised the question of what accountability measures do the Federal and State governments currently have in place to support ELs? Technical assistance could be offered to help practitioners and other stakeholders in the region learn more about accountability systems for English learners both at the federal and state level and how they can be used to inform improvements to instructional programs and related services.

- **Bilingual Education Models:** Bilingual education models are an important component of ELs' educational experiences. The provision and design of bilingual education varies throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, as does the availability of bilingual educator pathways and certification options. Technical assistance could be offered to share resources and research related to bilingual education models, to learn about local programs, and how states/localities are supporting bilingual educator development. There also seems to be a broad need for educator professional learning related to supporting ELs regardless of the instructional model used.

Priority 3: The Educator Workforce

Outcomes and Findings

Ameliorating the nationwide educator shortage is a top priority in the Mid-Atlantic region. Data shows that our school systems are currently struggling in three areas pertaining to the educator workforce: educator recruitment, educator retention, and educator training. Through a series of focus groups, surveys, and public comments, a diverse group of stakeholders shared reasons why a focus on our educator workforce is critical. The committee has summarized these findings below:

Educator Recruitment: Staffing our region's schools has become increasingly difficult since the COVID-19 pandemic, placing a strain on recruitment efforts. There is a dire need to recruit more prepared and qualified certified educators to reduce large class sizes and high educator-to-student ratios. Many districts in our region have school buildings that are not fully staffed and where hiring becomes less about finding highly qualified educators and more about just filling a vacancy. Schools also struggle to hire diverse candidates who reflect the rapidly changing student body in our public schools. Districts report increasingly challenging recruitment efforts due to difficult and costly state certification requirements, a lack of certification reciprocity between jurisdictions, insufficient educator preparation, and poor educator pay and pay structures. Additionally, local officials fear the sharp drop in recent years of enrollment in educator preparation programs will further significantly reduce the number of prepared and qualified educators in the coming years.

Educator Retention: Educator retention has also presented a significant challenge for LEAs in recent years. According to educator reports, educators attribute the mass exodus to multiple institutional conditions. In a data-rich educational culture, educators are often asked to perform more analytical tasks for which they may not have been fully trained. They are not well versed in using the multiple

types of assessment data to adjust their instruction to differentiate for all students. With larger class sizes and fewer staff, many are overextended with these tasks which represent a workload meant for multiple positions. Additionally, paraprofessionals are often asked to do the work of classroom and inclusion educators. Ultimately, the lack of opportunity for advancement outside of the principalship and insufficient compensation for the work required can contribute to a sense of overwhelm leading educators to leave the field.

Educator Training: In addition to recruitment and retention challenges, educators share that our school systems fail to provide adequate professional development. As student needs continue to evolve and inclusion becomes more commonplace, educators are encountering more students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in their classrooms. However, they may not receive adequate professional development to be able to support their students in meaningful ways, causing them frustration. Furthermore, our districts also struggle to accelerate professional growth when they fail to provide training for new initiatives. Educators experience initiative fatigue when multiple new initiatives and programs are introduced with little to no training. Educators often become overwhelmed and struggle to determine how best to implement these new practices into their instruction. Consequently, there is often little return on the investment of professional learning, impacting the educator workforce and classroom practice immensely.

Priority Needs

As the Mid-Atlantic RAC noted, our priority for increased academic performance in the region cannot be met unless we have a robust educator workforce ready to support these needs.

The educator workforce priority falls into two categories: recruitment and retention. Training, mentioned above, contributes to both—excellent ongoing professional development both supports educators staying in the classroom and makes a district a more appealing place to work. First, the committee recognizes the mass exodus of educators leaving the profession over the last few years. In addition, enrollment in teaching preparation programs has significantly dropped over the last few years. As we seek to rebuild the profession, it is essential that the Mid-Atlantic region is supported through the recruitment of new qualified and trained educators and the retention of our current educators.

