

Section 4

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1. *SREB States Transform School Accountability with NCLB Waivers*

This May 2013 report highlights the waivers granted by the United States Department of Education to SREB states. Following the report are two-page summaries of each SREB that had received a waiver prior to June 21, 2013. The state of Alabama received its waiver to pilot ACT assessments on June report Executive Summary of Building a Grad Nation by Civic Enterprises, Everyone Graduates Center at the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University, America's Promise Alliance and the Alliance for Excellent Education updates the nation's progress in improving the graduation rate and reduce the number of dropouts

2. *A Policymakers' Guide: Leveraging Longitudinal Student Data to Develop College and Career Ready High School Graduates*

Data collaboration between SCDE, the SC Commission on Higher Education and schools will be integral component of EAA revisions.

3. *Examples of Frameworks*

The first is a spreadsheet created as a result of the stakeholder meetings that show criteria for designing a state accountability system along with indicators and tradeoffs.

The second framework, which is on legal-size paper, is an EOC staff summary of how the information might be put into practice.



SREB States Transform School Accountability with *NCLB* Waivers

Bold accountability reform is under way in all 16 SREB states — and other states around the nation. These efforts are part of a federal program to give states relief from what many leaders consider constraining provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

Over the past several years, *NCLB* increasingly has been criticized as federal over-reach that drains state resources and labels too many public schools as failures. In fact, by 2011 the fate of many public schools had become dire — about half of all schools nationwide were failing under *NCLB*, and that number was expected to rise sharply by the Act's 2014 deadline on key targets. State leaders complained that the law not only had become ineffective, but it also had begun to hinder innovative reforms developing at the state and local level. In response, the U.S. Department of Education began offering waivers of *NCLB* provisions to give states the flexibility to carry out reforms that will shift the nation into a new age of school accountability.

SREB is monitoring these efforts closely. An early 2013 report, *Federal Waivers Grant Flexibility to No Child Left Behind in SREB States*, alerted policy-makers that 13 SREB states (Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia) had received waivers. Alabama and Texas now have waivers pending. West Virginia's waiver approval came too late to analyze in this *SREB Policy Brief*. This brief updates you and other leaders on the key policies the 13 SREB states plan to implement so you can make informed decisions and address any concerns of public stakeholders.

The policies introduce new achievement goals, new systems for evaluating school performance, new ways to identify low-performing schools — and signal the end to major *NCLB* school accountability requirements that had been a federal standard for the past decade.

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How does the flexibility program work?

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) began offering waivers to states because some of *NCLB*'s school accountability requirements were particularly rigid. The waivers grew out of a concern that, as Congress works out more permanent solutions to reauthorize *NCLB*, states needed immediate relief from the more onerous requirements in the Act and flexibility to reform their school accountability systems. States that request waivers to *NCLB* must meet federal guidelines for receiving flexibility; the USDOE approves both the waiver requests and the new state accountability plans created to substitute for *NCLB* provisions. This means states have to adopt certain policies the USDOE considers fundamental to school accountability reform, such as college and career readiness, differentiated

accountability, and teacher evaluation systems tied to student performance.

State education leaders believe these reforms will change the school accountability landscape. The waivers give states the flexibility to move forward with new policies that will, in effect, roll back the main tenets of *NCLB*'s school accountability system (such as measuring adequate yearly progress and setting the same achievement goals for all groups of students) and introduce new policies that will transform the way schools are held accountable for raising student achievement. State leaders expect these new policies, implemented under the flexibility program, will be made permanent when ESEA is reauthorized.

Why does your state need flexibility to *NCLB*?

While *NCLB* provides a common framework for states to improve academic performance through school accountability, most policy-makers believe it has serious flaws. Four major ones play an important role in state plans to reform school accountability and are described below. (For a quick primer on *NCLB*, see Box A.)

1. ***The Act calls for 100 percent of students to reach proficiency in reading and mathematics on state assessments by 2014 — a goal that most leaders think is ambitious but impractical.*** Students and schools have different capacities for meeting proficiency targets, and some students will take longer than others to become proficient. The Act provides an unfortunate incentive for states to set lower standards in key subjects like reading and math to increase the chances that *every child* will meet them. It also provides incentive for schools to *narrow the curriculum* to reading and math, and thereby reduce instructional time for science, social studies, physical education and the arts.
2. ***NCLB's accountability system, based on adequate yearly progress (AYP), only rewards***
3. ***NCLB's "all-or-nothing" approach to accountability results in labeling too many schools as low-performing.*** Many otherwise high- or mid-performing schools became stigmatized. When this happens, school morale, community pride and economic development can all take a significant hit. An additional blow to many of these schools is that adequate funding is not available to help them address the problems. For schools that are both low-performing and high-poverty, federal funding can help support school improvement efforts; but for other low-performing schools, states have had to shoulder the costs of school improvement — and spread limited resources across too many schools. Many state leaders believe it is more efficient to concentrate resources on the truly low-performing schools.

Box A

Major Provisions of *NCLB*

Prior to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, school accountability was the responsibility of states. *NCLB* requires all states to improve students' academic performance through a common framework of school accountability that includes: (1) criteria for measuring student performance and school progress, (2) school improvement actions for low-performing schools, and (3) requirements on federal funding used to assist schools with large percentages of students from low-income families.

- **2014 Performance Goal: All students** must reach a level of proficiency on state assessments in reading and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013-2014 school year. States must hold schools accountable for raising student performance to meet this goal, both overall and for specific student groups: racial and ethnic groups, those from low-income families, students with disabilities, and English-language learners.
- **Annual Measurable Objectives:** States must set **annual targets**, called Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), for the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level in reading and math and for student performance on at least one other academic indicator (usually, graduation rates for high schools and attendance rates for elementary and middle grades schools). States can choose their own annual targets for each grade level and subject, but targets must move incrementally toward 100 percent proficiency. This means annual targets for the percentage of students scoring at the proficient level must increase over time and reach 100 percent by 2014.
- **Adequate Yearly Progress:** To maintain accountability, schools and districts have to make **adequate yearly progress (AYP)** by meeting all annual targets for overall performance and for the performance of individual student groups each year. If even one student group misses the annual targets (for example, students with disabilities) then the school is not considered "making AYP." Schools and districts that do not make AYP are identified publicly and may face state intervention for school improvement.
- **Title I Schools:** These are schools that receive federal funding to serve large percentages of students from low-income families. Title I schools must take certain **school improvement actions** if they fail to make AYP for two consecutive years. These actions include offering supplemental tutoring and allowing students to transfer to higher-quality schools in the district — *NCLB*'s version of "school choice." If Title I schools fail to make AYP after taking these actions, they face more stringent consequences that escalate over time. Consequences can result in school closure.
- **Federal Funding:** *NCLB*'s funding source is ESEA's Title I (Part A) aid to states for assistance to students from low-income families. Title I aid is concentrated to schools with the largest percentages of students from low-income families; in order to qualify for certain Title I funds, schools must meet a poverty threshold. Additionally, the law requires states to reserve specific amounts of federal funds for school improvement actions, and it limits the transfer of funds from one program to another.

4. *NCLB* requires that states administer the same school improvement actions for all low-performing schools. Title I funding for low-performing schools can only be used to support specific school improvement actions and treats all low-performing schools alike. Some schools

miss annual targets by a large margin, some by a small margin, and some have fallen short in only one student group. Yet they all have to choose their school improvement actions from the same limited list of federally approved programs.

What key policies have SREB states agreed to adopt to qualify for waivers to *NCLB*?

School accountability has been central to the SREB region's concern for school quality and student achievement for decades. SREB's current *Challenge to Lead 2020* goals call for student achievement to exceed state standards and national averages — and recognize school accountability as a key policy lever in ensuring student success for all groups. As leaders in accountability reform, all SREB states applied for waivers to *NCLB* — seeking permission to create new plans for improving school performance through accountability.

For the 13 SREB states that have already received waivers, this report details the key policies these states have outlined in their plans to substitute for *NCLB* accountability provisions. The USDOE released federal guidelines to states that offer them a variety of options for incorporating new reforms in their school accountability plans. While the 13 SREB states vary considerably in their reform plans, these states have all given high priority to **five key policies**. By centering on these five policies, policy-makers can compare accountability reform in these 13 states:

1. college- and career-readiness standards
2. differentiated accountability
3. ambitious but achievable goals
4. a tiered methodology to identify schools for improvement, and
5. teacher and principal evaluation systems partially based on student achievement.

Policy 1: College- and Career-Readiness Standards

Federal guidelines give a limited definition of college- and career-readiness standards — declaring only that they “are content standards for kindergarten through 12th grade that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation.” States should adopt college- and career-readiness standards in at least reading/language arts and math and create a transition plan to implement their standards for all students no later than the 2013-2014 school year. States have two options: (1) adopt standards common to a significant number of states, or (2) adopt standards approved by a state network of institutions of higher education.

With the exception of Virginia, every SREB state approved for flexibility has adopted the Common Core State Standards in reading/language arts and math as its college- and career-readiness standards and will transition to new common assessments in those subjects in the 2014-2015 school year. Virginia adopted its own college- and career-readiness standards and accompanying assessments that were approved by U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan as meeting the defined criteria.

Policy 2: Differentiated Accountability

States receiving waivers to *NCLB* may substitute a state-specific accountability framework for *NCLB*'s AYP system for tracking school performance and progress. They must continue to report proficiency rates — defined by *NCLB* as “meeting state standards” — in at least reading/language arts and math for all students and individual student groups; graduation rates for all students and individual student groups; and school performance and progress over time, including the performance and progress of individual student groups. But each state has the flexibility to decide its own system to hold schools accountable for these measures.

