

ESSA LISTENING TOUR REPORT



LOUISIANA'S EDUCATION PLAN AND THE FEDERAL EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document informs parents, educators, and other education stakeholders about Louisiana's plan for elementary and secondary education, outlines the requirements and opportunities afforded by the new federal ESSA, documents input received thus far in public meetings held throughout the state, and identifies ways in which readers can offer input into the development of Louisiana's long-term education plan.

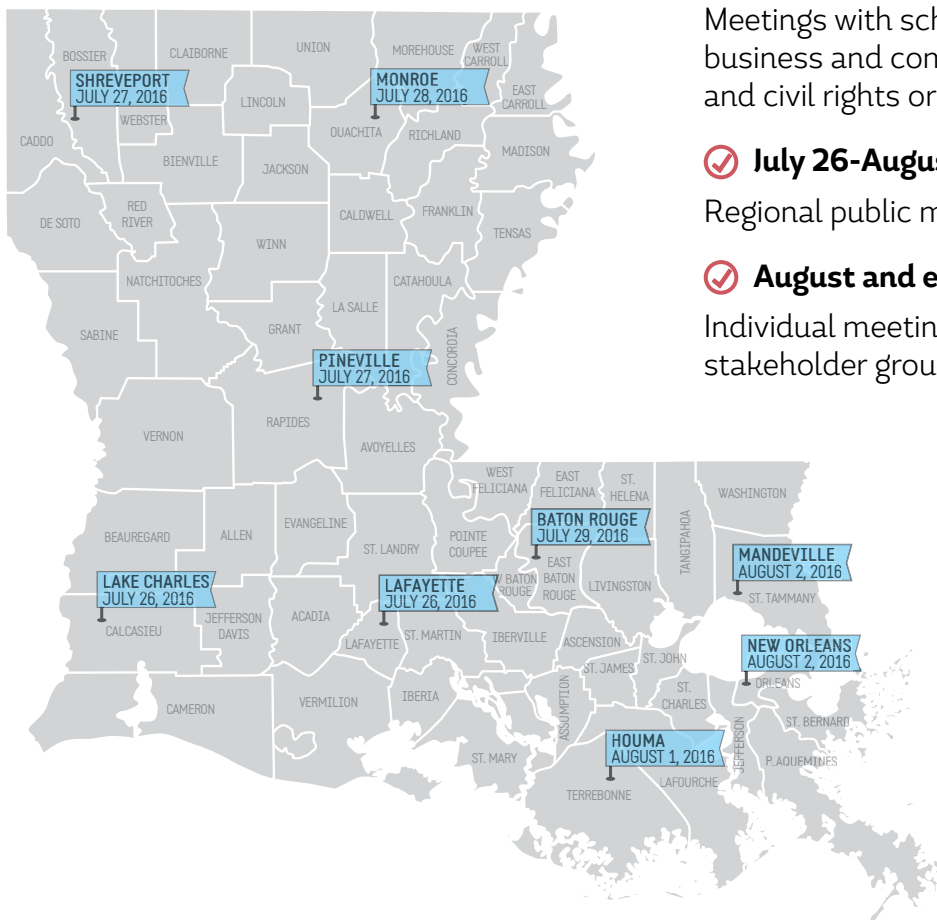
WHAT IS ESSA, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO LOUISIANA'S PLAN FOR EDUCATION?

The federal ESSA was signed into law December 10, 2015, reauthorizing the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and revising many provisions of what was known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is the United States' national education law that exists to ensure that all children have significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education. [Learn more about ESSA and Louisiana's education plan.](#)

HOW IS LOUISIANA'S UPDATED EDUCATION PLAN BEING DEVELOPED?