Staffing shortages impact class sizes, reduce instructional time for students, and create additional challenges for current educators and administrators. Based on our needs sensing activities, the RAC found that we must recruit more educators into the profession by providing alternative pathways and removing barriers to educator certification. Building on-ramps into the profession can include reimagining apprenticeships and tapping into members of school communities such as paraprofessionals and parents to find a path into the classroom. Moreover, educator recruitment must be done through the lens of diversifying the workforce. Diversifying the workforce is essential, as a diverse student body benefits from diverse perspectives.

Technical assistance is crucial not just for the recruitment of new educators, but also for retaining experienced educators. Based on the committee's needs sensing activities, to support the work of teaching and learning, educators need agency and quality professional development that is aligned with district needs and priorities and is anchored in adult learning theory. Professional learning must also be

differentiated to meet the various needs of the educator workforce. Consequently, equipping educators with culturally responsive teaching techniques supports the diverse population of students that are in our classrooms. Retention for educators means supportive learning opportunities for their continued growth.

Technical Assistance Recommendations

Based on the findings of our data collection, available quantitative data, and discussions during our RAC meetings, we recommend the following technical assistance supports:

- **"Grow Your Own" Programs and Alternative Pathways into the Teaching Profession**: To address the need for the educator recruitment component of this priority, the committee recommends technical assistance in developing, implementing, and evaluating "grow your own" programs—such as those that recruit and prepare community members to teach in their local schools—as well as alternative pathways into the teaching profession, with a particular focus on expanding the racial and cultural diversity of our workforce. Reducing barriers to entry into the teaching profession can also include better alignment of certification requirements and reciprocity across states in our region. The committee encourages approaches or tactics that lower barriers while maintaining the professionalism our stakeholders expect and deserve from educators.

- **Evaluating Educator Preparation Programs**: For educators entering the profession from more traditional educator preparation programs, the committee suggests technical assistance to evaluate what novice educators found beneficial, superfluous, or missing from their educator preparation programs. This feedback can assist regional institutions of higher education in aligning their coursework and experiences more effectively with the requirements of future educators as they enter our region's classrooms. Whether traditional or alternative, technical assistance should prioritize pre-service educator training and learning that focuses on pedagogy, data-driven decision making, and classroom management.

- **Best Practices in Professional Learning Opportunities**: To address the need for the educator retention component of this priority, technical assistance is needed to help LEAs provide differentiated and research-based professional learning opportunities to both new and experienced educators that is specific to the needs and context of their unique district and/or school. These opportunities must be grounded in adult learning theory, address the needs of educators and students of color, and, when proven effective, should be shared across the region.

- **Leveraging Regional Educational Laboratories:** RELs contribute to the growing body of research on how experiences within the nation's education system differ by context and student group, thereby impacting outcomes and identifying potential solutions. The REL can work with LEAs and SEAs on a process for getting best practices to in-service educators efficiently so that they can use the information while also helping them to identify and avoid misinformation about instructional practices. Both pre-service and in-service professional development must be intentional and purposeful in teaching cultural humility and competence.

- **Leverage Existing Knowledge**: To provide meaningful and beneficial support and coaching for novice and training educators, the committee recommends technical assistance that leverages experienced educator knowledge and leadership. Keeping in mind the profession's desired growth and educator retention, if experienced educators assume these roles, the experience should be structured to minimize any excessive burden on the educators we aim to retain. The committee also recommends technical assistance that will assist school district leaders, boards of education, and principals to make decisions that will support their educators in improving student progress and academic success.

- **Data Gathering to Support Educator Retention**: To get a clearer picture as to why educators in our region leave the profession, our regional LEAs and SEAs would also benefit from technical assistance to conduct meaningful exit interviews and gather related data through existing systems of data collection. The committee recommends that the REL provide activities that disseminate information about ways to improve the mental health of educators to support and retain them. Examining ways to provide educators with adequate time to prepare for and reflect upon their work with students should be considered to improve educator retention and outcomes for students.