All 13 SREB states approved for flexibility will set annual targets for: (1) the percentage of students meeting state standards, and (2) *progress* to raise the percentage of students scoring at this “proficiency level.” They also will report student progress in meeting annual targets at the school, district and state level, with separate group results for the total student population and for individual student groups. SREB states differ, however, in how they will define school performance, calculate progress and determine accountability status. (See Table 1).

Only Delaware will continue to calculate AYP as it had been under *NLCB* and require schools to meet annual targets for the individual performance of all groups of students as determined by the Act. Delaware's new system, however, will not use the old AYP designations, such as “Needs Improvement,” to identify schools.

Table 1

Accountability Frameworks in SREB States with *NCLB* Waivers¹, June 2013

State	AYP System, With Some Modifications	Measures Percentage of Students Meeting Annual Targets Only	Performance Index	Index Score Assigns Letter Grades in A-F Grading System
Arkansas		✓		
Delaware	✓			
Florida			✓	✓
Georgia			✓	
Kentucky			✓	
Louisiana			✓	✓
Maryland			✓	
Mississippi			✓	
North Carolina ²		✓		
Oklahoma			✓	✓
South Carolina			✓	✓
Tennessee ³		✓		
Virginia ⁴		✓		

¹ All states that receive waivers to *NCLB* provisions will continue to report the percentage of students meeting annual targets for all students and individual student groups.

² North Carolina recently passed a law requiring an A-F grading system, and it is currently under development. The A-F grading system was not a part of its original state plan submitted in the waiver request.

³ Tennessee does not use an A-F grading system to rank the overall performance of schools, but it does issue letter grades for schools in each content area (e.g., reading, math, science and social studies).

⁴ The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) program is used, along with other indicators, to recognize exemplary schools in Virginia.

Source: Prepared by SREB.

For some SREB states, performance and progress will be defined as they had been under the AYP system — that is, by the percentage of students meeting annual targets. A school’s accountability status, however, will not be determined by the individual performance of all groups of students. For example, Arkansas requires each school to meet annual targets for all students and for a newly created Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG), which includes students from low-income families, English-language learners and students with disabilities. Schools that meet their annual targets for all students and TAGG are identified as “Achieving,” but those that do not meet their annual targets for all students and TAGG are labeled as “Needs Improvement.” This practice differs from *NCLB*, where schools could not make AYP if

even one of the student groups comprising TAGG missed its annual targets.

Eight SREB states replaced the AYP system with performance indexes that broaden the way school performance is defined. Indexes allow states to calculate an overall score based on the weighted averages of many performance indicators, including state assessments, school readiness, and achievement gap reductions. Four SREB states assign letter grades (A to F), using an index system to rank school performance and report accountability status. Similarly, Maryland uses index scores to assign schools to different strands (numbering 1 to 5) that correspond to a specific level of school performance and state support. (See Box B for a typical performance index.)

Box B

What Does a Performance Index¹ Look Like?

Overall Index Score		
30% Achievement	40% Gap Reduction	30% Student Growth
Measured by the percentage of all students scoring at or above proficiency ²	Measured by the gap between the lowest-performing student group and the highest-performing student group within a school	Measured by the percent of students making one year's growth on state assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mathematics ■ Reading ■ Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mathematics ■ Reading ■ Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mathematics ■ Reading
<p>¹ The example is based on Maryland's School Progress Index (SPI) — http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/esea_flex/spi.</p> <p>² Proficiency means meeting state standards on state assessments.</p> <p>Source: Prepared by SREB.</p>		

Performance indexes can lead to more balanced judgments in tracking school performance and progress. Low values in one indicator — for example, reading performance — can be balanced by high values in another indicator — for example, mathematics growth — making it possible for schools to have an accountability status that reflects student performance more comprehensively than *NCLB*'s all-or-nothing approach. (Under *NCLB*, a low value on reading performance by a single student group, even if all other groups had significantly higher values, would cause a school to be labeled “Needs Improvement.”)

Efforts to broaden the way school performance is defined are common among SREB states with waivers, even for those without a performance index. All but three SREB states approved for flexibility added science assessments to their accountability frameworks, either for all grade levels or for certain grades. Five states — Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma and South Carolina — include both social studies and science assessments, either for all grade levels or for certain grades.

Some SREB states also added assessments to measure students' ability to be successful in postsecondary education, such as the ACT's EPAS programs (the

EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT Assessments). Others adopted Advanced Placement (AP) exams or industry certification exams. Using these college- and career readiness indicators represents a major shift from *NCLB*, which had a narrow focus of improving reading and mathematics performance on state assessments. (See Table 2.)

Policy 3: Ambitious but Achievable Goals

Under flexibility guidelines, states can replace *NCLB*'s 2014 goal that 100 percent of children reach proficiency in reading and math on state assessments with ambitious but achievable goals — where annual targets rise steadily over time. States have three options in setting a new performance goal: (1) reduce by half the percentage of students not meeting proficiency in the state from 2012 to 2017, (2) increase proficiency levels to 100 percent by 2020, or (3) create a state-specific goal that results in ambitious but achievable annual targets.

Five SREB states — Maryland, Delaware, Georgia, Mississippi and North Carolina — chose the first option. These states must set annual targets in equal increments from 2012 to 2017, using 2010-2011 proficiency levels as the starting point. The flexibility allows these states to differentiate annual targets for

Table 2

Content Assessments in Accountability Systems for SREB States with *NCLB* Waivers, June 2013

State	Elementary	Middle Grades	High School
Arkansas ¹	Reading, math	Reading, math	End-of-course exams in Algebra I, grade 11 reading and geometry
Delaware	Reading, math	Reading, math	Reading, math
Florida	Reading, math, writing and science	Reading, math, writing and science	Reading, math, writing and science
			A specific list of approved postsecondary assessments [e.g., SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement (AP) and industry certifications]
Georgia ²	English/language arts, reading, math, science and social studies	English/language arts, reading, math, science and social studies	End-of-course exams in ninth-grade literature, American literature, biology, economics, Math 1, Math 2, physical science and U.S. history
Kentucky	Reading, math, science, social studies and writing	Reading, math, science, social studies and writing	End-of-course exams in Algebra II, English II, biology and U.S. history; on-demand writing tests
		EXPLORE for grade 8 only	A specific list of approved postsecondary assessments (e.g., ACT, COMPASS and industry certifications)
Louisiana ³	Reading, math, science and social studies	Reading, math, science and social studies	End-of-course exams in English II, English III, Algebra I, geometry, biology and American History
			ACT composite school averages ⁴
Maryland	Reading, math and science	Reading, math and science	English, algebra and biology
Mississippi ³	Reading, math	Reading, math	English II, algebra I and biology
	Science for grade 5 only	Science for grade 8 only	
North Carolina ³	Reading, math	Reading, math	End-of-course exams in Algebra I, English II and biology
	Science for grade 5 only	Science for grade 8 only	ACT composite scores ⁵
Oklahoma ³	Reading, math	Reading, math	End-of-course exams in Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology I, English II, English III, geometry and U.S. history
	Science, social studies and writing for grade 5 only	Geography for grade 7 only; Science, U.S history and writing for grade 8 only	A specific list of approved postsecondary assessments [e.g., SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement (AP)]
South Carolina ³	Reading, math, science and social studies	Reading, math, science and social studies	Reading, math
			End-of-course exams in biology and U.S. history
Tennessee	Reading, math and science	Reading, math and science	End-of-course exams in Algebra I, English II and biology
Virginia	Reading, math	Reading, math	End-of-course exams in reading, Algebra I, geometry and Algebra II

¹ Arkansas requires science assessments for grades 5 and 7 and a biology end-of-course exam for high school students. However, these assessments are not used for accountability determinations.

² Georgia's Math 1 and Math 2 courses will transition to Common Core Georgia Performance Standards coordinate algebra and analytic geometry, respectively.

³ In Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma and South Carolina, reading assessments are listed as "English/language arts" assessments.

⁴ In Louisiana, the ACT composite average of each high school is weighted in the School Performance Score (SPS).

⁵ Each school in North Carolina has an ACT annual target for all students and individual student groups.

Source: Prepared by SREB.

each school and student group, based on individual starting points. This means that — unlike the *NCLB* practice — each student group and school has a different annual target. Student groups and schools starting with the lowest performance, however, are required to make the greatest achievement gains by 2017. (For an example of differentiated annual targets, see Box C.)

