

DISTRICT: _____

Public Plan - Needs Assessment for ESSER 3.0



General Information

LEA Name	Achievement School District	Director of Schools	Lisa R. Settle
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Students & Enrollment

Mission & Vision	Mission: The Achievement School District authorizes charter schools committed to academic excellence, equity, and social-emotional development for all students.				
	Vision: The Achievement School District will equip every student with the knowledge and skills to take full advantage of future citizenship, leadership, and life opportunities.				
Grades Served	PreK-12	# of Schools	26	Total Student Enrollment	8,716
Race/	American Indian/Alaska Native	.17%	Asian	.31%	
	Black/African American	89.68%	Hispanic	7.51%	
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.2%	White	8.57%	
	Multiracial	1.07%			
Economically Disadvantaged	69.5%	English learners	6.6%		
Students with Disabilities	12.1%	Foster	1.52%		
Students Experiencing Homelessness	1.17%	Students in Military Families	0%		
Migrant	.01%	Students with High-Speed Internet at Home	21%		

This needs assessment for ESSER 3.0 is built to be a summary of the major elements to consider in strategic planning for effective resource

allocation for those funds. The department also encourages updates to ESSER 1.0 and 2.0 spending plans to align with needs as they are updated and develop. Local plans and those submitted through InformTN for the comprehensive district plans will likely be more detailed and thorough, with specific call-outs by individual school need. The state template is intended to provide the public with a data snapshot to inform community engagement related to the needs of the district that ESSER 3.0 dollars may support.

ACADEMICS

Topic	Supporting Data and Notes	Interpretation of Data and Identified Needs
Kindergarten		
50%+ School Year Remote	Provide information on any increase in the number of students whose "first time" experience in a formal school setting will be 2021-2022.	There was no increase in the number of students entering a formal school setting for the first time.
Instructional Days		
Days In-Person	Total number of in-person days in the 2020-21 school year (number of days and percent of the year) for elementary, middle, and high schools in your district.	Elementary: 175; Middle 175; High: 78
Days Virtual	Total number of virtual days in the 2020-21 school year (number of days and percent of the year) for elementary, middle, and high schools in your district.	Elementary: 175; Middle: 175; High: 175
Quarantine Closures	Summarize the number of days or weeks schools were closed due to quarantine and how that varied across the district. Differentiate between elementary, middle and high schools and only provide summaries in the context of broad impact (number of students impacted, on average).	There were two instances of full school closures due to quarantine. The closures overlapped, resulting in a total of 10 school days lost. The closures occurred at the elementary school level only. As a result of school closures over 178 students were directly impacted.
Additional Impacts on Instructional Time	Summarize any other significant impacts on instructional time (more than 5 days). Examples may include: staffing shortages, weather or natural disasters, technology access or issues, etc.	During February 2021, the state of Tennessee experienced unprecedented snowstorms. Several schools received significant damage that delayed and/or halted in-person instruction in at least five school buildings. Schools experienced water damage from broken pipes, flooding, loss of heat and water shortages during these times. This increased trauma students experienced, as well. Staffing shortages were challenges schools faced as well.
Overall Impact	Summarize engagement in virtual instruction, by grade band. This should include the academic and relational experience during the 2020-21 school year.	K-2 – Students struggled with accessing lessons and skills through the virtual format. A large percentage of students and parents found it difficult to navigate the technicalities of the computer and the software programs. It was difficult for 3-5 students to stay engaged due to home distractions, inability of teachers to virtually model, and lack of hands-on/minds-on instruction. As students transition to secondary school, they typically become less interested in school. This was even more apparent this year in the wake of the pandemic. Outside distractions and less accountability for reporting to the building caused an increase in chronic absenteeism.
Student Achievement, Instructional Materials and Interventions		
Benchmark Data	Provide the district average for beginning, middle, and end-of-year diagnostic/screener data comparisons. Provide overall data as well as by student group.	The beginning benchmark data for elementary schools, particularly in the lower grades, were not reliable as the district saw students making huge gains from the previous year. It was determined that parents were assisting students during testing. However, the following two benchmark assessments produced more reliable data for schools.

Remember that a needs assessment is to specifically name those areas where additional support, resources, or attention would positively benefit students. That requires the identification of areas to strengthen as a result of the pandemic. The needs assessment may also include areas that were already focus areas for the district that have been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic and where additional investment may be warranted or beneficial.

Since the Achievement School District is a portfolio of schools operated by various charter management organizations, benchmark assessment data is not consistent due to the various assessments used by the different operators. Therefore, data comparisons and district averages cannot be calculated.

