

Key Decision Point in ESSA	Early Learning Work Group Alabama Recommendation
<p>2. States must identify a strategy for promoting PreK-3rd grade alignment and supporting district and elementary school capacity building focused on the following early learning areas including:</p>	<p>2. The work group recommends continued alignment and expansion of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) framework for opportunities to coordinate services between state agencies.</p>
<p>2 a. Educator effectiveness; educator effectiveness; ESSA allows state and district Title IIA (PD) and Title III (EL) funds may be used for PD of early childhood providers. (XVIII) where practicable, provide jointly for school staff and other early childhood education program providers, to address the transition to elementary school, including school readiness</p>	<p>2 a. The work group recommends that Title II A and Title III PD funds (state set aside portions of funds) be used for training elementary administrators and teachers on developmentally appropriate practice for early childhood programs, ELLs in early childhood programs, and special education in early childhood programs.</p>
<p>2 b. Instructional tools (standards, curriculum, and assessments);</p>	<p>2 b. The work group recommends that the ALSDE partner with the community college system and higher ed. to explore course and program standards to determine if aligned with NAEYC requirements. Crosswalk NAEYC standards with existing curriculum to identify gaps.</p> <p>The work group recommends implementation of the Alabama First Class Pre K framework as an instructional tool for pre-K programs. (Curriculum content is comprehensively presented and reinforced with intentional teaching strategies for pre-K teachers. Curricula is embedded into the Alabama First Class Pre-K Reflective Coaching Model that includes effective teaching practices, curriculum content, and professional development.)</p>
<p>2 c. Learning environments (culturally inclusive, promoting relationships, and structured to support diverse learners);</p>	<p>2 c. The work group recommends support age-appropriate, evidence-based practices for use in prekindergarten through third grade classrooms.</p>

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<p>2 d. Data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data);</p>	<p>2 d. The work group recommends that Alabama’s plan supports and strengthens data infrastructure to enable transfer of children’s information and school reports from early education programs to elementary programs; and coordinates with local early childhood programs and Alabama’s First Class Pre-K classrooms.</p> <p>The work group also recommends that the ALSDE expand efforts to utilize the information provided to educators from the Pre-K assessments and KEA to measure progress and provide feedback to early learning educators. It is recommended that schools utilize Pre-K assessment results for School Improvement Planning and for goal-setting for the Pre-K to kindergarten transition component of School Improvement Plans.</p>
<p>2 e. Family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making);</p>	<p>2 e. The work group recommends that families and staff are connected with relevant community partners, such as early childhood mental health consultants, connecting with Family Resource Centers and adopting the Strengthening Families framework as an effective way to engage families.</p> <p>The work group recommends ALSDE Special Education Services continue to use the Alabama Parent Education Center (APEC), the Alabama’s Parent Training and Information (PTI), as well as Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to promote parent and family engagement</p>

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2 f. Continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, preK-3 pathway);	2 f. The work group recommends as ALSDE and ADECE develops and implements strategies to ensure that every child, especially those most at risk for school failure, has access to a continuity of services and a clear pathway of high-quality education from pre-K through 3 rd grade.
2 g. Cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and,	2 g. The work group recommends establishing and supporting a collaborative (cross-organizational and cross-sector) study to identify decision-making roles and responsibilities among partners to support PreK-3rd efforts.
2 h. Administration/leader effectiveness.	2 h. The work group recommends that ALSDE and ADECE provide training for the building principal where the Pre-K First Class classroom is located, as well as, administrators serving PreK-3 populations.

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3. States must identify a strategy or strategies for helping districts and elementary schools satisfy the Head Start program’s performance standards, including providing technical assistance for district/school leaders, teachers, and other learning professionals.	3. The work group recommends using the Alabama First Class Pre-K Model guidance to meet the Head Start requirements (through the current Preschool Development Grant program design).
4. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools implement curricula aligned to the state’s early learning standards.	<p>4. The work group recommends the expansion of the CTE early childhood education program for high school students offering a CDA as a credential. Discuss with Superintendents and CTE Administrators the partnership opportunities available of utilizing the Pre-K First Class classroom as the observation/laboratory setting for the high school program.</p> <p>The work group recommends the implementation the Alabama First Class Pre K framework. (Curriculum content is comprehensively presented and reinforced with intentional teaching strategies for pre-K teachers. Curricula is embedded into the Alabama Reflective Coaching Model that includes effective teaching practices, curriculum content, and professional development.)</p>
5. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and meet the state’s quality indicators for early learning, if any.	5. The work group recommends that all Alabama school- based Pre-K programs become Alabama’s First Class Pre-K sites and adhere to approved performance standards and guidelines.
6. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and meet the state’s k-2 accountability indicators, if any	6. The work group recommends providing guidance to LEAs about how lack of access to early childhood programs and/ or low quality Pre-K could relate to indicators of school at risk of failure.

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<p>7. States must identify a strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and use preschool and early elementary assessments that are developmentally appropriate and aligned to state learning standards to assess school readiness, if any.</p>	<p>7. The work group recommends that Alabama determine the Pre-K assessment that will be used as baseline information for determining the progress and growth made by students in kindergarten and in later grades.</p> <p>Extend as a consistent measure and reporting system of readiness that aligns with the Teaching Strategies GOLD used for classroom instruction that provides formative assessment information for teachers, that facilitates longitudinal studies of program results, and that enables evaluation and comparability measures to be consistent in all Alabama First Class Pre-K programs.</p>
<p>8. The Title I state plan must also be coordinated with programs under the Head Start Act and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (Sec 1111(a)(1)(B)</p>	<p>8. The work group recommends that technical assistance to school systems be provided from the Department of Early Childhood Education regarding the availability and use of ESSA funds for serving pre-Kindergarten children (e.g., Title I, Title II, and Title II); creating quality preschool programs; Head Start requirements and other related information for high quality preschool education.</p> <p>The work group recommends using the Alabama First Class Pre-K Model guidance to meet the Head Start requirements (through the current Preschool Development Grant program design).</p>

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<p>9. States must develop a strategic plan for collaboration, coordination, and quality improvements among existing programs and state and local agencies.</p>	<p>9. The work group recommends the inclusion of the following items for Alabama’s ESSA plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to host summits with ALSDE, DECE, 2-year community college system, and higher education stakeholders to collaborate and align programs that provide educational training, certifications, and degrees, ultimately creating a pipeline of workers for the early learning career pathway. • ALSDE and ADECE should continue the monthly Pre-K Collaboration meetings and extend invitations to participate to additional partner groups. Such groups may include VOICES for Alabama’s Children, Alabama School Readiness Alliance, Alabama Department of Human Resources and Alabama Department of Public Health. In addition to monthly meetings, the Pre-K Collaboration group will continue to host summits around topics of interest and importance to the state. The group will also meet regularly with the two-year community college system and higher education stakeholders to collaborate and align programs that provide educational training, certifications and degrees, ultimately creating a pipeline of workers into the early learning career pathway. ALSDE, DECE, partner groups and local education agencies will work with two and four year colleges on streamlining the articulation agreements and coursework leading to an associate’s degree and/or a four-year degree. • ALSDE and DECE should coordinate PD, technical assistance and trainings offered to LEAs and schools.