The remaining SREB states — Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Kentucky, Florida, South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee — chose to create their own state-specific goals. Some also plan to reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students before 2017 but will design a formula unique to the state for setting annual targets. For example, Virginia will begin by ranking all schools in the state by student performance, and then set annual targets in equal increments based on the difference between the highest- and lowest-performing schools. However,

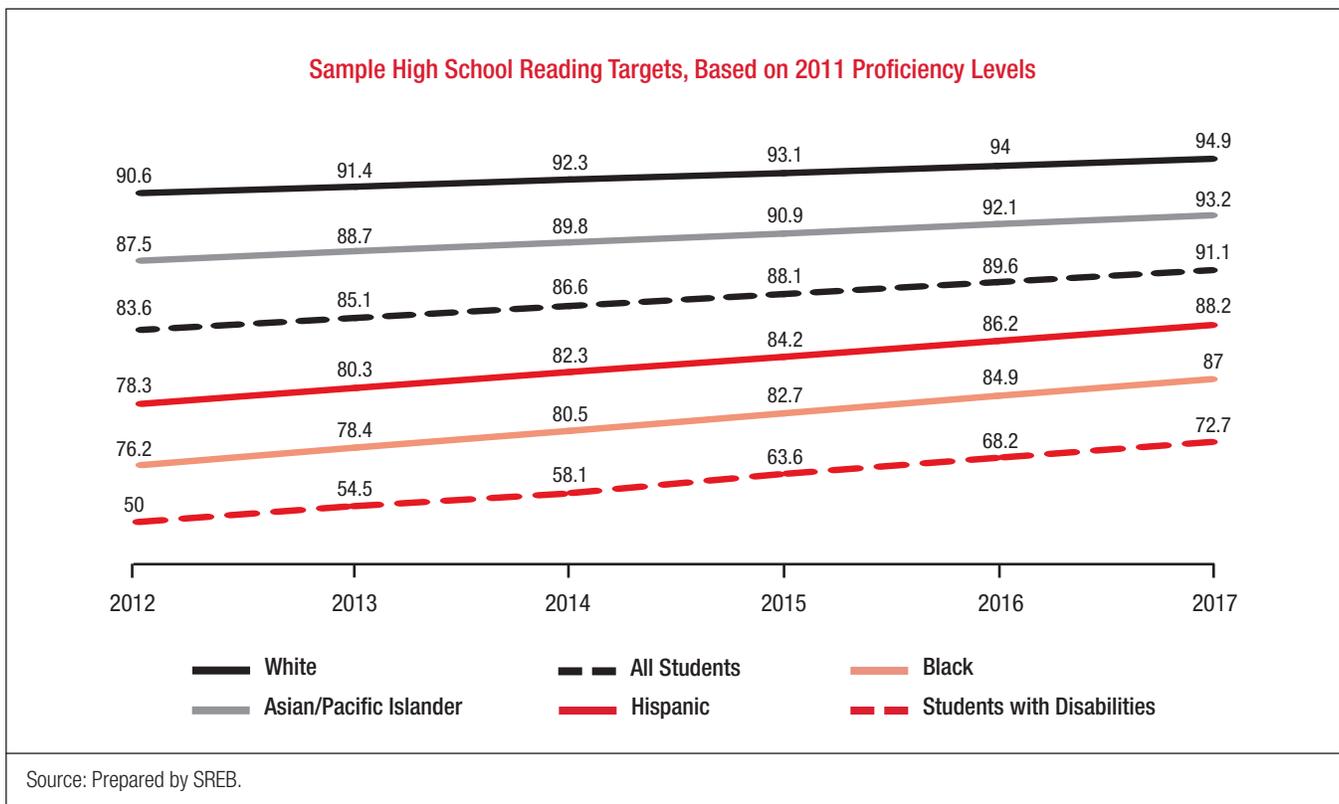
Louisiana, which also chose the third option, is the only SREB state that decided to keep the original 2014 goal for 100 percent proficiency in reading and math.

Four states — Kentucky, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee — developed unique performance goals and formulas for setting annual targets. For example, Kentucky requires each school to improve its overall score each year on the state’s performance index: Each school meets its annual targets by adding points to its overall score.

Many SREB states have adopted the USDOE provision allowing states to drop their reliance on individual student group performance as a basis for rating schools. They will now rely more on differentiated annual targets for schools and student groups, with customized starting points that depend upon group performance in the beginning year of the cycle. Whereas states had to make major accountability

Box C

What Does It Mean to Differentiate Performance Targets?



decisions based on a single groups' assessment results during the *NCLB* era, SREB states will now hold themselves accountable for narrowing the achievement gap among specific student groups. The student groups represented in annual targets for narrowing the achievement gap differ by state. For example:

- Maryland will set annual targets for narrowing achievement gaps between the highest-performing student groups and lowest-performing student groups within a school. Because the nature of the achievement gaps varies within schools, each school will have a customized target for raising the performance of its weakest student group.
- Tennessee set annual targets for narrowing achievement gaps between four specific comparison groups for each school: racial and ethnic groups compared with all students, students from low-income families compared with students not from low-income families, English-language learners compared with students who are not English-language learners, and students with disabilities compared with students who do not have disabilities.
- Virginia sorted certain student groups into three “proficiency gap groups” and set separate annual targets for the overall performance of each of three “gap groups”:
 - **Gap Group 1:** students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English-language learners, unduplicated
 - **Gap Group 2:** black students, not of Hispanic origin, including students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students from low-income families
 - **Gap Group 3:** Hispanic students, of one or more races, including students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students from low-income families
- Kentucky and Arkansas combined individual student groups into one “super group” and will hold schools accountable for the overall performance of the super group:
 - Kentucky’s Student Gap Group includes students from certain racial and ethnic groups (black, Hispanic and American Indian students), students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English-language learners.
 - Arkansas’s Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) includes students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English-language learners.
- Florida, Louisiana and Oklahoma set annual targets that require schools to raise proficiency levels of the lowest-performing students, who may belong to any student group as defined by *NCLB*.

Policy 4: Tiered Methodology to Identify Schools for Improvement

One of the core principles of the federal flexibility program calls for states to remove the unnecessary burden placed on local districts to meet both state and federal accountability requirements. Prior to *NCLB*, every SREB state had taken actions to hold schools accountable for raising student achievement. When *NCLB* was enacted, 10 SREB states decided to retain their state accountability systems in addition to the new *NCLB* requirements. This meant school districts in these states had to meet two sets of accountability requirements. These parallel state and federal systems placed excessive regulations on local districts; they also began to drain state and local resources as more schools failed to achieve accountability thresholds and required state support.

The USDOE asked states to dismantle dual accountability systems, recognize excellent schools, funnel state support to the lowest-performing schools, and customize school improvement actions for schools with the greatest needs. Federal guidelines require states to develop accountability systems using a three-tiered approach for improving schools. The majority of schools would no longer be considered as failing for not meeting annual targets. Schools that deserve recognition or demonstrate the greatest need would be labeled “Reward Schools,” “Priority Schools” or “Focus Schools.”

- Reward Schools are among the highest-performing schools in each state, as demonstrated by highest performance or most progress on state assessments. The purpose of identifying Reward Schools is to recognize, reward and incentivize school excellence.
- Priority Schools are among the lowest-performing schools in each state, and they receive the most aggressive state intervention to improve student achievement. Priority Schools should include at least 5 percent of all Title I schools in the state, and they are identified as: (1) lowest-performing, based on the achievement of all students on state assessments, (2) Title I- or Title I-eligible high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent, and (3) Tier I or Tier II schools operating under a School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. Schools that enter Priority School status remain in that status for three years.
- Focus Schools have the largest within-school achievement gaps based on student performance and/or graduation rate, or they have student groups with the lowest performance and/or graduation rates in the state. At least 10 percent of the state's Title I schools should be identified as Focus Schools. Focus Schools also include Title I high schools with graduation rates that are less than 60 percent and are not already identified as Priority Schools. Focus Schools should receive state support tailored to the specific needs of each school and remain in Focus School status for three years.

States usually set their own additional criteria for identifying Focus Schools, and using this practice will result in more variation among SREB states. For example, Arkansas will determine Focus School status by the performance of its consolidated student group — TAGG. Schools with the largest gap between TAGG and non-TAGG students will be identified as Focus Schools in Arkansas.

In Louisiana's A-F grading system, Focus Schools are: elementary and middle grades schools with a grade

of F and not already managed by the state-run Recovery School District; and high schools with a cohort graduation rate less than 60 percent and not already managed by the state-run Recovery School District.

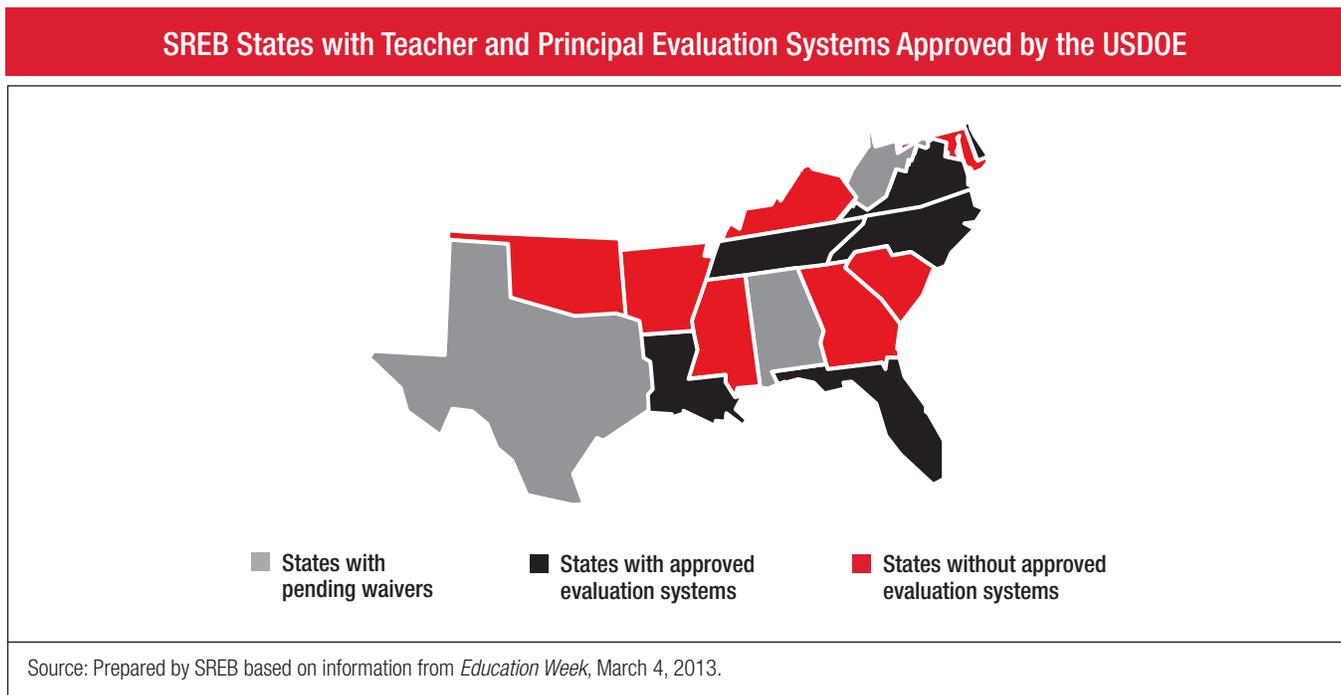
Focus Schools can be identified in two ways in North Carolina. Focus Schools have the largest in-school achievement gap above the three-year state average between the highest-performing student group and the lowest-performing student group. Schools with a student group that has a proficiency rate below 50 percent for two prior years are also identified as Focus Schools.