The beginning 20-21 benchmark data for elementary schools, particularly in the lower grades, were not reliable as the district saw students making huge gains from the previous year. It was determined that parents were assisting students during testing. However, the last benchmark assessments produced more reliable data for schools as we enacted more measures to ensure students were not getting assistance from their parents.

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RTI Benchmark Data in Achievement Schools:

RISK	19/20 Fall		19/20 Winter	
	Read	Math	Read	Math
High	16.8%	20.1%	21.2%	21.5%
Some	36.1%	25.9%	33.2%	25.3%
Low	47%	53%	45.4%	51.9%

RISK	20/21 Fall		20/21 Winter		20-21 Spring	
	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math
High	20%	11.6%	32.5%	23.5%	37.1%	38.8%
Some	54.2%	18.1%	35.7%	21.4%	33.1%	23.2%
Low	51.5%	69.8%	31.7%	54.9%	28.9%	37.8%

From the last benchmark assessment in 19/20 to the last one in 20-21, there was a 75% increase of "high risk" students in reading and an 80% increase of "high risk" students in math.

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Literacy	Summarize the impact of early reading compared to previous years. Provide overall data as well as by student group.	<p>The District experienced challenges with literacy instruction due to teacher phonics modeling being difficult for students to view and emulate through computer/tablet screens. Students who were in the in-person setting experienced difficulty with phonemes and phonemic awareness due to the need for teachers and students to wear masks.</p> <p>As a result, benchmark data in K-2 literacy shows students at “high risk” more than doubled and students at “low risk” decreased by a little less than half from the winter of 2019 to the Spring of 2021.</p> <p>RTI Benchmark Assessment Data for K-2 in Achievement Schools</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>RISK</th> <th>19/20 Winter</th> <th>20/21 Spring</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Read</td> <td>Read</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High</td> <td>22.7%</td> <td>50.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Some</td> <td>27.4%</td> <td>26.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low</td> <td>49.8%</td> <td>22.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	RISK	19/20 Winter	20/21 Spring		Read	Read	High	22.7%	50.4%	Some	27.4%	26.9%	Low	49.8%	22.6%
RISK	19/20 Winter	20/21 Spring															
	Read	Read															
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ACT	Summarize ACT data for your district (participation and outcomes) compared to previous years. Provide overall data and by student group.	In 2020, the average ACT score for the Achievement School District was 14.8 with a participation rate of 83%. Students with disabilities averaged a 13. Unofficially, it appears that the ACT average for the district did decrease to approximately 13.6 in 2021 with much lower participation rates due to chronic absenteeism in our high schools.															
Interventions (Above and Beyond RTI)	Summarize any proactive interventions included in 2020-21 to address potential concerns, as applicable.	Schools hired additional personnel to help troubleshoot technical issues for students and parents, formed attendance teams to support students and teachers with logging on, and provided families with computer training.															
School Activities and Enrichment	Summarize any impacts on enrichment programs, school activities, etc. during the 2020-21 school year.	Due to the pandemic, there were no enrichment programs or additional school activities.															

STUDENT READINESS

Topic	Supporting Data and Notes	Interpretation of Data and Identified Needs
Transitions and Pathways		

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Transitions into Middle School	Summarize challenges for students new to middle school during the 2020-21 school year.	Rising sixth grade students struggled with connection to their new middle schools. Students were unable to complete their fifth-grade year due to school/district closures with COVID-19 and many experienced anxiety, fear and other social-emotional trauma due to COVID-19 and social events that occurred in Spring/Summer 2020 and into the 2020-2021 school year. Further, rising sixth grade students were unable to walk the halls of their new school buildings, meet teachers and members of the administrative staff.
Transitions from Middle School	Summarize challenges related to students who are leaving middle school in Spring 2021.	Rising ninth grade students struggled with connection to their new high schools. Students were unable to complete their eighth-grade year due to school/district closures with COVID-19 and many experienced anxiety, fear and other social-emotional trauma due to COVID-19 and social events that occurred in Spring/Summer 2020 and into the 2020-2021 school year. Further, rising ninth grade students were unable to walk the halls of their new school buildings to familiarize themselves, meet teachers and members of the administrative staff.
Transitions into High School	Summarize challenges for students new to high school during the 2020-21 school year.	Students new to high school had to make virtual connections with teachers, staff and administration. Students, who were learning in the virtual setting, were learning in a setting that may or may not have been conducive to their learning styles. Students were unable to build relationships with classmates and teachers and learn about the school environment. Students new to high school were unable to have authentic interaction with their counselors and principals while in the virtual setting. Some students experienced increased anxiety and fear during this time. Students missed the authentic bridge year from middle to high school.
Graduation Rates	Summarize challenges related to students who will graduate in Spring 2021 compared to previous years.	Graduating seniors experienced a myriad of challenges as compared to previous years. The inability to take college tours, lack of in-person ACT prep classes, and not being able to build relationships with school counselors, faculty and staff.
Dropout Rates and Disengagement	Summarize challenges related to expected drop-out rates credit recovery needs or engagement concerns with high school students in the 2020-21 school year compared to previous years.	Due to the challenges with the virtual platform, many students across the Portfolio either did not enroll or maintain enrollment. Lack of consistency in enrollment was connected to lack of childcare for children or siblings and too many courses to recover in a short amount of time. This challenge directly impacted drop-out rates and student engagement.
CTE	Provide any decrease in the number of CTE courses, concentrators, completers, and/or inability to participate in coursework needed to fulfill concentrator/completer status due to pandemic restrictions.	There has not been a decrease in the number of courses CTE courses offered during this school year, as all courses were made accessible through virtual learning. However, some activities in a few classes were compromised due to the virtual format. Culinary Arts is the one POS that was impacted.