Conclusion

The Mid-Atlantic RAC wholeheartedly believes that the three priorities laid out in this report are not just important, but necessary for the region's states and districts to provide all students with a high-quality education. While this report lays out recommendations within the categories of Academic Performance for the Region's Students, Services to English Learners, and the Educator Workforce, in reality much of the most impactful technical assistance that could come from the U.S. Department of Education will weave together the recommendations for all the categories. When the Mid-Atlantic States can provide high-quality, ongoing professional development on evidence-based approaches to academic subjects, as well as on identifying and supporting special populations like English learners, educators will have an easier time providing appropriate services and helping students learn across subject areas. When ELs are correctly identified and supported, it will be easier for educators to know which students need what kinds of supports. When evidence-based practices are deeply incorporated within classrooms, students will achieve more and educators will have higher job satisfaction. None of these priorities occurs in a vacuum.

This committee recognizes that many educators, school leaders, parents, school boards, community members, nonprofit organizations and others have been engaged deeply in this work across the Mid-Atlantic region for many years. Moreover, this committee understands there are many competing priorities that demand our collective attention and resources. It is the committee's strong belief that these three areas are particularly well-suited to technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Education, as well as to potential regional efforts. Some of the recommendations around the educator workforce, for example, involve data collection and analysis that could take place at a regional level so that all states and districts within the Mid-Atlantic region might benefit from knowledge about when and why educators leave the workforce.

Finally, it is worth noting that technological advances have created exciting opportunities to address the priorities discussed within this report. Those may include native-language virtual tutoring; the development of regional or state-level professional development that can be implemented online; and data systems that allow for the collection of more, and more standardized, data to address remaining open questions identified through the Mid-Atlantic RAC's need-sensing process. Technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Education will also be valuable in helping states, districts, and schools decide when technology is most helpful, how to select between the many tools available, and what types of equity or other considerations are important in this area.

When Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania are all able to make significant strides on incorporating evidence-based strategies for instruction, supporting English Learners, and recruiting and retaining a high-quality workforce, students, families, and communities across the Mid-Atlantic will be significantly stronger. This is difficult but essential work, and this committee is proud to play a small role.

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Appendix A. Chart of Nominated, Recommended, and Serving RAC Members

Number of Individuals Nominated, Recommended, and Serving on the Mid-Atlantic RAC

Region	Nominated	Recommended by the U.S. Department of Education	Declined	Resigned	Accepted, Serving
Mid-Atlantic	27	14	0	3	11

Appendix B. List of RAC Members

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 include:

Regional Chair

- Ms. Liz Cohen, Policy Director, FutureEd at Georgetown University

RAC Members

- Ms. Nora Durant, Teacher, William C. Lewis Dual Language Elementary School
- Mr. Theodore Dwyer, Chief Accountability Officer, Data, Research, Assessment, and Accountability, Pittsburgh City Schools
- Ms. Amaya Garcia, Deputy Director, PreK-12, New America
- Dr. Megan Gierka, Senior Content Developer, AIM Institute for Learning & Research
- Ms. Rochanda Hiligh-Thomas, Executive Director, Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.
- Ms. Cassandra L. Johnson, Regional Support Team Lead, New Jersey Department of Education
- Ms. Deborah Lynam, Education Consultant (to NJ Dept. of Education)
- Ms. Elizabeth Raff, Elementary Learning Facilitator, Penn Manor School District
- Ms. Jahsha Tabron, Special Education Teacher, Brandywine High School
- Ms. Tamieka Thomasson, Program Manager/ Program Coordinator, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Service

Appendix C. Mid-Atlantic Profile (Comprehensive)

The following profile shows recent data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education for the Mid-Atlantic Region, which includes the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Data for each state is included along with high-level data comparing information across the regions. The following topic areas are included:

- Information about Districts and Schools
- Student Enrollment Information
- Graduation Information
- Student Academic Information
- Student Non-Academic Information
- Teacher Information
- Teacher Qualifications
- Teacher Shortages
- Financial Resources
- Resources

Note that data includes the most recent tables available in July 2023. In some instances, data have not been disaggregated by jurisdiction so national data have been included as a reference point. Where appropriate, Reflection Questions have been provided for consideration.