Policy 5: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

Federal guidelines for developing new teacher and principal evaluation systems to include in revised school accountability plans are perhaps the most ambiguous. According to the guidelines, states had to adopt evaluation systems using multiple measures of teacher and principal effectiveness. They also had to incorporate student performance or growth as a significant factor in personnel decisions. The guidelines were unclear, however, on which measures of student growth would count as a "significant factor" and what specific personnel decisions should be tied to student performance. Would it include tenure, job assignments and pay increases? How should the state measure academic growth for students in subjects for which the state has no standard assessment? Most states nationwide are still grappling with these issues.

Of the 34 states (and Washington, D.C.) that have received waivers, 12 obtained approval to implement their teacher and principal evaluation systems as part of their new accountability systems. Half of these are SREB states — Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. The remaining seven SREB states developed personnel evaluation systems but were required to revise them before they can implement them within their accountability systems. They are in the process of completing their revisions and awaiting federal approval. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1



Policy considerations

As states implemented their educational reforms to replace *NCLB* provisions and to gain greater flexibility in curriculum, assessment and evaluation, many found that their accountability systems became more complex, less transparent and less uniform from state to state. Once some SREB state agencies released their initial plans to the public, they encountered criticism from various stakeholder groups. As a result, they had to pull them back and revise them. Other states were able to move ahead on schedule but found it necessary to tweak their policies as they rolled them out.

As the work to implement these new policies continues, you and other leaders and policy-makers in the region should consider three important areas of concern to public stakeholders.

- **Transparency.** Is your state's accountability system transparent in reporting student performance and progress? Some systems are not as clear to stakeholders as they need to be. Some states plan to report achievement data using indexes

and formulas that are confusing to stakeholders and tend to obscure widening achievement gaps. While performance indexes help to curb an over-reliance on test results, they can make it difficult for teachers and principals to understand them and use them to analyze trends and to improve their schools' status. School staff and leadership should not require significant training to be able to use an index: It should be clear and useful in improving classroom practice.

The indexes should also be easy for policy-makers to use to understand school performance, follow results and reach conclusions. As a policy-maker, when you review results from state assessments in your state, ask about the performance on key subjects and key groups in your state. Are results by grade level apparent? If you cannot follow important trends, ask for more detailed information.

- **Student groups.** Will different annual targets for student groups raise proficiency levels or reinforce low expectations? It remains to be seen. Some

educators applaud different annual targets for different groups because the performance expectations are more realistic. Others argue that setting different targets will lead to lower expectations for traditionally under-performing groups. These groups are now often combined with others in “super groups.” Because most SREB states will not hold schools accountable for the separate performance of each racial and ethnic student group, for economic groups, for students with disabilities and for English-language learners, policymakers, parents and students need safeguards to ensure the focus on these students does not expire with *NCLB*.

- **Priority and Focus Schools.** The new methodology for identifying schools for assistance may well limit aggressive state intervention to the lowest-performing schools. States are required to

identify only 5 percent of Title I schools as Priority Schools and only 10 percent of Title I schools as Focus Schools. Under *NCLB*, they had to assist all schools that were considered low-performing. The changed rules relax both the definition of a low-performing school and the percentage of them that must be addressed. This means that the majority of public schools will face few consequences even if they fail to meet annual targets.

This is a major shift from *NCLB* and severely relaxes the sweeping accountability standards of the past decade. To help all low-performing schools improve student achievement, states should avoid keeping the same schools in Priority or Focus status permanently.

Additionally, states should establish flexible criteria for schools to enter and exit Priority and Focus status so that more lower-performing schools are served.

Looking ahead

A key question obviously has yet to be fully addressed: How will Congress accommodate these state policies when ESEA is reauthorized? Whether Congress will rein in state flexibility in favor of a more universal policy when they reauthorize the Act is hard to predict.

In recent Congressional hearings on waivers, state leaders made it clear to federal lawmakers that reform efforts under the flexibility program should be included in any reauthorization of ESEA. States have invested significant resources to establish college- and career-readiness standards, performance indexes and new performance goals. They insist it will be hard for states if Congress were to decide to roll back these policies now that new state accountability systems are in place.

Available with this *SREB Policy Brief* are profiles of the 13 SREB states already approved for waivers. They lay out the approved accountability plan for each state

under the flexibility program. Although it is too soon to tell if the approved plans are final (or if states will find it necessary to revise them as implementation continues), a comparison of SREB states gives a sense of overlapping themes as well as distinguishing elements within each plan.

Although *NCLB* presented serious problems in its implementation, the law provided clear and standard practices for school accountability and promoted efforts to close achievement gaps for major student groups. Flexibility relieves states from *NCLB*'s more onerous requirements and replaces them with state-specific plans — sometimes creating quite complex systems. The challenge for SREB states will be to use the greater flexibility that these new systems may provide to improve student performance, college and career readiness, and high school graduation rates for all students.

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Arkansas: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Arkansas adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* provisions?

Performance Goal >	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — among all students and in all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science (grade 5 only)
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science (grade 7 only)
High	End-of-course exams: reading (grade 11), Algebra I, geometry, biology Graduation rate

How will Arkansas measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

Similar to *NCLB*'s adequate yearly progress (AYP) system, Arkansas will measure school performance and progress by the percentage of students meeting state standards in reading and mathematics — i.e., scoring at the proficient level on state assessments. Arkansas requires science assessments for grades 5 and 7 and a biology end-of-course exam, but these assessments/exams are not used to make accountability determinations.

Schools do not have to meet annual targets for each separate student group, as had been the practice under *NCLB*¹. Arkansas requires schools to meet annual targets for all students and a Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) to show progress in achieving the state's performance goal. TAGG includes the overall test performance of students from low-income families, English-language learners and students with disabilities. Schools that meet their annual targets for all students and TAGG are identified as "Achieving," and schools that do not meet annual targets for all students and TAGG are labeled as "Needs Improvement."

Arkansas's Accountability Model², 2013

To be considered Achieving, elementary and middle grades must:

- test 95 percent of all students and TAGG, and
- meet reading and math performance targets for all students and TAGG **or** meet reading and math progress/growth targets for all students and TAGG.

To be considered Achieving, high schools must:

- test 95 percent of all students and TAGG, and
- meet reading and math performance targets for all students and TAGG **and** meet graduation rate targets for all students and TAGG.

Notes: ¹All states that receive waivers to *NCLB* provisions will continue to report proficiency levels, or the percentage of students meeting annual targets, for all students and individual student groups. ²Schools that do not receive Achieving designation are classified as Needs Improvement schools.

Source: Arkansas ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www.arkansased.org/esea-flexibility>.

How will Arkansas identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

In Arkansas, all schools are given a broad accountability rating (Achieving/Needs Improvement) but are further classified among five accountability categories: Reward, Achieving, Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority. All schools — both Title I¹ and non-Title I schools — are included among the five categories. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Arkansas developed separate criteria to identify schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward ²	Schools demonstrating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high performance or high progress • high TAGG populations with high performance or high progress, and • no significant gaps among individual student groups 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Achieving	Schools that meet annual targets for progress, performance or graduation rate (high schools) for all students and TAGG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools that meet all annual targets must submit a School Improvement Plan every three years. • Schools that meet most annual targets must submit a School Improvement Plan every year. 	Schools can lose Achieving status for failing to meet annual targets.
Needs Improvement	Schools that fail to meet annual targets for progress, performance or graduation rate (high schools) for all students and TAGG	School Improvement Plan with customized interventions approved by state agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet annual targets for two consecutive years for all students and TAGG, and • make satisfactory progress on School Improvement Plan
Needs Improvement Focus ³	10 percent of low-performing Title I schools with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • largest achievement gaps between TAGG and non-TAGG students, and • lowest performance and/or graduation rates for student groups 	Targeted Improvement Plan with customized interventions approved by state agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet annual targets for all students and TAGG for two years, and • improve progress of all student groups
Needs Improvement Priority ³	5 percent of the lowest-performing Title I schools that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I or Title I-eligible high schools with less than 60 percent graduation rate, and • Tier I and Tier II SIG⁴ 	Priority Improvement Plan with customized interventions approved by state agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet annual targets for two consecutive years for all students and TAGG, and • make satisfactory progress on the Priority Improvement Plan

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families. ²In Arkansas, Reward Schools are called “Exemplary Schools.” ³Non-Title I schools also are eligible for Focus or Priority status if they show commensurate performance with Title I schools that receive the same designation. ⁴Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG) at Tier I or Tier II.

Source: Arkansas ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www.arkansased.org/esea-flexibility>.

