



March 2023

This month as we welcome spring, we focus on a Mississippi project that is supporting the state in updating guidance for Community Engagement Councils that provide input and feedback to low-performing schools and districts. Reading this month's [blog](#) reminded me of the critical importance of community engagement, including families, to student learning. A strong body of research over the last 30 years demonstrates that family engagement positively impacts student achievement across all ethnic and social and economic groups as well as all levels of schooling. Additionally, multiple studies show that family and community engagement positively impact other outcomes, including course rigor, social skills, and behavior. Family and community engagement are also core resources for catalyzing and sustaining whole-school improvement and building school cultures that support all students. However, for family and community engagement to support whole-school improvement, intentional efforts must be made to structure important decisions to include family and community participation, and schools and districts must treat the participation of these stakeholders as an integral part of how they do their work. Mississippi's Community Engagement Councils provide a structure to support these types of intentional efforts for community engagement in decision-making that can, if used effectively, lead to true partnerships that support whole-school change and improved outcomes for students.

Whether your state or district requires a specific structure like the Community Engagement Council, I hope that you'll take an opportunity to review the resources provided in this newsletter and think about how your school or district can be more intentional in engaging both family and community members in your day to day work. We all have the same goal, improved student learning, so we need to continually look for strategies to leverage all of our strengths to achieve it together.

Be sure to visit our website and check in with us on social media to keep up with our work.

We are honored to continuously support you during these five years.

Robin G. Jarvis

Robin G. Jarvis, PhD

Director, Region 7 Comprehensive Center



Resources

New R7CC Blog – [Centering Communities in School Improvement: Strengthening Guidance Through Stakeholder Input](#)

REL Pacific – [Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education](#)

National Comprehensive Center – [Supporting Students in Poverty with High-Impact Instructional Strategies Toolkit](#)

Annenberg Institute for School Reform – [Why Community Engagement Matters in School Turnaround](#)

Edutopia – [How Can High-Poverty Schools Engage Families and the Community?](#)

R7CC Project Spotlight

Mississippi Community Engagement Councils



Purpose

Communities possess important knowledge, understanding, and expertise that can support schools. Community Engagement Councils (CECs), required under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-18-5, are community-led groups focused on improving a school or district. To be implemented effectively, additional supports are needed for districts and schools to establish CECs.

Required to establish a CEC in 2021-22:

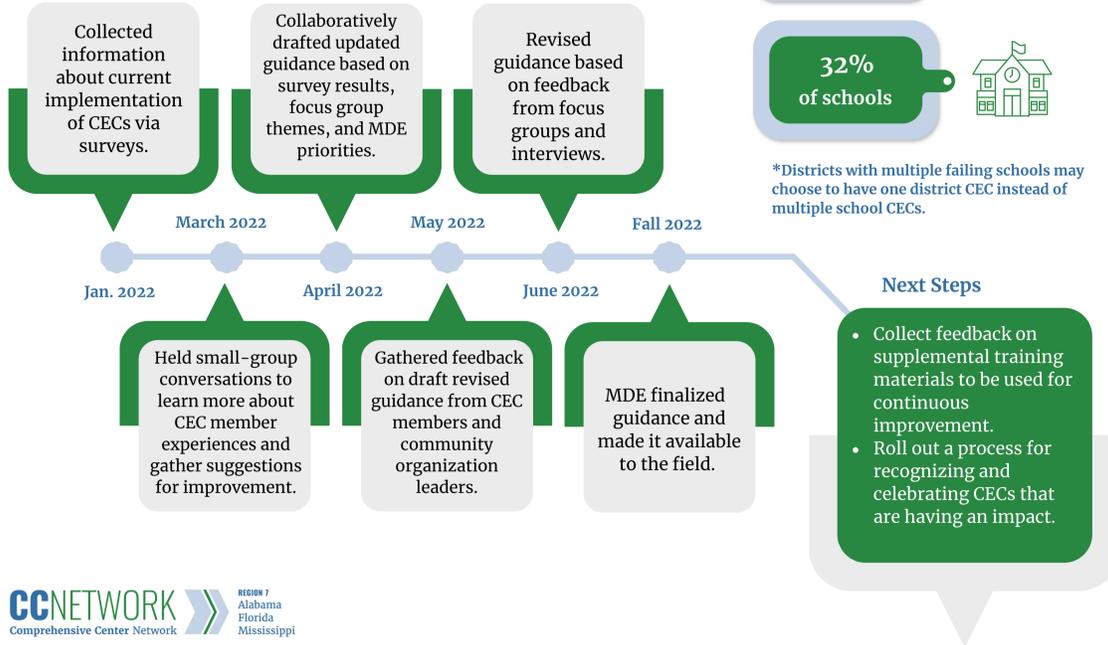
31%
of districts*



32%
of schools



*Districts with multiple failing schools may choose to have one district CEC instead of multiple school CECs.



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