**Federal Programs to Support School Improvement**
**Workgroup Meeting Notes**
**Workgroup Leaders: Debbie Gay and Leigh Ann Putnam**
**July 19, 2016**

Introductions were done.  Committee members shared their interest and purpose for participation in the workgroup.

This workgroup will play a role in making recommendations for the methodology and elements used to identify Comprehensive and Targeted schools who will be eligible for support.  Additionally to discuss and recommend school improvement activity.

 **Critical Questions:**
**How will the ESSA work with local communities?** An important aspect of the work going forward will be to understand and establish protocols for complimenting improvement activities underway in the local communities.
**What will the evidence-based practices be**?  Each district has different demographics and dynamics and the SEA must focus on evidence based practices for improvement matched to the uniqueness of each local school district.

**How do the streams of funding work together to provide services to students?** The federal program conference held in June 2016, provoked thought and conversation about why federal dollars are provided.  We must be equitable in services to all students. The ESSA must be studied to understand the new flexibility in terms of allowable and unallowable spending.

**How do we align with the State Strategic Plan?**
Brainstorming Activity –
Workgroup member responses:
**What has worked in improving outcomes for children**?
- There are things that "Sig"  has done (leadership, professional development)
    - We recognize that there is not a one size fit all view of districts and schools.  The work that has been done in the districts and schools has reflected this.
    - There will be a fifth cohort of 6 schools in the Sig grant.  There is one cohort that will be a Georgia grown Sig model.  Georgia has created a vertical model. Funding will support schools that feed into the Sig schools (elementary, middle and high).  Consider how we can look at feeder patterns in the new work of this committee.
    - Feeder patterns provide opportunities to create stakeholders from all groups.
- We look at the child holistically. We have been innovative, flexible and autonomous.  We are growing in our ability to think outside the box.
- For students with the most significant support needs: instilling high expectations.  Not limiting the students' potential.
- Looking at subgroups to determine support needs.
- We have been able to use data to establish career tech and other programs
- District personnel and state personnel are collaborating and working together. Focus is on supporting district work.
- Historically, School Improvement was about the school.  However, there has been a shift to putting efforts at the district level to create functional districts.

- Focus on positive things and examples as opposed to having negative interactions with districts.
- Putting processes and structures in place to support the work on the ground that utilizes a data driven processes.
- The Public has more information on how schools and districts are doing. There is consistency in the reporting.
- Competency mastery.

**What has not worked (What might we change)?**
- Accountability committee and measures of CCRPI, grading system has caused a negative focus on certain subgroups.
- We need to use what successful schools are doing to drive change for those who need assistance. Collaborate to determine what might work for other schools. Schools need to work together. Avoid competition; promote collaboration.
- Layering initiatives on top of one another. Multiple initiatives/competing initiatives. Competition to meet different needs of the laws.
- Alignment and make data more easily accessible
- Stop telling district how to do things. Show how things can work together and let them make the decisions.
- Data is great, but the quality of the data is questionable. Focusing on short term gains and grades; not the long term impact.
- Data is used superficially. No deep analysis to determine what is actually causal.
- Districts struggle with spending their money. They are returning large quantities of money. We need to assist them to spend their money in a constructive and student productive way. Draw down is a significant issues for those with large amounts of money from many pots.
- Limitation on spending causes issues with drawing down money responsibly.
- Timelines are a barrier to spending. Need more timely allocation to support appropriate spending.
- Need to build more capacity to look across all areas in creating budgets.

**Another critical question, "How do we support local stakeholder engagement?" How do we build good community stakeholder engagement?'**
- Consider having advocates on the governing boards to support those teams.
- The whole community means parent, business.
- Engaging parents in the schools through meaningful activity .
- A lot of research around authentic engagement. We must use this to get to the education of the whole child as the work of the community.
- We must help districts to understand the work and get them to make a plan. Giving everyone a role and how they can contribute is critical to the engagement.
- Businesses are closed in communities. Education can help with the community economic base. We have a lot of things happening in curriculum that focuses on bringing businesses back.

**In summary:** We must do a lot of work on informing the community so they are knowledgeable about the issues. We need to help them to shift their focus to the important targets in education based on information and knowledge in order to advocate for those things that will bring needed changes to the district with long term impact.

Meeting Adjourned