Sources:

- **Arkansas ESEA Flexibility Request** — <http://www.arkansased.org/esea-flexibility>.
Achievement goal, pg. 45
Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG), pg. 46
Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pgs. 44-45
School performance and progress, pgs. 57-58
“Achieving” status, pg. 66
Multi-tiered levels of support, pgs. 67-68
- **Arkansas ESEA Flexibility Presentation** — <http://www.arkansased.org/esea-flexibility>.
Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 8
Achievement goal, pg. 9
DARTSS system, pg. 11
Exemplary Schools, pg. 26
Priority Schools, pg. 27
Focus Schools, pg. 28

Delaware: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Delaware adopt after receiving waivers to <i>No Child Left Behind</i> provisions?	
Performance Goal ➤	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — among all students and in all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics Attendance rate Participation rate
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics Attendance rate Participation rate
High	State assessments: reading, mathematics Graduation rate Participation rate
How will Delaware measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?	
<p>Delaware will keep the same methodology for calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP) as defined in <i>NCLB</i> — i.e., the percentage of students meeting annual targets in reading and mathematics. Schools that meet their annual targets for all students and individual student groups (as defined by <i>NCLB</i>) are identified as making AYP. However, Delaware will use its flexibility to <i>NCLB</i> to set differentiated annual targets for schools and student groups, using 2011 proficiency levels as the starting point. This means schools and student groups will have different annual targets.</p> <p>Schools can make AYP either by meeting performance targets (based on proficiency levels) or by meeting growth model targets (based on student growth) — for all students and individual student groups. Delaware will no longer use the “Needs Improvement” label and associated interventions in schools that do not make AYP.</p>	
Delaware’s Accountability Model, 2013	
<p>To make AYP, elementary and middle grades must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test 95 percent of all students and each student group, • meet a 90 percent attendance target, and • meet growth targets or performance targets for both reading and mathematics, for all students and individual student groups. <p>To make AYP, high schools must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test 95 percent of all students and each student group, • meet graduation targets for all students and individual student groups, and • meet growth targets or performance targets for reading and mathematics, for all students and individual student groups. 	
<p>Source: Delaware ESEA Flexibility Request — http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/de.pdf.</p>	

How will Delaware identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

In Delaware, all schools receive an accountability designation (Met AYP/AYP Not Met) based on school performance and progress in meeting annual targets. Title I schools¹ that meet the established criteria are further classified as Reward, Priority and Focus Schools. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Delaware developed separate criteria for identifying these schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward ²	Title I schools that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> made AYP reduced achievement gap among individual student groups have highest performance for all students and student groups, or show high progress for all students and student groups. 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Focus	10 percent of low-performing Title I schools with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> largest gaps between low-income and non-low income students, or lowest performance for student groups 	Customized interventions approved by state agency	Meet specialized performance targets for two consecutive years for each student group identified as having low performance
Priority	5 percent of low-performing Title I schools that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> those identified as a “Persistently Low-Achieving School” by a state agency Title I or Title I-eligible high schools with less than 60 percent graduation rate, and those operating under Tier I and Tier II SIG³ 	Placed under state-run Partnership Zone with customized interventions approved by state agency All Partnership Zone schools remain under state control for three years.	There are two options for exiting Priority status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: Make AYP at least once by second year in Partnership Zone Option 2: Meet specialized AMOs for reading and mathematics by second year in Partnership Zone

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²Delaware also has a Recognition Program to reward high-performing or high-progress schools. Unlike Reward Schools, Recognition Schools could be Title I or non-Title I schools. ³Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Delaware ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/de.pdf>.

Source: Delaware ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/de.pdf>.

- Achievement goal, pg. 68
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 68
- School performance and progress, pgs. 71-72
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), pg. 60
- Reward Schools, pg. 72
- Priority Schools, pg. 83
- Partnership Zone, pgs. 83, 90
- Focus Schools, pg. 93

Florida: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Florida adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* provisions?

Performance Goal ➤	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — among all students and in all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science, writing
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science, writing End-of-course exam: Algebra I
High	State assessments: reading, writing End-of-course exams: Algebra I, biology Accelerated curricula (e.g., Advanced Placement, industry certifications) Graduation rate College and career readiness: ACT, SAT, Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT)

How will Florida measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

Florida's School Grades system relies on a performance index to assign each school an A-to-F letter grade. There are different School Grades scales for elementary (800-point scale), middle grades and K-8 schools (900-point scale), high schools (1600-point scale) and K-12 or 6-12 combination schools (1700-point scale). School Grades for elementary and middle grades are based on achievement results — for all students and the lowest-performing 25 percent of students. School Grades for high schools are based on state assessments and other components, such as graduation rate. The elementary School Grades model is illustrated in this profile. To see all models, see the Source.

Florida also will track student progress by measuring the percentage of students meeting annual targets. Each school has a School Grade target, a reading and math performance target, and a progress/learning gains target for the lowest-performing 25 percent of students. There is also a statewide target that compares Florida's performance with high-performing states and nations on national and international assessments.

Florida's Elementary School Grades Model, 2013

Reading	Math	Writing	Science			
Performance ¹ 100 points	Performance 100 points	Performance 100 points	Performance 100 points			
Progress ² 100 points	Progress 100 points	Total Available Points = 800 100 points for each component				
Progress of lowest 25 percent ³ 100 points	Progress of lowest 25 percent 100 points					
Source: Florida Department of Education — http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/pdf/1112/Guidesheet2012SchoolGrades.pdf		School Grades Scale				
		A	B	C	D	F
		≥ 525 points	495 – 524 points	435 – 494 points	395 – 434 points	< 395 points

Notes: ¹Performance is measured by the percent of all students scoring satisfactory or higher on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in reading, math, writing and science. ²Progress is measured by the percent of students learning a year's worth of knowledge on FCAT reading and math assessments. ³Progress (lowest-performing) is measured by the percent of the lowest-performing 25 percent of students who are making a year's worth of progress on FCAT reading and math assessments.

How will Florida identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

Florida will use its School Grades system to identify Reward, Focus and Priority Schools. Florida added a fourth accountability category — Prevent — for schools assigned a grade of C in the accountability system. Both Title I schools¹ and non-Title I schools can be classified among the four accountability categories. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Florida developed separate criteria for identifying schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	Schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> with an A rating in the School Grades system, or that increased their status by a full letter grade from the previous year 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Prevent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools with a C rating in the School Grades system 	School Improvement Plan and appropriate interventions supervised by local district	Schools can improve their letter grade in the School Grades system above a C rating.
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools with a D rating in the School Grades system, or high schools with the lowest graduation rates for all students or student groups 	School Improvement Plan and appropriate interventions supervised by local district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools are required to improve their letter grades in the School Grades system to a C rating within two years. Schools that continue a D rating after two years will engage in more aggressive turnaround options.
Priority	Schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> with an F rating in the School Grades system among 5 percent of the lowest-performing Title I¹ schools, based on all students' achievement and progress, and currently operating under Tier I and Tier II SIG² 	Performance objectives and new operating structure approved by a state agency Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles	Schools are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve their letter grades in the School Grades system to a C rating for three consecutive years, and improve reading and math achievement targets established by a state agency.

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families. ²Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Florida ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/fl-amendment.pdf>.

Source: Florida ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/fl-amendment.pdf>.

- Performance goal, pg. 90
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 93
- School Grades system, pgs. 49-51
- Reward Schools, pg. 102
- Priority Schools, pg. 104
- Focus Schools, pg. 115
- Prevent Schools, pg. 79

Georgia: 2013 Accountability Profile

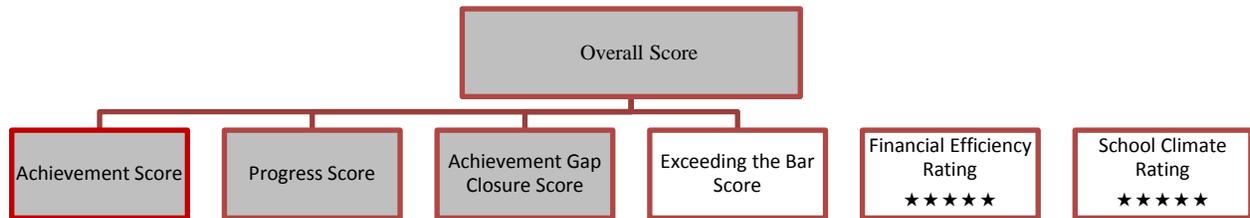
What new performance goal did Georgia adopt after receiving waivers to <i>No Child Left Behind</i> provisions?	
Performance Goal >	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — among all students and in all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics, English/language arts, science, social studies
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics, English/language arts, science, social studies
High	End-of-course exams: ninth-grade literature, American literature, Math I (transitioning to coordinate algebra), Math II (transitioning to analytic geometry), biology, economics, physical science, U.S. history Graduation rate

How will Georgia measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

Georgia replaced *NCLB*'s adequate yearly progress (AYP) system with a Performance Flag system. This flag system reports achievement results by grade level, student group and assessment/exam. For each set of assessment/exam results, schools receive green, yellow or red flags based on student performance in meeting annual targets. The system provides feedback to schools and systems on: 1) the percentage of students meeting state standards for each assessment; and 2) student groups making progress toward the final performance goal.

Georgia also created the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) as a broad measure of school progress and performance. The CCRPI is used to calculate an overall score that reflects a school's achievement, participation rates, student progress and success in narrowing achievement gaps. The CCRPI score is based on the weighted average of three subscores: Achievement Score, Progress Score and Achievement Gap Closure Score. A school may earn additional points to its overall CCRPI score by meeting a companion set of indicators called Exceeding the Bar. The CCRPI will also include a Financial Efficiency star rating and a School Climate star rating, based on one to five stars. These star ratings do not impact the overall CCRPI score.

Georgia's College and Career Ready Performance Index, 2013



Source: Georgia Department of Education — <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Accountability/Pages/default.aspx>.