Louisiana is consulting with parents, educators, and other stakeholders to update its education plan. The Department of Education has hosted a number of stakeholder and public meetings in which ESSA and Louisiana's state education plan have been discussed. [View the information presented during these meetings.](#)

REGIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS



✓ June 14-20, 2016:

Meetings with school leaders, education associations, business and community leaders, and civil rights organizations

✓ July 26-August 2, 2017:

Regional public meetings around the state

✓ August and early September 2016:

Individual meetings with organizations and stakeholder groups

Educators and representatives from the following school systems and organizations participated in these conversations:

- Acadia Parish School System
- Acadiana Center for the Arts
- Achievement Network
- AdvanceEd
- Aetna Better Health Louisiana
- Allen Parish School System
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation/Healthier Schools Program
- American Federation for Children
- American Reading Company
- AMIKids
- Ascension Parish School System
- Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana
- Assumption Parish School System
- Audubon Behavioral Health
- Auntie B Preschool & Daycare
- Baton Rouge Area Chamber
- Bayou Land Families Helping Families
- Beauregard Parish School System
- Better Boys Initiative
- Black Alliance for Educational Options
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana
- Bossier Parish School System
- Caddo Association of Educators
- Calcasieu Parish School System
- Caldwell Parish School System
- Central Community School System
- Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance
- CenturyLink
- Charter Schools USA
- City of Baker School System
- City of Bogalusa School System
- City of Monroe School System
- City of Zachary School System
- Claiborne Parish School System
- Committee of 100
- Communities in Schools
- Community School for Apprenticeship Learning
- Community United to Reform Education
- Concordia Parish School System
- Council for a Better Louisiana
- Democracy Prep Public Schools
- Democrats for Education Reform
- DeSoto Parish School System
- Dillard University
- Dyslexia Society of South Louisiana
- East Baton Rouge Parish School System
- Education's Next Horizon
- Einstein Charter School
- Entergy
- Epiphany Day School
- Evangeline Parish School System
- ExxonMobil
- Families Helping Families of Acadiana
- Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge
- Families Helping Families of Jefferson
- Families Helping Families Region 7
- Fletcher Technical Community College
- Franklin Parish School System
- Graduation Alliance
- Grant Parish School System
- Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce
- Hammonds, Sills, Adkins & Guice, LLP
- Health and Education Alliance of Louisiana
- Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce
- Iberia Parish School System
- Iberville Parish School System
- International High School
- Jackson Parish School System
- Jefferson Chamber of Commerce
- Jefferson Parish School System
- Jefferson Davis Parish School System
- Kidz View
- Lafayette Parish Public Education Stakeholders Council
- Lafayette Parish School System
- Lafourche Parish School System
- LaSalle Parish School System
- Lincoln Parish School System
- Live Oak Children's Center
- Louisiana Office of the Governor
- Livingston Parish School System
- Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative
- Louisiana Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
- Louisiana Association of Educators
- Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- Louisiana Association of Principals
- Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools
- Louisiana Association of School Administrators of Federally Assisted Programs
- Louisiana Association of School Business Officials
- Louisiana Association of School Librarians
- Louisiana Association of School Superintendents
- Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities
- Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Louisiana Board of Regents
- Louisiana Center for Children's Rights
- Louisiana College
- Louisiana Community and Technical College System
- Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
- Louisiana Department of Economic Development
- Louisiana Department of Health
- Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
- Louisiana Federation of Teachers
- Louisiana Healthy Communities Coalition
- Louisiana House of Representatives
- Louisiana Hands and Voices
- Louisiana Key Academy
- Louisiana Legislative Fiscal Office
- Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice
- Louisiana Parent Teacher Association
- Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
- Louisiana Public Health Institute
- Louisiana Resource Center for Educators
- Louisiana School Boards Association
- Louisiana Special Education Center
- Louisiana State Senate
- Louisiana State University and A&M College
- Louisiana State University at Alexandria
- Louisiana State University Laboratory School
- Louisiana State University at Shreveport
- Louisiana Tech University
- Louisiana Together Educating All Children
- Louisiana Workforce Commission
- Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans
- Madison Parish School System
- McNeese State University
- Monroe Chamber of Commerce
- Morehouse Parish School System
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- National Heritage Academies
- New Leaders
- New Schools Baton Rouge
- Northshore Families Helping Families
- Northshore Technical Community College
- Northwestern State University
- Office of Congressman Garret Graves
- One Acadiana
- One Community One School District
- Orleans Parish School System
- Ouachita Parish School System
- Our Lady of Lourdes Wellness Works
- Parents Empowered
- Plaquemines Parish School System
- Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe
- Pointe Coupee Parish School System
- Power of Public Education
- Prevailing Faith Christian Academy
- Public Affairs Research Council
- Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center
- Rapides Parish School System
- Redemptorist St. Gerard School
- Red River Parish School System
- ReNew Schools
- Responsive Education Solutions
- Richland Parish School System
- Roedel Parsons Koch Blache Balhoff & McCollister
- Sabine Parish School System
- Saint Bernard Parish School System
- Saint Charles Parish School System
- Saint Helena Parish School System
- Saint James Parish School System
- Saint John the Baptist Parish School System
- Saint Landry Parish School System
- Saint Martin Parish School System
- Saint Mary Parish School System
- Saint Tammany Federation of Teachers
- Saint Tammany Parish School System
- Save the Children Head Start
- SMILE Community Action Agency
- Southeastern Louisiana University
- Southern Poverty Law Center
- Southern University and A&M College
- Southern University System
- Special Education Advisory Panel
- Special Olympics Louisiana
- Special School District
- SSA Consultants
- Stand for Children
- Step Forward
- Strengthening Outcomes with Autism Resources
- Tangipahoa Parish School System
- Teach for America
- Tensas Parish School System
- Terrebonne Parish District Attorney's Office
- Terrebonne Parish Government
- Terrebonne Parish School System
- The MAX Charter School
- The Micah Project
- The Orchard Foundation
- Tulane University
- United Healthcare Community
- United Way of Acadiana
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- University of Louisiana at Monroe
- University of Louisiana System
- University of New Orleans
- Urban League
- Urban Support
- Vermilion Parish School System
- Vernon Parish School System
- Volunteers of America
- Washington Parish School System
- Webster Parish School System
- West Baton Rouge Parish School System
- West Carroll Parish School Board
- West Feliciana Parish School System
- West Monroe Chamber of Commerce
- Women's Philanthropy Network
- Workforce Investment Council
- Winn Parish School System
- Xavier University of Louisiana