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Course Availability	Provide an overview of courses that were not able to be offered during the 2020-21 school year as a result of pandemic related challenge (not including CTE, which is referenced above).	All courses were made available during the 2020-21 school year. Classes that required an in-person element were revised to be accessible through virtual learning.
Special Populations and Mental Health		
Special Populations	Summarize challenges related to supporting students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, migrant students, and economically disadvantaged students during the 2020-21 school year.	<p>The district faced challenges with supporting students with disabilities (SWDs) in the virtual environment, especially students with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities. In addition, many of our schools struggled with providing adequate related services, such as speech, physical and occupational therapy. SWDs also experienced a lack of connection with their non-disabled peers and limited social and adaptive connections.</p> <p>English Learners faced writing, speaking, and reading challenges. All ELs did not have access to face-to-face instruction needed for linguistic courses such as phonetics and phonology. ELs experienced challenges with accessing online learning platforms, resolving technical issues, and staying engaged during virtual instruction. During the 2019-20 school year, WIDA ACCESS testing was interrupted, preventing schools from exiting eligible ELs from the ESL program. During the 2020-21 school year, it was challenging to identify new English Learner students in a virtual setting.</p> <p>The pandemic intensified the needs of homeless students. The school serves as a critical resource for providing wraparound services to students experiencing homelessness. Homeless students did not have consistent access to food, school nurses, social and emotional supports, and community agencies to aid their situation. Some homeless students continued to experience attendance problems in a virtual environment due to a lack of stable shelter and connectivity issues. During the 2020-21 school year, it was difficult to effectively identify new homeless students and provide direct supports in a virtual setting.</p> <p>Foster Care students experienced most of the same challenges as homeless students. The pandemic created added isolation and uncertainty for foster care students who have already undergone the trauma of abuse and neglect. Foster care students with severe social and emotional needs did not have consistent access to targeted supports and services in the virtual setting.</p> <p>Migrant students experienced most of the same challenges as English Learner students.</p> <p>During the 2020-21 school year, many of the district's most vulnerable students, in special populations, experienced school instability, food insecurity, lack of critical supports and services, lack of engagement, and isolation from peers, teachers, and staff.</p>

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Mental Health, Behavioral and Other Supports, Interventions and Staffing	Summarize challenges related to mental and behavioral health. As applicable, include limitations related to observation and interaction with student in the virtual learning environment.	Students experienced increased fear, trauma and anxiety due to the uncertainty of the world, COVID-19 and the social unrest of summer and fall 2020 into the school year. Also, students who may have been experiencing mental health challenges may not have received interventions they would if they had been in school with trained professionals who are able to identify needs and refer parents for services. Students in the virtual learning environment were unable to have authentic support sessions from related service providers as well as counseling while in the virtual learning environment. Students who experience behavior challenges may have increased difficulty when re-entering the brick and mortar setting.
School Nurses	Summarize challenges related to shortages or limitations in school nurses (or similar).	The district experienced some issues with nurse shortages. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that direct care of students is just one piece of the support that school nurses provide. The absence of nurses in some of our schools emphasized the critical role they play in the lives of students. Nursing shortages caused some schools to have to ask staff members without medical training to support students with medical issues. School nurses were responsible for consulting with school and district leaders, providing training for staff, educating students and their families on how to stay healthy, and performing case management for students with serious health concerns and their absence in school buildings caused some students to miss out on some of these critical supports.