How will Georgia identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

CCRPI scores provide a broad picture of school performance but do not affect the selection of Reward, Focus and Priority Schools. In Georgia, only Title I schools¹ are eligible for Reward, Focus or Priority status. Georgia added a fourth accountability category — Alert — for Title I or non-Title I schools with a student group whose performance falls below the state average for its peer group statewide. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Georgia developed separate criteria for identifying schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	Title I schools with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the highest performance or progress for all students and for student groups, and no significant gaps among student groups 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Focus	10 percent of low-performing Title I schools with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the largest gaps between the highest- and lowest-performing student groups, based on statistical calculation 	Customized interventions approved by state agency	Schools no longer meet the criteria for a Focus School for three consecutive years and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent in student groups over three years (elementary and middle grades schools), or increased graduation rates by 8 percent in student groups over three years (high schools)
Priority	5 percent of lowest-performing Title I schools that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title I or Title I-eligible high schools with less than 60 percent graduation rates, and Tier I and Tier II SIG² 	School Improvement Specialist assigned to each school to determine interventions aligned with turnaround principles	Schools no longer meet the criteria for a Priority School for three consecutive years and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent over three years (elementary and middle grades schools), or increased graduation rates by 8 percent over three years (high schools)
Alert	Title I and non-Title I schools in which a student group's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> graduation rate falls significantly below the state average for that group performance on any state assessment falls significantly below the state average for that group, or subject-area performance falls significantly below the state average for that subject area 	Customized interventions approved by state agency	Schools no longer meet the criteria for an Alert School for three consecutive years and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent in student groups over three years (elementary and middle grades schools), or increased graduation rates by 8 percent in student groups over three years (high schools)

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Georgia ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ga.pdf>.

Source: Georgia ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ga.pdf>

- Performance goal, pg. 49
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 50
- College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), pgs. 62-63
- Performance Flag System, pg. 51
- Reward Schools, pg. 67
- Priority Schools, pg. 69
- Focus Schools, pg. 79
- Alert Schools, pg. 80

Kentucky: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Kentucky adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* requirements?

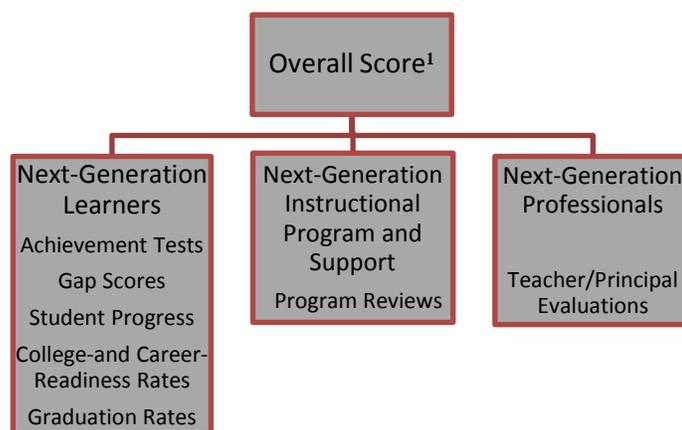
Performance Goal ➤	To increase each school's Overall Score on the state's performance index by 2017
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing College readiness: EXPLORE (grade 8 only)
High	End-of-course exams: Algebra II, English II, biology and U.S. history On-demand writing tests Graduation rate College readiness: ACT, Compass, Kentucky Online Testing Program (KYOTE)

How will Kentucky measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

Kentucky will assign each school an Overall Score, using a performance index that has three categories. The first category, Next-Generation Learners, **includes student achievement**: overall achievement scores, gap scores, individual student progress/growth scores, college- and career-readiness rates, and graduation rates. The second, Next-Generation Instruction and Support, **is based on program reviews** for arts and humanities, writing and practical living/career studies. The third, Next-Generation Professionals, **reflects teacher and principal effectiveness**.

The Overall Score is based on a 100-point scale. Each school is expected to increase its Overall Score — which serves as the annual target — each year to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). A statistical formula is used to set annual targets, which vary for each school according to the starting Overall Score, grade level (elementary, middle grades or high school) and school performance (low, average or high).

Kentucky's Accountability Model, 2013



Note: ¹The complete model is projected to phase in for the 2013-2014 school year.

Source: Kentucky Department of Education — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ky.pdf>.

How will Kentucky identify schools in its accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

In Kentucky, the Overall Score is used to create a distribution of all schools in the state. Schools ranked at the 90th percentile or higher are identified as “Distinguished,” and schools ranked at the 70th percentile or higher are identified as “Proficient.” All schools falling below the 70th percentile are called “Needs Improvement Schools.” Any school —Title I¹ or non-Title I — that meets the established criteria is further classified as a Reward, Focus or Priority School. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Kentucky developed separate criteria for identifying schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	Schools that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> highest-performing (with an overall index score in the 90th percentile or higher) and have met their annual targets, or high-progress, in the top 10 percent of schools with improvement and have met their annual targets 	Public recognition and financial rewards, subject to availability of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest-performing schools identified annually High-progress schools identified every two years because the calculation is based on two years’ worth of data
Focus	Schools that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are in the lowest 10 percent of the student group gap scores by level (elementary, middle grades, high school) and have missed AYP for past two years have any individual student groups underperforming in the third standard deviation below the mean, and are high schools with a graduation rate below 60 percent for two consecutive years 	Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), with customized interventions determined by state agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools in the 10 percent category must increase the student gap group above the lowest 10 percent, show improvement and make AYP for two consecutive years. Schools in the third standard deviation category must increase individual student group performance above the third standard deviation, show improvement and make AYP for two consecutive years. Schools in the graduation rate category must have a 70 percent or higher graduation rate and make AYP for two consecutive years.
Priority ²	Schools that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 percent of the lowest-performing Title I schools, based on overall achievement non-Title I schools in the lowest 5 percent of non-Title I schools with at least 35 percent poverty and that have failed to make AYP for three years high schools with a graduation rate below 60 percent for three or more consecutive years, and those under Tier I and Tier II SIG³ 	Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) Customized interventions determined by state agency consistent with turnaround principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make AYP for three consecutive years No longer in the lowest 5 percent of low-performing schools High schools need to have a 70 percent or higher graduation rate for three consecutive years.

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²Priority schools are those already identified as “Persistently low-achieving” by Kentucky statute 160.346 —

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/KRS/160-00/346.PDF>. ³Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Kentucky ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ky.pdf>.

Source: Kentucky ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ky.pdf>.

- Overall Score components and phase in, pg. 45
- Statistical calculation of annual targets, pgs. 54-55
- Reward Schools, pg. 64-65
- Priority Schools, pg. 68
- Focus Schools, pgs. 75-76

Louisiana: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Louisiana adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* requirements?

Performance Goal >	Louisiana kept the original <i>NCLB</i> goal that all students meet state standards in reading and mathematics by scoring at the proficient level or higher on state assessments by 2014.
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies
Middle Grades	State assessments: English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies Dropout Index
High	End-of-course exams: English II, English III, Algebra I, geometry, biology and American history Graduation Index Cohort graduation rate College and career readiness: ACT

How will Louisiana measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

In Louisiana, schools are now assigned letter grades (A-to-F) based on School Performance Scores derived from the state performance index. The School Performance Score (SPS) is based on a 150-point scale. An SPS score of 100 represents 100 percent proficiency for all students, and an SPS score of 150 demonstrates advanced proficiency for all students. SPS scores for the elementary and middle grades are based on achievement results and a Dropout Index for schools with grade 8. For high schools, SPS scores are based on end-of-course exams, average composite ACT scores, cohort graduation rates, and a graduation index.

Louisiana also will evaluate student progress by measuring the percent of students meeting annual targets. Each school has an SPS target, a reading and math performance target, and a progress/growth target for the lowest-performing 35 percent of students.

Louisiana's School Performance Scores, 2013

Grade Level	Achievement ¹	Graduation/Dropout Index	Cohort Graduation Rate			
K-5	English/language arts, math science and social studies (100%)					
K-8, 7-8	English/language arts, math, science and social studies (95%)	Dropout Index ² (5%)				
9-12	End-of-course exams (25%) ACT ³ (25%)	Graduation Index ⁴ (25%)	Cohort Graduation Rate (25%)			
Source: Louisiana Department of Education — http://www.louisianabelieves.com/accountability/school-performance-scores .		Total Available Points: 150				
		Letter-Grades Scale				
		A	B	C	D	F
		100 – 150	85 – 99.9	70 – 84.9	50 – 69.9	0 – 49.9

Notes: ¹Achievement results for elementary and middle grades are based on Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) assessments and the Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (iLEAP). ²The dropout index is measured by the dropout rate. ³For high schools, the average composite ACT score is weighted in School Performance Scores. ⁴The graduation index points are assigned based on college- and career-readiness performance of the graduating class.

How will Louisiana identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

Louisiana will use School Performance Scores and a letter-grade system in order to identify its Reward, Focus and Priority Schools. All schools are eligible for Reward or Focus status, but only Title I schools¹ can be identified for Priority status. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Louisiana developed separate criteria for identifying schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	<p>High-performing schools are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade A schools that increase School Performance Score by 5 points or more in one year. <p>High-progress schools are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B, C, D or F schools that meet or exceed the annual target for the lowest-performing 35 percent of students, or schools that increase the School Performance Score by 10 points or more in one year. 	<p>Financial rewards, public recognition</p> <p>High-progress schools also receive additional School Performance Score points.</p>	Reward Schools are identified annually.
Focus	<p>Schools that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F schools not transferred to the state-run Recovery School District schools with a School Performance Score less than 50, or high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent 	Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles and approved by a state agency	<p>Focus schools are identified annually, and schools are allowed to exit Focus School status when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools increase the School Performance Score to 50 or higher for two consecutive years, and their letter grades increased above F.
Priority	<p>Title I schools that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> among the lowest 5 percent of schools based on achievement of all students on state assessments, or D or F schools already transferred to the state-run Recovery School District (may include schools with less than 60 percent graduation rate or Tier I and Tier II SIG schools²) 	<p>Recovery School District oversees performance objectives and new operating structure</p> <p>Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles</p>	<p>After five years, a school can choose to return to its former school district or remain with the Recovery School District if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has earned a School Performance Score of 53 for two consecutive years (out of 150 possible points on the scale).