WHAT INPUT HAS THE STATE RECEIVED TO DATE FROM CITIZENS AND STAKEHOLDERS?

Throughout these meetings, participants communicated priorities, offered recommendations, and expressed diverse perspectives covering a wide range of issues. The Department specifically requested input related to the five main pillars of Louisiana's plan, but participants offered other comments and expressed other priorities as well.

Below is a representative sample of input received during these meetings, demonstrative of wide-ranging themes that have emerged. This is not a comprehensive list of all comments received, nor an endorsement of any particular ideas. To access the complete record of regional public meetings, visit [Louisiana's ESSA webpage](#).

ALIGNING EXPECTATIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

- Louisiana's education system should align expectations for high school graduates with the knowledge and skills that students need to be successful in their freshman year of college and as they enter the workplace.
- Louisiana should incentivize and reward schools for having students who earn industry credentials and transition into good jobs, not just those who are prepared to enter universities.
- The accountability system should recognize school performance as well as progress/growth, and should do so in a way that keeps school performance scores and ratings generally stable over time.
- The accountability system should include multiple measures, not just student test scores.
- As Louisiana raises standards and measures student learning using new tests, the state should pay closer attention to students' ability to write and use technology.

“As a former classroom teacher and a parent, I expect that an ‘A’ means excellence. But too many ‘A’ schools in our accountability system are only average or just above average when compared to schools in other states. We need to raise our standards.”

~ Kelli Bottger, American Federation for Children

“Students on a career path for industry based certification may not take college prep courses thus preparing them to score at the mastery level on standardized tests. We need to have a discussion on the movement from basic to mastery test scores for students who are on a career path in high school.”

~ Brian Leleune, Superintendent, Jefferson Davis Parish School System

“The school report cards have been improved in recent years to give parents a lot of great information, but I'm not sure parents are getting them. We should look for more ways to have open, honest conversations with parents about the successes and challenges of their child's school.”

