The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) affects educators and children in every state in many significant ways. It embodies four key principles. The principles are: stronger accountability for results; greater flexibility for states, school districts and schools in the use of federal funds; more choices for parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds; and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been demonstrated to work.

The act also places an increased emphasis on reading, especially for young children, enhancing the quality of our nation’s teachers, and ensuring that all children in America’s schools learn English. The No Child Left Behind Act impacts virtually every program authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)-ranging from Title I and efforts to improve teacher quality to initiatives for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students, safe and drug-free schools, and access to technology.

Support from State Board of Education’s Master Plan
The mission of this legislation is supported by the State Board of Education’s Master Plan. The plan defines nine Key Results Areas with corresponding Goals, Strategies, and Measures. This consolidated application for funding under NCLB supports the Master Plan’s nine goals. In addition, the Master Plan targets four priority areas that support the ESEA goals and performance indicators. These four areas are: Teacher Quality Enhancement, Early Childhood Education, Reading, and Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners. Through focused attention at the state level on these four priorities and the six minimum core ESEA goals, Tennessee believes it will ensure that no child in the state is left behind.

Tennessee has adopted five minimum core ESEA goals and will report on all performance indicators that the United States Department of Education has established. Tennessee has established its own state performance targets for each of these goals and indicators that is related to Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). Each of the ESEA Goals is linked to the Goals in Tennessee State Board of Education Master Plan.

ESEA Goal #1: By 2013-14, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
TN Master Plan Goal #1: All children will begin school ready to learn.
TN Master Plan Goal #2: All primary and middle grade students will achieve world-class standards and enter high school ready for rigorous study.
TN Master Plan Goal #3: All high school students will achieve world-class standards and leave school prepared for postsecondary education and work.
ESEA Goal #2: All limited English proficient will become proficient in English and reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

TN Master Plan Goal #2: All primary and middle grade students will achieve world-class standards and enter high school ready for rigorous study.

TN Master Plan Goal #3: All high school students will achieve world-class standards and leave school prepared for postsecondary education and work.

ESEA Goal #3: By 2005-06, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.

TN Master Plan Goal #5: The teaching profession will attract well-qualified individuals who complete strong professional preparation programs and continue to grow professionally.

ESEA Goal #4: All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.

TN Master Plan Goal #8: All students and school personnel will have teaching and learning environments that are safe, disciplined, and healthy.

ESEA Goal #5: All students will graduate from high school.

TN Master Plan Goal #3: All high school students will achieve world-class standards and leave school prepared for postsecondary education and work.

These materials do not include detailed information about this legislation. Educators in school systems have many sources for necessary information and should access those sources as needed. These materials describe Tennessee’s Federal Programs Consolidated Planning and Needs Assessment Process in the context of NCLB. The process incorporates the necessary steps and guidelines to enable educators in Tennessee’s school systems to effectively accomplish the planning process while also attending to the important requirements of NCLB. For example, all states had a deadline of January 31, 2003 to submit an accountability plan for complying with this federal law. The steps of this Consolidated Planning and Needs Assessment process included in this document attend to the requirements of our accountability plan. Tennessee’s complete Accountability Plan is also available to all interested stakeholders on the department’s website at http://www.state.tn.us/education

**Consolidated Planning**

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates Consolidated Planning prior to school systems receiving federal funds for its proposed programs and services. In designing this process for Tennessee school systems, three major goals guided the efforts. The first was referred to previously. The process must direct school systems to address the many requirements of this important mandate. The second was to develop a “research-based” process incorporating the recommendations of notable experts in the field of planning. The attempt was to make the process credible, effective, and efficient while building on the improvement process already in place in our schools. And to that end, the third goal was to design the process to fit our context in Tennessee, most importantly the Tennessee School Improvement Planning (TSIP) process. Consolidated Planning presented here is a set of steps guiding system level leaders through the essential components to result in Action Plans and the Funding Application required by Federal Programs.
A comprehensive and effectively done Consolidated Plan can be a complex undertaking. That would be especially true if all school systems were at a very beginning point in regard to planning. But for many of our Tennessee systems, Consolidated Planning is not a new requirement. In addition, all of our schools and school systems have been responding to various requests for plans for many years. Over time, those requests have resulted in some excellent plans in many of our school settings, but not in all settings.

Equally important to the quality of the product, is the quality of the process of planning. Again, every setting has many unique contextual features including the people who are involved in the planning process, the past history of planning efforts, the level of collaboration and cooperation, and commitment to carrying out the plan. Again, the quality of the planning process in some settings was exactly what it should have been, but probably not in all. It would seem that a fair assumption is--every school system is at a different point in terms of their knowledge of and experience with system-wide planning.

