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States Focus on Equitable Education Systems

How can states ensure that all students have access to equitable education systems? What do the data show regarding challenges faced in specific states? What strategies are recommended for improving equity for underserved students, such as English learners (ELs), students with disabilities, students of color, and others? Over 100 educators, leaders, and policymakers convened to address these questions and explore other relevant topics during the [SECC Equity Summit—Accountable Leadership: Opportunities for Equitable Systems](#). The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) at American Institutes for Research (AIR) hosted the regional summit November 28–29, 2018, in Jackson, Mississippi.

To help participants understand the historical context of educational, economic, and civic inequities, several pre-summit activities were offered November 25–28: the [Civil Rights Learning Journey](#) (from Jackson, Mississippi, to Birmingham Alabama); a tour of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians community; a historical tour of [Jackson State University](#); and a visit to the [Mississippi Civil Rights Museum](#). For the Civil Rights Learning Journey, 10 equity champions—including an instructional review coach, a recruiter, and a director of secondary schools—participated and shared their experiences via video interviews. Equity champions are state education agency (SEA) personnel nominated by agency leadership to lead the post-summit equity work and advance equity within their states.



Summit representation included experts from preK–20 education systems as well as from organizations that support those systems: Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District, Meridian Public School District, Mississippi Department of Education, AIR, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Education Trust (EdTrust), National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), National Council of State

Legislatures (NCSL), New Orleans Youth Alliance, and RMC Research Corporation. The panel session members pictured are national collaborators representing NCSL, NASBE, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, EdTrust, and CCSSO. The summit included plenary, work, and state team sessions that provided key information and data on challenges impacting equity as well as strategies for addressing them. Equity teams from Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Michigan began work on their draft equity plans, which they are continuing to develop with ongoing assistance from SECC.

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Project Spotlight: Alabama Professional Learning Commission

The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) is supporting the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) with co-development of a framework for establishing a statewide system of support (SSOS) for professional learning (PL). SECC staff are collaborating with state staff from across the agency and members of the Alabama Professional Learning Commission (APLC) to examine PL being provided to districts and

schools and to devise a cohesive framework for providing PL opportunities to educators throughout the state.

SECC assisted with the development of a professional learning survey; supported data collection, analysis, and reporting; and provided PL resources to inform the commission's framework. Once the draft survey was finalized, SECC and ALSDE held a virtual meeting with APLC members to gather their feedback and input. In January, the team disseminated the survey, which will close in early February. The SECC will report survey results at an on-site meeting with APLC in February and will provide resources on current approaches to statewide PL systems of support so the commission can move forward with developing its own framework.

Through this work, SECC will help ALSDE achieve (1) increased state and local education agency knowledge of evidence-based school improvement strategies and materials in the state's most challenged schools and districts, (2) agency consensus on the elements of an SSOS plan, (3) a structured system for providing support to low-performing districts and schools, and (4) improved processes for monitoring the effective implementation of the SSOS for low-performing schools. To learn more about SECC project work with the states in its region, visit [Overviews By State](#).

Upcoming Events

North Carolina Association for Middle Level Education (NCMLE) Annual Conference—Keys to Success: Unlocking Middle School Achievement March 3–5, 2019

Koury Convention Center, Greensboro, North Carolina

The NCMLE will provide over 100 hour-long interest sessions on a broad variety of topics relevant to middle-level education during its annual conference.

[Event site](#)

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