~ Stephanie Desselle, Council for a Better Louisiana

SERVING STRUGGLING STUDENTS

- Educators need increased training in meeting the needs of students who are struggling.
- Louisiana's plan should move students with special needs to the forefront among school administrators.
- Schools should institute early identification and universal screening for disabilities and for giftedness in order to meet all students' unique needs.
- Louisiana needs more supports for students with disabilities to enable them to transition to the work place.
- Schools should be motivated to focus on the improvement of all students to achieve at their full potential.
- Louisiana needs a better way of evaluating alternative schools to determine if they are effectively serving students' needs and to address their unique missions in school accountability.
- Schools should do more to identify the multiple individual needs that students have instead of addressing them simply as “at risk.”
- Higher education cannot continue to remediate students who do not learn essential skills in the K-12 school system. Schools must do more to address students' remedial needs in high school.
- Louisiana should carefully consider the requirements of IDEA when developing its ESSA plan.

“I'm wondering about supports for students with disabilities when it comes to postsecondary opportunities, whether it's college or the world of work. I would certainly want to see a way to help such students....there is a gap in services for supports for young college students with disabilities and there's a gap in services for young people with disabilities who are not pursuing college but need to continue to pursue work opportunities.”

~ Karran Harper Royal, Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center

TRANSFORMING STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

- Parents of students attending low-performing schools should retain the ability to enroll their child in another school as the low-performing school works to improve.
- Low-performing schools that are experiencing growth should be recognized for that growth in the school accountability system.
- The state needs another way of addressing low-performing schools before the Recovery School District takes them over.
- Louisiana should consider options to intervene in low-performing schools prior to four consecutive years.

“Would the department consider putting a dual school letter grade on the report card? One grade can be based performance and the other letter grade can be based on improved performance. That would tell that the school is making progress but there is room to grow.”

~ Brian Adams, Teach for America

ENSURING ACCESS TO ENRICHING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL STUDENTS

- All students should be given greater access to the arts, world languages, and physical activity while in school, not as add-ons or optional activities, but as a integrated strategy to increase student achievement and support whole child development.
- All students in all schools should have access to suitable instructional materials and technology to support their learning.
- Schools should partner more with business and industry to find teachers who can teach career training and give more students access to courses and training aligned with workforce needs.
- Schools should prioritize positive behavior supports and individualized interventions instead of suspending or expelling kids home, in order to more effectively address students' needs and support their continued academic progress in school.
- Academically gifted students need to be challenged and prioritized too, just as students who are below proficient.
- Schools should do more to support diversity, cultural understanding, and positive conflict resolution among students.

“I would like see universal screening of students for gifted and talented. This would provide equity of access to these programs. Students need access to arts, music and foreign language. These are enrichment courses that used to be offered. All students in our schools should have access to these enrichment programs.”

~ Ann Burruss, parent and member of Power of Public Education Lafayette

“There is a challenge in equity of access to enriching experiences. It’s not that children can’t learn, they just may not have access to the resources that other children have.”

~ Sandra Franklin, Rapides Parish School Board member

CELEBRATING AND STRENGTHENING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

- New teacher candidates should be given extended practical experience in order to be fully prepared for the classroom.
- New teacher candidates should be expected to demonstrate critical skills for teaching students, not just required to take courses.
- A consistent accountability system should exist for all types of educator preparation providers, including universities and private/alternative providers.
- Educators should have access to actionable information about student performance throughout the year that helps them support students in mastering the state academic content standards.
- Educators should be evaluated fairly based on the use of consistent classroom observations, individualized, achievable growth targets, and multiple measures of student achievement.
- The state should identify ways to make teaching a more attractive profession by addressing compensation, support, and placement.
- Teachers should have incentives and rewards for teaching large numbers of struggling students and teaching at low-performing schools.
- Too many great teachers are lost to administrative positions because of limited career ladder opportunities.
- Teachers need help in addressing individual needs of students within their classrooms and dealing with behavior-related issues. Class sizes should be kept as low as possible.
- Educators need professional development to ensure that they are teaching required content at acceptable levels of rigor.
- K-12 and higher education need to be able to share student achievement information that will enable colleges and universities to improve educator preparation programs.