Overall Reflection Questions

- What is your overall reaction to the data presented?
  - *Is it what you expected?*
  - *If it was not what you expected, what surprised you?*
- What other data do you need to help you better understand the needs in your jurisdiction or region?
- Are the data available at the state level or do you have access to this data through another vehicle?
- How can the needs assessment help you attain this data?
- What do you believe are the top priorities facing your jurisdiction/region?
- Why do you believe these are the top priorities facing your jurisdiction?
- What input would you like to hear from other stakeholders?
- How will you collect that input?

Information about Mid-Atlantic Region Districts and Schools

Totals by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Total Number of Operating Districts (2020-21)	Total Number of Operating Public Schools (2020-21)	Total Number of Charter Schools (2020-21)	Total Number of Private Schools (Fall 2019)
District of Columbia	68	235	119	70
Delaware	45	225	23	140!
Maryland	25	1,421	47	700
New Jersey	701	2,565	87	1,070
Pennsylvania	787	2,947	177	2,460

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

Note 1: Profiles were prepared using the most recent publicly available data. The most recent set of private school data provided was fall 2019, whereas the tables used for reporting the districts and public/charter school data were updated for the 2020-21 school year.

Note 2: Operating schools/districts include all those providing services at the start of the reported school year.

Student Enrollment Information

Jurisdiction	Total Public School Enrollment (Fall 2019)	Public PreK-8 Enrollment (Fall 2021)	Public Grades 9-12 Enrollment (Fall 2021)	Enrollment in Private Schools
District of Columbia	88,908	68,940	19,968	16,100
Delaware	139,935	95,876	44,059	24,390
Maryland	881,461	610,399	292,743	149,600
New Jersey	1,372,381	946,529	425,852	196,960
Pennsylvania	1,695,092	1,145,719	549,373	283,980

Note: Public schools include traditional public and charter schools.

3–5-year-old Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (% distribution by race/ethnicity) (2021)

Jurisdiction	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native	Two or More Races
District of Columbia	79.3%	83.1%	79.8%	++	++	++	++	++
Delaware	55.8%	60.6%	58.4%	37.2%	++	++	++	++
Maryland	50.7%	54.1%	50.7%	45.8%	42.0%	++	++	53.1%
New Jersey	63.6%	66.4%	62.9%	61.1%	59.7%	++	++	63.7%
Pennsylvania	50.1%	52.8%	50.8%	41.7%	27.9%	++	++	49.1%

++Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

Note: Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native did not meet reporting standards. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate, or the CV is 50 percent or greater.

Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (% distribution by total) (Fall 2021)

Jurisdiction	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Two or More Races
District of Columbia	13.1%	65.0%	17.2%	1.5%	0.1%	0.1%	3.1%
Delaware	41.6%	30.3%	18.5%	4.2%	0.2%	0.4%	4.9%
Maryland	33.9%	33.2%	20.7%	6.7%	0.1%	0.3%	5.1%
New Jersey	39.6%	14.9%	32.1%	10.2%	0.2%	0.2%	2.8%
Pennsylvania	62.3%	14.5%	13.7%	4.3%	0.1%	0.2%	4.9%

Number of Students by School Locale (Fall 2019)

Jurisdiction	City	Suburban	Town	Rural
District of Columbia	89,011	+	+	+
Delaware	17,969	70,283	22,366	29,312
Maryland	178,872	574,672	31,651	124,209
New Jersey	156,539	1,084,670	27,083	106,996
Pennsylvania	366,323	884,823	135,710	90,682

+Not applicable.

English Language Learners (Fall 2020)

Jurisdiction	Total	Percentage of Total Enrollment
United States	4,963,388	10.3%
District of Columbia	9,347	12.0%
Delaware	14,581	10.7%
Maryland	88,834	10.3%
New Jersey	95,042	7.2%
Pennsylvania	71,571	4.2%

Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (2019–2020)[a]

Jurisdiction	Total	Percentage of Total Enrollment
United States	26,000,645[a]	52.1%[a]
District of Columbia	67,688[b,c]	76.4%[b,c]
Delaware	39,635b	28.3%[c]
Maryland	381,913	42.0%
New Jersey	523,960	38.2%
Pennsylvania	782,049	50.7%

[a] For the United States data, total includes imputation for nonreporting states.