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Louisiana ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/la.pdf>.

Source: Louisiana ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/la.pdf>.

- New performance goal, pg. 70
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 67
- Letter grades, pg. 50
- School Performance Scores, pg. 51
- Reward Schools, pg. 72
- Priority Schools entrance criteria, pg. 76
- Priority Schools exit criteria, pgs. 85-86
- Focus Schools entrance criteria, pg. 86
- Focus Schools exit criteria, pg. 92

Maryland: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Maryland adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* requirements?

Performance Goal ➤	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — among all students and in all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science
High	State assessments: English, Algebra I, biology Cohort graduation rate Attendance rate Career and Technical Education (CTE): Number of students with CTE concentration

How will Maryland measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

Maryland replaced *NCLB*'s adequate yearly progress system (AYP) with a School Progress Index. Schools receive index scores that correspond to strands numbering 1 to 5, with Strand 1 being the highest performing and Strand 5 being the lowest. Index scores for elementary and middle grades are based on achievement results in reading, mathematics and science; progress or growth of all students in reading and math; and the gap reduction between a school's highest-performing student group and its lowest-performing student group. Index scores for high schools are based on achievement results in reading, math and science; the gap reduction between a school's highest-performing student group and its lowest-performing student group; and college- and career-readiness, as measured by cohort graduation rate, attendance rate, and the number of Career and Technology Education (CTE) students who have achieved concentrator status.

Maryland also will track student progress by measuring the percentage of students meeting annual targets for reading, math, science, attendance rate and graduation rate.

Maryland's School Progress Index for Elementary and Middle Grades, 2013

Overall Index Score ¹		
Achievement (30%)	Gap Reduction (40%)	Student Growth (30%)
Measured by the percentage of all students scoring at or above proficiency	Measured by the gap between the lowest-performing student group and the highest-performing student group within a school	Measured by the percent of students making one year's growth on state assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Math • Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Math • Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Math

Notes: ¹Schools must continue to meet 95 percent participation target for state assessments. ²Proficiency means meeting state standards on state assessments.

Source: Maryland ESEA Waiver Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/md.pdf>.

How will Maryland identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

Maryland will use its School Progress Index, in addition to school performance on state assessments, to identify its Reward, Focus and Priority Schools. Only Title I schools¹ are eligible. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Maryland developed separate criteria for identifying schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward ²	<p>High-performing Title I schools that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have no significant gaps in achievement • met AYP for two consecutive years, and • those in the top 10 percent are designated Distinguished Highest-Performing Reward Schools <p>High-progress Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an 18 percentage point or more gain in overall achievement, and • no significant gaps in achievement 	Public recognition and awards	Reward schools are identified annually.
Focus	<p>Title I schools that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are among the 10 percent of Title I schools with the largest gap between the highest- performing student group and the lowest-performing student group, or • have a high school graduation rate less than 60 percent (and are not already identified as Priority) 	Customized interventions aligned to school improvement plans	<p>Schools must remain in Focus status for three years unless they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are no longer among 10 percent of schools with largest gaps • make progress in the area(s) for which it was identified, and • advance two strands or more on the state index or fall within Strand 2 on the state index. <p>High schools must have a 70 percent or higher graduation rate for two consecutive years.</p>
Priority	<p>Low-performing Title I schools that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have overall achievement in the bottom 5 percent of schools based on state assessments in reading and math; • have a graduation rate less than 60 percent for three consecutive years, or • operate a Tier I or Tier II SIG³. 	Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles	<p>Schools must remain in Priority status for three years unless they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance two strands or more on the state index or fall within Strand 2 on the state index. <p>High schools must have a 70 percent or higher graduation rate for two consecutive years.</p>

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families. ²After the 2012-2013 school year, Reward Schools are expected to achieve the top two categories on the School Progress Index for two consecutive years. ³Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Maryland ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/md.pdf>.

Source: Maryland ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/md.pdf>.

- New Performance goal, pg. 103
- Annual Measurable Objectives, (AMOs), pg. 70
- School Progress Index, pg. 72
- Reward Schools, pgs.104-105
- Priority Schools, pgs. 109, 112
- Focus Schools, pg.120

Mississippi: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Mississippi adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* provisions?

Performance Goal ➤	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — among all students and in all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science (grade 5 only) Attendance rate
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science (grade 8 only) Attendance rate
High	End-of-course exams: English II, Algebra I, Biology I Graduation rate

How will Mississippi measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

Mississippi replaced *NCLB*'s adequate yearly progress system with a Quality of Distribution Index (QDI). Student performance in reading, mathematics and science is calculated to produce four QDI scores for each school: QDI_O, the overall performance of all students; QDI_H, the performance of the highest-performing students; QDI_L, the performance of the lowest-performing students; and QDI_{GAP}, the achievement gap between the highest- and lowest-performing students. The QDI_{GAP} score is calculated by subtracting the index value of the lowest-performing students (QDI_L) from the highest-performing students (QDI_H). QDI values are used to create school rankings that inform accountability decisions.

In addition to QDI scores, Mississippi set reading and math targets based on proficiency levels for all students and student groups as defined by *NCLB*. As a second academic indicator, high schools have a graduation target, and elementary and middle grades have an attendance target. Schools not meeting annual targets in the same category (e.g., reading, math) or other academic indicator (e.g., attendance, graduation) for two consecutive years must implement customized interventions. Additional oversight and intervention will occur if low performance continues.

Mississippi's Accountability Model, 2013

To show yearly progress, elementary and middle grades must:

- test 95 percent of all students and each student group,
- meet attendance targets, and
- meet reading and math performance targets for the overall performance of all students.

To show yearly progress, high schools must:

- test 95 percent of all students and each student group,
- meet graduation targets, and
- meet reading and math performance targets for the overall performance of all students.

Source: Mississippi ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ms.pdf>.

How will Mississippi identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

Mississippi uses Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) scores to identify its Reward, Focus and Priority Schools. Only Title I schools¹ are eligible. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Mississippi developed separate criteria for identifying these schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	<p>High-performing schools are Title I schools that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ are in the top 20 percent of QDI_O for overall performance ➤ are in the top 20 percent of QDI_L for low-performing students ➤ met annual targets for all students and student groups, and ➤ have a QDI_{GAP} score in the lowest 25 percent of schools. <p>High-progress schools are Title I schools in which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the difference between QDI_O scores for the current year and previous two years is in the top 10 percent ➤ the difference between graduation rates for the current year and previous two years is in the top 25 percent, and ➤ QDI_{GAP} scores were reduced over the last two years. 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Focus	<p>Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ QDI_{GAP} scores in the top 20 percent for three consecutive years, and ➤ QDI_L scores for low-performing students in the lowest 20 percent for three consecutive years 	<p>Action Plan approved by local school board</p> <p>Customized interventions aligned to needs assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ QDI_{GAP} score is no longer in the top 20 percent for two consecutive years ➤ QDI_L for low-performing students is not in the lowest 20 percent for two consecutive years ➤ Meets all annual targets ➤ Community-based council is formed and operating
Priority	<p>Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ QDI_O scores in the lowest 5 percent and the difference between QDI_O scores for the current year and previous year in the lowest 27 percent ➤ graduation rates below 60 percent (applies also to Title I-eligible high schools), and ➤ Tier I and Tier II SIG² 	<p>Three-year Transformation Plan approved by state agency</p> <p>Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No longer in the bottom 5 percent of QDI_O scores ➤ Two years of academic improvement by meeting goals in Transformation Plan ➤ Community-based council is formed and operating

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Mississippi ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ms.pdf>.

Source: Mississippi ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ms.pdf>.

- Performance goal, pg. 65
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 48
- Measures (approved for 2013), pg. 63
- Quality of Distribution Index (QDI), pg. 50
- Reward Schools, pg. 69
- Priority Schools, pg. 73
- Focus Schools, pg. 85

North Carolina: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did North Carolina adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* provisions?

Performance Goal ➤	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — among all students and in all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: English/language arts, mathematics, science (grade 5 only)
Middle Grades	State assessments: English/language arts, mathematics, science (grade 8 only)
High ¹	End-of-course exams: English II, Algebra I, Biology I ACT WorkKeys (career and technical education) Future Ready Core rate Graduation rate

How will North Carolina measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

In North Carolina, school performance is measured by the percentage of students meeting annual targets in English/language arts, mathematics and science. There are differentiated annual targets for schools and student groups. This means there are different annual targets for each school and student group by assessment/exam, based on starting proficiency levels. High schools have to meet additional annual targets for graduation rates, ACT and Future Ready Core participation rates (the rate of students who complete and pass Algebra I), and WorkKeys (the state assessment for career and technical education). School performance on the North Carolina Graduation Project (optional to schools) also is reported. All schools also must meet the participation target for all students and student groups for each assessment/exam.

To track annual progress, North Carolina's READY accountability model will report: 1) *progress*, or the proficiency targets for each academic indicator, and 2) *status*, or achievement results in that indicator for the current year. Using value tables, the READY model provides feedback on whether or not a specific target was met and the total number of targets met for all students and student groups.