“There is an outcry for certified special education teachers...It is critical for the outlying parishes to know about opportunities such as our online teacher certification program, supported through the Louisiana’s Believe and Prepare initiative, which can help them meet these needs.”

~ Dr. Patsy Jenkins, Department Chair, Louisiana State University at Alexandria Department of Education

“The chambers of commerce need to work with industry to help provide more career path teachers. We need to bridge the gap and pool resources to hire teachers.”

~ Senator Mike Walsworth, District 33, West Monroe, Louisiana

“My concern is public perception of the teaching profession.... We need to address the perception that teaching isn't a professional career. We don't reward the commitment of those who teach.”

~ Dr. Dorothy Schween,
School of Education, University of Louisiana at Monroe

OTHER FEEDBACK RECEIVED

- School report cards should include more detailed information in order to equip parents and educators with the information they need.
- School ratings based entirely on test scores don't provide all of the necessary information about a school. The accountability system should include other indicators of school quality.
- The state should consider reducing testing time.
- Louisiana should carefully consider test participation in its state accountability system and ensure that school performance isn't "masked" by non-participation.
- Schools need to increase students' access to technology, and there are several organizations that are available and willing to partner with school systems on that.
- The state needs to carefully track high school student exits to distinguish between legitimate exits and those where students may have been counseled out of school.
- The state should consider the unique needs of rural districts when developing this plan. Giving all students access to teachers, specialized courses, etc., is very challenging in these districts.
- Louisiana should address the "wasted senior year" and require students to use unscheduled time during the school day to address remedial needs or to enroll in post-secondary education or training.
- The plan developed in response to ESSA should do more to help schools increase parent involvement.
- Indicators of school quality should be chosen carefully in order to reconcile valid, reliable data on student outcomes with what could be less valid and reliable data derived from surveys. Louisiana's strong accountability system must be preserved.

“It's great that ESSA includes health and wellness and physical education as part of a well-rounded education. Louisiana has the highest childhood obesity rate and more and more research is showing that healthy children do learn better, have an increase in their academic achievement and have higher test scores.”

~ Erica Gilliam, Alliance for a Healthier Generation

“Please continue assessments for science and social studies. Our minutes are already limited by state law. We are left to our own devices and left to do what we think is best. These scores are important for us to measure what our students are learning.”

~ Loren Klein, science and social studies teacher,
Iberia Parish School System

“What we see right now is that the disproportionality in exclusionary discipline based on race and disability, not just IEPs but also 504 plans, to me speaks entirely to issues of implicit bias and treating the same student behavior in different ways based on characteristics that I don't think are at all appropriate. So what I would love to see is within ESSA we do have multiple references to funding for MTSS, which we know is an evidence-based program. So if there's a way to link up promoting using those dollars to do the things that we know in the end will reduce exclusionary discipline, I think it's a tremendous opportunity for the state.”

~ Jennifer Coco, Southern Poverty Law Center

“We need to look at the way we report our accountability system....We need to offer indicators to our schools that are not academic (only) based. The whole child is nurtured by other indicators in addition to academics.”