[b] This state reported only the count of students who were eligible based on direct certification. Direct certification is the process by which children are certified for free meals based on household participation in one or more means-tested federal assistance programs—such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—without the need for a household application.

[c] Imputation for survey nonresponse. State-level imputations for 2017-18 through 2019-20 were based on the reported percentages for 2015-16 (the most recent year for which percentages were reported) applied to the 2017-2018 through 2019-20 enrollments.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – District of Columbia

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	0	18	461	145	3	287	75
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	5	7	805	268	0	106	20
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	X	9	10,513	2,118	X	767	242

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Delaware

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	5	40	221	184	X	497	X
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	9	111	520	312	4	1,064	64
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	75	370	8,262	3,845	19	9,029	988

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Maryland

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	5	386	2,217	1,303	9	2,891	419
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	22	581	3,379	1,981	11	3,617	492
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	253	3,403	41,136	17,305	101	33,982	4,681

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – New Jersey

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	9	876	1,360	4,357	8	4,936	494
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	26	1,158	1,470	4,574	28	5,785	400
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	310	10,323	37,406	66,438	296	104,065	5,155

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Pennsylvania

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	33	588	2,576	2,767	10	12,000	1,751
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	68	986	4,504	4,495	11	17,865	2,024
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	588	5,533	54,262	43,223	210	188,902	16,042

Student Enrollment Reflection Questions

- Based on the number of students by school locale, where are the majority of your students located?
- Looking at the enrollment distribution by race percentages, how diverse is your student population?
- How does the percentage of students qualifying as ELs in your jurisdiction compare to the overall percentage of ELs throughout the United States?
- How does the percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) in your jurisdiction compare to the overall percentage of students qualifying for FRPL throughout the United States?

Graduation Information[b, c]

Demographic	United States	District of Columbia	Delaware	Maryland	New Jersey	Pennsylvania
Total ACGR for all Students	87%	73%	89%	87%	91%	87%
Percent Students with Disabilities (2019-2020)	71%	56%	73%	69%	80%	73%
Percent English Learner (2019-2020)	71%	56%	76%	56%	73%	69%
Percent Economically Disadvantaged (2019-2020)	81%	62%	82%	79%	85%	80%
Homeless Enrolled (2019-2020)	Not Available	55%	73%	66%	74%	70%
Foster Care (2019-2020)	Not Available	53%	74%	50%	55%	56%
Private High School Graduates (2018-2019)	340,610	1,390	1,300	10,500	13,430	18,130

ACGR by Race/Ethnicity % (2019-2020)[g]

Jurisdiction	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Two or More Races
District of Columbia	93%	73%	64%	88%	>=50%	>=90%
Delaware	91%	87%	86%	95%	83%	89%
Maryland	94%	85%	72%	96%	87%	92%
New Jersey	95%	86%	85%	97%	89%	92%
Pennsylvania	91%	77%	77%	93%	78%	81%

[b] Numbers are the public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by selected student characteristics for 2019-2020.

[c] The time when students are identified as having certain characteristics varies by state. Depending on the state, a student may be included in a category if the relevant characteristic is reported in 9th-grade data, if the characteristic is reported in 12-grade data, or if it is reported at any point during the student's high school years.

[d] Students who met the state criteria for classification as economically disadvantaged.

[e] Students who meet the definition of English Learners as outlined in the Department of Education EDFacts workbook. For more information, see EDFacts Workbook.

[f] Students identified as children with disabilities under the IDEA.

[g] States either report data for a combined "Asian/Pacific Islander" group or report the "Asian" and "Pacific Islander" groups separately. Total represents either a single value reported by the state for "Asian/Pacific Islander" or an aggregation of separate values reported for "Asian" and "Pacific Islander." "Asian/Pacific Islander" includes the "Filipino" group. Number represent the Total reported Asian/Pacific Islander.