Prior to NCLB
In the past, few schools, districts, and state education agencies coordinated federal categorical programs so that they could work together for the achievement of common goals. This lack of coordination was exacerbated by federal requirements for separate applications, program implementation strategies, evaluations, reporting mechanisms, and monitoring of all programs, even those funded to serve the same children. In addition, seldom did program coordinators explore how their programs could complement each other, and administrative functions were typically organized around programs and funding sources.

Beginning with the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and extending to the Improving America’s School Act (IASA), central themes in the literature on school improvement and student achievement referred to a comprehensive and coordinated approach to education. These statements included: “All children achieving to high standards,” “Programs that cut across categorical boundaries,” “Educating the whole child,” and “Systemic school improvement.” Consistent with this thinking, individual strategies for improving the quality of the educational programs are giving way to more comprehensive strategies to improve every aspect of the schooling experience. Comprehensive strategies acknowledge the interrelatedness of the numerous direct and indirect influences on students’ academic progress including the climate and culture of individual schools and the district as a whole.

While it is reassuring that the current more comprehensive strategy is proving effective in increasing student achievement, it is happening at a time when schools are dealing with decreased resources. Most school systems have experienced significant budget cuts, reductions in the numbers of administrators and support staff, and the reallocation of funds. With increased emphasis on comprehensive improvement and the reality of limited resources, meaningful change can occur only if all available resources are used in a focused and efficient manner to enable all programs to contribute to the achievement of common goals.

Consolidated Planning is a way to integrate programs so that resources are maximized and program fragmentation and duplication are minimized. By examining all programs and resources in light of student, school, district, or state needs and goals, programs can be designed to support initiatives that address these needs and goals in a coordinated way. Consolidated planning also serves as a catalyst
for communication and collaboration among educators and stakeholders to support needs with all available resources.

Such consolidation allows flexibility and innovation for districts to implement school improvement efforts. Schools, districts, and states across the country are aligning programs with federal requirements by developing their beliefs and mission, assessing needs, setting goals, and identifying ways to use resources to reach their goals. Categorical services are being replaced by coordinated services designed to improve the learning of all students, while ensuring that students with special needs get the support they need to reach high standards. The alignment and integration of programs and resources to meet specific student learning goals can be achieved through state and local consolidated planning.

**Tennessee’s Consolidated Planning Process**

Presented here is a long-term approach to comprehensive, consolidated planning. If a school system is at a beginning point with planning on this broad a scale, our purpose is to provide the necessary information, structure, and resources to do Consolidated Planning as it is supposed to be done. Presented in these materials is what is needed to accomplish this complex task in a highly successful way.

We know that Tennessee educators want to do the process right. But, we also know the practical realities of schooling. Taking the long-term view, the goal for systems just beginning with planning is that every cycle of Consolidated Planning (or every time it is done) can be better (more comprehensive, thoughtful, collaborative) than the previous time it was undertaken. In other words, Consolidated Planning may not be as comprehensive and thorough the first time through, but the goal is that it will become more encompassing and detailed with each cycle.

In Tennessee, we are also results oriented. If a school system has a high level of experience with and knowledge about planning, and the educators and stakeholders are satisfied with the results gained through their particular approach to comprehensive planning, our purpose is to reinforce and perhaps even to enhance their efforts. If, because of planning and implementation efforts, all student groups are performing as desired, all educators are highly-qualified and continually strive to be the best they can be, and all stakeholders are satisfied with the students’ academic progress and with the educational experiences the system is providing, then previous planning efforts have obviously paid off in benefits to students and to the community. Therefore, the purpose of this process and these materials is to allow educators in these high performing school systems and schools to continue working their plans to benefit their students. The purpose is definitely not to use an extensive amount of valuable time, energy, and other resources in yet another set of planning activities.

To that end, the Consolidated Planning and Needs Assessment Process is presented as a set of steps. Each of these steps is included because it is determined to be essential to the integrity of a quality planning and needs assessment process. With each step several self-assessment questions are presented to assist the planning team in moving through the process at an individualized and appropriate pace. It is assumed that the pace of progress will vary depending on many factors. In addition to the ones mentioned above, the variation in the sizes and composition of the school systems will impact the progress in accomplishing Consolidated Planning.
Perhaps the most significant point to remember in that we are planning for ourselves and for our students—not to meet specific mandates. The resulting Action Plans are owned by each school system and are the system’s roadmap toward their destination of improved student learning. Planning activities should help school systems meet the needs identified in the ways that are justified as the most effective for our students. In other words, the purpose of engaging in planning is to meet student needs in the best ways we can. Engaging in planning as described will satisfy external mandates, but that should definitely not be the focus of our efforts. If assessing our needs and planning is done right, we will see the results in increased student achievement and student motivation to learn. *Getting desired results is the real test of the quality of planning.*