~ Debbie Meaux, Louisiana Association of Educators

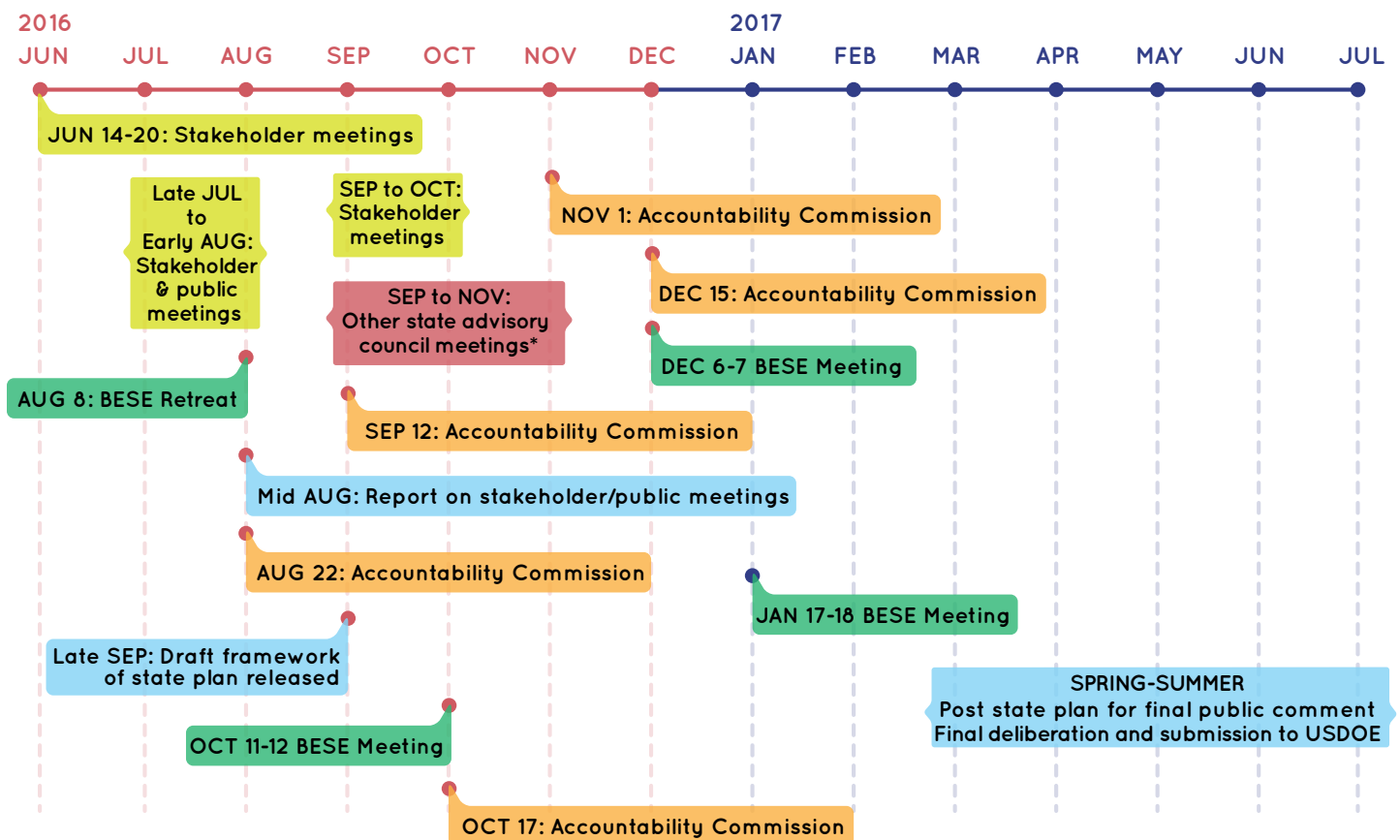
“We must stay the course. Over the past several years, we stood for high standards. We stood for parent choice. Now it's time to stand for accountability.”

~ Dr. Phillip Rozeman, Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce

HOW CAN CITIZENS AND STAKEHOLDERS OFFER ADDITIONAL INPUT IN CREATING LOUISIANA'S LONG-TERM EDUCATION PLAN UNDER ESSA?

- ➔ Visit our website at www.louisianabelieves.com/essa
- ➔ Email ESSALouisiana@la.gov
- ➔ Attend an upcoming **Accountability Commission meeting** in which ESSA will be discussed:
 - September 12, 2016
 - October 17, 2016
 - November 1, 2016
 - December 5, 2016
 - Contact Jessica.Baghian@la.gov for more information.

ESSA STATE PLAN DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



*Special Education Advisory Panel, Superintendents Advisory Council, Early Childhood Care, and Education Advisory Council, Workforce Investment Council, and more.