Student Academic Information

To compare students nationally, we have provided results from the 4th and 8th grade math and reading National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results. NAEP—a congressionally mandated large-scale assessment administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)—consists of print and digital assessments in various subject areas. Three of these subjects—mathematics, reading, and science—are assessed most frequently and reported at the State and select district level, usually for grades 4 and 8. The Nation's Report Card provides results on student performance based on gender, race/ethnicity, public or nonpublic school, teacher experience, and hundreds of other factors.

NAEP assessment results are reported as average scores on a 0-500 scale (reading, mathematics at grades 4 and 8, U.S. history, and geography) or on a 0-300 scale (mathematics at grade 12, science, writing, technology and engineering literacy, and civics). These scale scores, derived from student responses to assessment questions, summarize the overall level of performance attained by that student. Scale scores for individual students are not reported, but summary statistics describing scale scores for groups of students (demographic, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) are reported. More information about NAEP can be found at https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/.

Academic Achievement: NAEP (2022) National and State Averages

Jurisdiction	4th Grade Math	4th Grade Reading	8th Grade Math	8th Grade Reading
United States	235	216	273	259
District of Columbia	223	207	260	250
Delaware	226	208	264	253
Maryland	229	212	269	259
New Jersey	239	223	281	270
Pennsylvania	238	219	274	259

Non-Academic Information

Non-academic factors for students include suspension and expulsion rates. Additionally, the most recently reported data regarding students who have carried firearms to schools and have experienced bullying (both on school property and electronically) have been included.

Percentage of Students Suspended or Expelled from Public Elementary and Secondary Schools by Gender and Ethnicity (2017–2018)[i]

Percent who Received Out-of-School Suspensions[j]

Demographic	United States	District of Columbia	Delaware	Maryland	New Jersey	Pennsylvania
Total	5.0%	7.9%	8.3%	4.4%	4.2%	5.5%
Male	6.8%	9.8%	10.9%	5.9%	5.6%	7.3%
Female	3.0%	5.9%	5.6%	2.8%	2.6%	3.5%
White	3.4%	0.8%	4.9%	2.6%	2.2%	3.2%
Black	12.3%	10.5%	15.5%	7.4%	11.2%	14.8%
Hispanic	4.0%	3.1%	5.9%	2.8%	4.4%	7.5%
Asian	1.0%	0.5%	1.2%	0.7%	0.8%	1.1%
Pacific Islander	4.9%	0.0%	4.0%	3.2%	2.1%	3.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	6.9%	2.0%	7.4%	4.0%	3.2%	6.3%
Two or More Races	5.5%	1.7%	9.0%	4.3%	3.5%	7.0%

Percent Expelled[k]

Demographic	United States	District of Columbia	Delaware	Maryland	New Jersey	Pennsylvania
Total	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Male	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Female	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
White	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Black	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Hispanic	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Two or More Races	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%

[i]Data by race/ethnicity excludes students with disabilities served only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (i.e., those not receiving services under IDEA).

[j]An out-of-school suspension is an instance in which a student is temporarily removed from his or her regular school (either in person or virtual) for disciplinary purposes for at least half a day (but less than the remainder of the school year) to another setting (e.g., home or behavior center). Out-of-school suspensions include removals with or without the continuation of educational services.

[k]Expulsions are actions taken by a local education agency to remove a student from his or her regular school (either in person or virtual) for disciplinary purposes, with or without the continuation of education services, for the remainder of the school year or longer, in accordance with local education agency policy. Expulsions also include removals resulting from violations of the Gun Free Schools Act that are modified to less than 365 days.

Firearms (2019-2020)

Jurisdiction	Total Number of Students Who Brought Firearms to or Possessed Firearms at School	Number of Students Who did this per 100,000 Students, Enrolled
United States	2,431	4.8
District of Columbia	14	15.6
Delaware	7	5.0
Maryland	13	1.4
New Jersey	6	0.4
Pennsylvania	17	1.0

Bullying (2017)

Jurisdiction	Percentage of Public School Students Bullied on School Property[l]	Percentage of Public School Students Electronically Bullied[m]
United States	19.0%	14.9%
District of Columbia	11.5%	8.9%
Delaware	14.1%	10.1%
Maryland	18.2%	14.1%
New Jersey	Not available	Not available
Pennsylvania	21.7%	17.3%

[l]Bullying was defined for respondents as "when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again." "On school property" was not defined for survey respondents.

