

# New Mexico Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA

## Strategies for Leaders to Host Focus Groups

### School Based Focus Groups

Principals have a lot to do and this should not become a burden on them, their staffs or their schools to complete. This focus group can be done in conjunction with many other activities already occurring at the school or could be delegated to a trusted staff member. Some ideas to hold focus groups at a school may include the following.

#### Leveraging Existing Meetings

- Teachers
  - Monthly staff meetings
  - Professional Learning Community/Teacher Collaboration Time
- Students
  - Student Senate Meetings
  - Extra-curricular or co-curricular activity group
    - Sports Teams
    - 4-H Clubs
    - Speech and Debate Teams
    - Drama Clubs
    - Honor Society
    - Student Councils
- Families
  - Parent Teacher Organization/School Based Parent Organization Meeting
  - Coaches meetings with parents
  - Open House

#### Delegation to Trusted Staff Members

- Assistant Principals
- Deans of Students
- Activities/Athletic Directors (especially those in charge of student leadership courses)
- Government Teachers
- Counselors
- Family Liaisons
- Head Teachers/Department Chairs
- President of the parent organization or other family volunteer

# New Mexico Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA

## Strategies for Leaders to Host Focus Groups

### Central Location Based Focus Groups

Districts could choose to host forums on behalf of their individual schools rather than hold focus groups at all their different school sites. Some ideas to facilitate centrally-located focus groups could follow these guidelines.

- District office clusters focus group forums by regions in their districts and publish the dates for which forums will be held.
- Principals are responsible for recruiting necessary members of focus groups to attend the forum at the time published by the district. Principals forward the names and number of people expected to attend the forum.
- At the regional forum, the superintendent welcomes participants, uses this time to make any announcements she deems appropriate, and shows the ESSA Overview video to the large group.
- The superintendent then dismisses the participants to individual rooms, labeled by school, so individuals recruited by the principal go to the same location to participate in the focus group.
- The district has facilitators that facilitate the meetings and note takers to scribe the answers to the focus group questions.
- The district forwards the school's responses to the school principal so the school principal may create their school's common themes document for submission back to the district. *(This step may be optional if a district chooses to take the raw information and formulate a document on the school's behalf. However, the intent of ESSA is to draw connections back to stakeholders so the exercise of a school knowing the answers to the questions is one that is valuable.)*