EDUCATORS		
Topic	Supporting Data and Notes	Interpretation of Data and Identified Needs
Staff Retirements	Summarize differences in the number of staff retirements during the 2020-21 school year as compared to previous years. Please differentiate between instructional staff and other staff.	Turnaround work is incredibly challenging, and the impact of COVID-19 has made staffing even more difficult. To date, there is a lack of evidence that there have been more staff retirements during the 2020-21 school year compared to previous years.
Staff Resignations	Summarize differences in the number of staff resignations which occurred during the 2020-21 school year as compared to previous years. Please differentiate between instructional staff and other staff.	Turnaround work is incredibly challenging, and the impact of COVID-19 has made staffing even more difficult. There is a lack of evidence that we experienced more staff resignations during the 2020-21 school year. We had difficulty retaining teachers and there is a general lack of licensed teachers and other staff.
Extended Quarantines	Provide the number and percent of instructional staff and non-instructional staff who faced more than two quarantine periods (10 days or longer).	Several schools in the ASD faced closures due to COVID-19 infections and close contacts. Data is as follows: 11 instructional staff and non-instructional staff faced more than two quarantine periods (10 days or longer)

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Classroom Vacancies	Provide the total vacancies for the teacher of record in the district during the 2020-21 school year.	Total Teacher vacancies across the district are as follows: 9 total vacancies for the teacher of record in the district during the 2020-21 school year
Other Vacancies	Summarize any other critical vacancies that impacted the district during the 2020-21 school year.	The district experienced critical vacancies in licensed teachers across the Portfolio of schools. High schools experienced significant vacancies that were unable to be filled throughout the course of the year. There was a lack of licensed teachers in literacy, mathematics, science and social studies courses. Again, high schools had difficulty hiring licensed staff in upper-level mathematics and science courses. High School teachers continue to be hard-to-staff.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS		
Topic	Supporting Data and Notes	Interpretation of Data and Identified Needs
Access to Technology	Provide the percent of time when students learning in a virtual environment did not have consistent access to a device. Provide this information for elementary, middle, and high school grade bands.	All students were provided a device and hotspot during the school year to engage in online learning. This number is effectively 0%.
Access to High-Speed Internet	Summarize student and staff access to high-speed internet during virtual instruction, how that changed over the year, and how that might have impacted opportunity and access.	Students were given hotspots at the beginning of the school year. This had not been a practice in previous year. During student registration, parents were asked to self-report high speed internet access. Twenty-one percent of families indicated access. All students, regardless of existing access were given hotspots to maintain connectivity during the school year.
Facility Constraints	Summarize facility constraints that impacted instruction (ie. space concerns leading to hybrid schedules).	Our schools are in old building that have a great deal of deferred maintenance. Schools will have to use funds to repair and upgrade buildings so all space can be used as we observe social distancing guidelines. Indoor air quality and updated HVAC systems are also needs in our buildings. Our schools will use ESSER funds and the ASD will partner with Shelby County Schools to perform the necessary deferred maintenance so all school spaces can be used for instruction.

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Summary of Key Priorities

For each of the sections below, list the top 3 investments your district will make to address the data indicated above and accelerate student achievement.

ACADEMICS

1	The district is committed to providing additional learning opportunities for students to address learning loss and acceleration.
2	The district is committed to implementing systems of support for teachers needing effective scaffolding strategies to teach grade-level standards to students who are several grade levels behind.
3	The district is committed to engaging parents and community to build relationships and cultivate learning environments both inside the school building and surrounding areas.

STUDENT READINESS

1	The district is committed to developing a multifaceted plan to support the social and emotional learning (SEL) of all students. The district will develop an effective program that includes the implementation of strategies and state and district policies that support SEL programming, teacher and classroom strategies that contribute to social and emotional learning, and outcomes of social and emotional learning among different student populations and settings.
2	The district is committed to implementing systems of support to develop and strengthen bridge programs to support transition from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school. The district will collaborate to help schools build relationships between feeder schools, including schools in the Shelby County School District.
3	The district is committed to providing comprehensive college and career guidance to all ASD middle and high schools. We are also committed to collaborating and providing resources to schools that help strengthen and expand CTE programs across the district.

EDUCATORS

1	The Achievement School District will hire one FTE whose full scope of work will be teacher licensure and ensuring teachers are either fully licensed or in an approved Educator Prep Program.
2	The Achievement School District will partner with Noble Educational Initiative to serve as an Educator Prep Program focused on job-embedded turnaround work throughout the Portfolio.
3	Schools in the Achievement School District are hiring additional personnel to decrease class sizes to accelerate learning and significantly decrease learning loss.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

1	The Achievement School District has prioritized monitoring, auditing data collection and reporting by hiring team members specifically focused on these scopes of work. The ASD will hire five FTEs with ESSER funding.
2	The Achievement School District has prioritized making the learning environment the safest possible for all students, staff and visitors by upgrading to water filling stations, adding air purification systems and improving indoor air quality.

3 The Achievement School District has prioritized focusing on Leadership development to build the principal's capacity to lead in a turnaround environment complicated further by the impact of COVID-19.