[m]Includes "being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting" for 2011 through 2015, and "being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media" for 2017.

Student Non-Academic Factors Reflection Questions
- What policies are in place to address recent issues of school violence?
- How does your state compare to the national average? Is this a number you would like to change? What other information do you need to make an informed decision about this issue?

Teacher Information

Jurisdiction	Total Number of Public School Teachers (Fall 2019)	Pupil/Teacher Ratio (Fall 2020)	Teachers in Private Schools
District of Columbia	7,409	12.1	1,930
Delaware	9,747	14.4	2,120
Maryland	61,485	14.8	14,420
New Jersey	117,060	12.1	19,010
Pennsylvania	124,294	13.9	25,280

Teacher Qualifications

The following table includes the highest degree earned and years of full-time teaching experience by state and United States. Data from the 2011-2012 academic year was the latest data reported at the national level.

Jurisdiction	Degree Levels, Percentage - Less than Bachelor's (2011-2012)	Degree Levels, Percentage - Bachelor's (2011-2012)	Degree Levels, Percentage - Master's (2011-2012)	Degree Levels, Percentage - Education Specialist or Doctor's (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience - Less than 3 (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience - 3 to 9 (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience – 10 to 20 (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience - Over 20 (2011-2012)
United States	3.8%	39.9%	47.7%	8.7%	9.0%	33.3%	36.4%	21.3%
District of Columbia	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++
Delaware	4.0%!	34.5%	49.7%	11.8%	12.6%	35.0%	33.8%	18.6%
Maryland	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++
New Jersey	3.0%	48.5%	40.8%	7.6%	7.3%	35.4%	37.4%	20.0%
Pennsylvania	4.5%!	32.9%	53.9%	8.7%	6.2%	37.0%	35.8%	21.0%

++Reporting standards not met. Data may be suppressed because the response rate is under 50 percent, there are too few cases for a reliable estimate, or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

!Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

Number and Percentage Distribution of Teachers Enrolled in Traditional and Alternative Programs

Jurisdiction	Number Enrolled in a Teacher Preparation Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Enrollment by Traditional Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Enrollment by Alternative Program- (Institute of Higher Education [IHE]) (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Enrollment by Enrolled in an Alternative Program- (Not IHE based) (2019-2020)
United States	590,046	69.9%	8.3%	21.9%
District of Columbia	3,205	18.4%	65.5%	16.0%
Delaware	2,726	82.9	16.1%	1.0%
Maryland	6,037	84.5%	0.0%	15.5%
New Jersey	10,051	78.5%	17.5%	4.0%
Pennsylvania	18,900	96.1%	2.2%	1.7%

Number and Percentage Distribution of Teachers Who Completed Traditional and Alternative Programs

Jurisdiction	Number Completed a Teacher Preparation Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Completers in Traditional Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Completers in an Alternative Program- (IHE based) (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Completers in an Alternative Program- (Not IHE based) (2019-2020)
United States	151,138	76.8%	11.4%	11.8%
District of Columbia	1,361	13.3%	73.0%	13.7%
Delaware	425	85.2%	12.7%	2.1%
Maryland	1,902	83.6%	0.0%	16.4%
New Jersey	3,017	77.0%	21.4%	1.6%
Pennsylvania	5,553	94.5%	3.4%%	2.1%

Teacher Information Reflection Questions
- Given national issues of teacher shortages, where are the priority areas in your state?
- What teacher preparation institutions or alternative programs does your state offer? Are these programs going to fulfill your educator needs in the next 5 years?

Financial Resources by State

Description	District of Columbia	Delaware	Maryland	New Jersey	Pennsylvania
Revenue sources for public elementary and secondary education - Federal (In thousands) (FY 2021)	$289,214	$211,068	$1,215,926	$1,899,244	$3,265,898
Revenue sources for public elementary and secondary education – State (In thousands) (FY 2021)	+	$1,747,079	$7,620,541	$16,224,441	$13,056,288
Revenue sources for public elementary and secondary education – Local (In thousands) (FY 2021)	$815,619	$815,619	$8,699,638	$17,546,094	$18,860,248
Amounts and percentage changes of inflation-adjusted state, local, and federal revenues per pupil (FY2021)	$32,119	$20,086	$19,870	$25,961	$20,642
Percentage change from FY20-21	4.4%	3.9%	3.8%	6.4%	2.7%
Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education by function, and subfunction - Total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	$2,257,263	$2,290,819	$14,890,629	$31,304,354	$30,375,252
Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education by function, and subfunction - Instruction (In thousands) (FY2021)	$1,134,852	$1,305,812	$9,741,442	$18,963,320	$18,908,664
Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education by function, and subfunction -Support Services (In thousands) (FY2021)	$1,084,055	$922,782	$4,869,182	$11,661,517	$10,585,585
Current expenditures per pupil - Total (In thousands) (FY2021)	$25,113	$16,589	$16,873	$22,784	$17,822
Title I expenditures per pupil - (In thousands) (FY2021)	$483	$364	$279	$268	$365
Salaries and wages, and employee benefits for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction - Total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	$2,257,263	$2,290,819	$14,890,629	$31,304,354	$30,375,252

Description	District of Columbia	Delaware	Maryland	New Jersey	Pennsylvania
Salaries and wages, and employee benefits for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction - Instruction and Instruction-related total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	$1,239,134	$1,396,857	$10,458,127	$20,264,726	$20,056,394
Salaries and wages, and employee benefits for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction -Support Services Total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	$979,773	$831,738	$4,152,497	$10,360,112	$9,437,855

+Not applicable.

Financial Resources Reflection Questions

- Looking at the subfunction allocations, are expenditures allocated proportionately in the correct places?
- How do educator salaries in your state compare to other professional careers?

Appendix D: Summary of Stakeholder Input

Data Source	# of Responses	Time Period	Topics by Category
Public comments	82	August 18 to October 13, 2023	• Attention to students' academic needs • Attention to needs of special subgroups • Supports for teachers • Attention to student and teacher overall well-being • Other needs such as better pay for educators and safer schools
REL Governing Board	1	September 15 to October 15, 2023	• Data collection and analysis processes to inform actionable instructional decision making for all students, including underserved populations, drawing on information available about best practices
Governor	2	September 15 to October 15, 2023	• Need to improve elementary students' literacy proficiency rates drawing on the "science of reading" • Data collection and analysis processes to inform actionable instructional decision making for all students, including underserved populations, drawing on information available about best practices

In addition to public comments, members of the Mid-Atlantic RAC conducted four data collection activities of their own: three focus groups and one survey. The following portrays the dates, participants, and general findings of their efforts:

- **Focus Group 1** with five members (a superintendent, a high school principal, a high school teacher, a substitute and assessment coordinator, a member of the United Federation of Teachers leadership) met on October 24, 2023. They concluded that a major need is for professional development that is grounded in evidence-based practices, especially around the "science of reading."

- **Focus Group 2**, comprised of six former and current teachers of the year and one award winning teacher from the Mid-Atlantic region, met on October 26, 2023. They emphasized, as well, the need for high-quality professional development for teachers focused on helping them understand evidence-based, classroom practices to meet the needs of diverse groups of students and to help teachers align their practice with the district curriculum, implementation, coaching, family engagement, and data systems.

- **Focus Group 3**, including three teachers, a special education coordinator, a school counselor, and an administrative intern, met on October 26, 2023. They defined a need for professional development that is differentiated and tied to more comprehensive, system-wide initiatives like job-embedded coaching or residency experiences.

The survey compiled responses from interviews with two school district staff members and two members of a policy organization between October 5 and October 13, 2023. Their responses highlighted the importance of in-service professional development that is differentiated to specific educational roles such as teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and helps educators translate research into effective classroom practice and assessment.