North Carolina's READY Accountability Reporting¹, 2013

A Basic High School Example	All	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Two or More Races	White	Students from Low-Income Families	English-Language Learners	Students with Disabilities	Gifted
Mathematics											
Target											
Result											
Met Target? (Yes or No)											
Participation											
Target											
Result											
Met Target? (Yes or No)											

Note: ¹For the complete READY model with all academic indicators for high schools, see the North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction waiver request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/nc.pdf>.

Source: North Carolina ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/nc.pdf>.

How will North Carolina identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus* and *Priority School* labels?

In North Carolina, only school performance in reading and math are considered in the selection of Reward, Focus and Priority Schools. Reading and math proficiency are calculated into a “proficiency score” for each school that is used, along with other factors, to determine accountability status. Only Title I schools¹ are eligible for Reward, Focus or Priority status. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, North Carolina developed separate criteria for identifying these schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	<p>High-performing schools are Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> poverty rates at or above 50 percent high proficiency scores for all students and student groups high graduation rates for all students and student groups the lowest in-school achievement gap between the highest- and lowest- performing student groups, and all annual performance targets met. <p>High-progress schools are Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proficiency score progress in the top 10 percent for all students, or graduation progress in the top 10 percent for all students. 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Focus	<p>Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an achievement gap between the highest- and lowest-performing student groups that is above the three-year state average, and a student group whose proficiency score is below 50 percent for two years and that has the lowest student group performance. 	Customized interventions aligned to needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce achievement gap below the three-year state average Make progress toward meeting all annual targets Raise the proficiency score and/or graduation rate to 60 percent
Priority	<p>Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proficiency scores below 50 percent for two years graduation rates below 60 percent (also applies to Title I-eligible high schools), and Tier I or Tier II SIG². 	<p>Two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement one of the four SIG models, or implement customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make progress toward meeting all annual targets for all students and student groups Meet the 95 percent participation requirement Meet the minimum proficiency rate and/or graduation rate of 60 percent

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: North Carolina ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/nc.pdf>.

Source: North Carolina ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/nc.pdf>.

- Performance goal, pg. 62
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 47
- Sample READY Accountability Report, pg. 49
- Reward Schools, pg. 65
- Priority Schools, pg. 71
- Focus Schools, pg. 80

Oklahoma: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Oklahoma adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* provisions?

Performance Goal ➤	For all students to graduate from high school college-, career- and citizen-ready by 2020
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics (all grades), science, social studies, writing (grade 5) School improvement factors: attendance rates, school culture indicators, etc.
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics (all grades), geography (grade 7), science, U.S. history, writing (grade 8) School improvement factors: attendance rates, school culture indicators, etc.
High	End-of-course exams: Algebra I, Algebra II, biology, English II, English III, geometry, U.S. history College-and career-readiness: SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement exams School improvement factors: high school graduation rates, etc.

How will Oklahoma measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

Oklahoma replaced *NCLB*'s adequate yearly progress system (AYP) with an A-to-F School Grading System. Schools receive a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F in each of the following four categories: overall achievement on all state assessments, progress/growth in reading and math for all students, progress/growth in reading and math for the lowest-performing 25 percent of students, and whole school performance. Points are awarded for the letter grade in each category: an A is 4 points, B is 3 points, C is 2 points, D is 1 point, and an F is zero points. Point values are combined to produce an overall school grade and grade-point average.

In addition to its school grades system, Oklahoma also will track student progress by setting annual targets based on three performance indexes: the Math Index, Reading Index and School Indicator Index. (For elementary and middle grades, the school indicator is attendance; for high schools, it is the graduation rate).

Oklahoma's A-F School Grading System, 2013

SAMPLE School Grade Calculation				
Category	Letter Grade	Point Value	Weight in Overall Grade	Weighted Points
Overall Achievement	C	2	33%	.66
Student Growth – Reading and Math	C	2	17%	.34
Bottom 25% Growth – Reading and Math	B	3	17%	.51
Whole School Performance	B	3	33%	.99
Overall GPA				2.5
Overall Letter Grade				C

Source: Oklahoma ESEA Flexibility Request – <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ok-amendment.pdf>.

How will Oklahoma identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

In addition to Reward, Focus and Priority Schools, Oklahoma created a fourth accountability category called Targeted Intervention Schools. Both Title I schools¹ and non-Title I schools are eligible for all accountability categories. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Oklahoma developed separate criteria for identifying schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward ²	Title I or non-Title I schools with a letter grade of A and any school identified as high-progress or high-performing, using methodology outlined for 2011	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Focus	Title I or non-Title I schools with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lowest performance for students with disabilities, English-language learners or black student groups • a high school graduation rate below 60 percent for three consecutive years (and not already identified as Priority School), or • the lowest high school graduation rates for student groups 	Customized interventions aligned to needs assessment	Schools are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no longer meet the criteria for Focus School status, and • meet annual targets for students groups whose performance identified the school as a Focus School for two years.
Priority	Title I or non-Title I schools with a letter grade of F and any school identified as lowest-performing, using methodology outlined for 2011	Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles Local agencies that lack capacity to improve Priority Schools will turn over those schools to state-run C ³ schools.	Schools are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • earn an A, B or C letter grade • no longer have school performance in the bottom 5 percent, and • have a graduation rate above 60 percent for at least three years.
Targeted Intervention Schools	Title I or non-Title I schools with a letter grade of D and not already identified as a Priority School	Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles	Schools are required to no longer meet the criteria for Targeted Intervention status.

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families. ²A school currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG) cannot be identified as a Reward School.

Sources: Oklahoma ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ok-amendment.pdf>.

Source: Oklahoma ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ok-amendment.pdf>.

- Performance goal option C, pg. 50
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pgs. 54-56
- A-F school grading system, pg. 33
- Reward Schools, pg. 59
- Priority Schools, pg. 65
- Focus Schools, pg. 78

South Carolina: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did South Carolina adopt after receiving waivers to *No Child Left Behind* requirements?

Performance Goal >	To increase student test scores on state assessments by 3 points to 5 points annually for all students and student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies Participation rates in English/language arts and mathematics assessments
Middle Grades	State assessments: English/language arts, math, science, social studies Participation rates in English/language arts and math assessments
High	State assessments: English/language arts, math End-of-course exams: biology and U.S. history Participation rates in English/language arts and math assessments Cohort graduation rate

How will South Carolina measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?

South Carolina replaced *NCLB*'s adequate yearly progress (AYP) with a state performance index and A-to-F School Grading System. Schools receive index scores ranging from 0-100, which correspond to an A, B, C, D or F letter grade. Index scores for elementary and middle grades are based on achievement results of all state assessments (English/language arts, math, science, social studies) and participation rates on state assessments in English/language arts and math. Index scores for high schools are based on achievement results of state assessments/exams (English/language arts, math, biology, U.S. history), participation rates in English/language arts and math, and the cohort graduation rate.

South Carolina also will track student progress by setting annual targets for actual student test scores on each state assessment — rather than the percentage of students scoring “proficient.” This means that South Carolina’s annual targets for state assessments are defined in terms of mean scale scores instead of proficiency levels.

South Carolina’s Index Composite Scores, 2013

Grade Level	Achievement	Participation	Cohort Graduation Rate							
Elementary	English/language arts (35%), math (35%), science (5%), social studies (5%)	English/language arts (10%), math (10%)								
Middle Grades	English/language arts (35%), math (35%), science (5%), social studies (5%)	English/language arts (10%), math (10%)								
High	English/language arts (22.5%), math (22.5%), science (5%), social studies (5%)	English/language arts (7.5%), math (7.5%)	Cohort Graduation Rate (30%)							
Total Available Points: 100										
Letter Grades Scale										
Source: South Carolina ESEA Flexibility Request — http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/sc-amendment.pdf						A	B	C	D	F
						90 – 100 points	80 – 89 points	70 – 79 points	60 – 69 points	< 60 points

How will South Carolina identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

South Carolina will use index scores and letter grades to identify its Reward, Focus and Priority Schools. Only Title I schools¹ are eligible. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, South Carolina developed separate criteria for identifying schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	Title I schools with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A,B, or C letter grades • free/reduced-priced lunch student population greater than 50 percent • no significant achievement gaps • highest percentage of students scoring proficient in English/language arts and mathematics, or • school progress ranked in top 10 percent for all students or student groups. 	Financial rewards, public recognition	Reward Schools are identified annually.
Focus	Title I schools with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D or F letter grade • largest within-school achievement gaps, and • low graduation rates for student groups (if it is a high school not identified as a Priority School). 	Challenge to Achieve Plan with research-based strategies to improve student group performance	Schools must meet annual targets for student groups for two consecutive years.
Priority	Title I schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with an F letter grade • operating a Tier I or Tier II SIG² • in the bottom 5 percent of schools with the lowest index score, and • with a graduation rate less than 60 percent (if it is a Title I or Title I-eligible high school). 	Customized interventions aligned to turnaround principles	Schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are no longer included in the bottom 5 percent of schools with the lowest index scores for two years • show significant value-added growth for two years, and • have a positive Comprehensive Capacity Assessment.

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families. ²Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: South Carolina ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/sc-amendment.pdf>.

Source: South Carolina ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/sc-amendment.pdf>

- New performance goal to increase actual test scores, pg. 71
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 72
- New AYP methodology, pg. 73
- Reward Schools, pg. 97
- Priority Schools entrance criteria, pg. 100
- Priority Schools exit criteria, pg. 107
- Focus Schools entrance criteria, pg. 118
- Focus Schools exit criteria, pg. 107

Tennessee: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Tennessee adopt after receiving waivers to <i>No Child Left Behind</i> provisions?	
Performance Goal ➤	To increase student proficiency on state assessments by 3 points to 5 points each year — to total a 20 percentage-point increase in student proficiency by 2017
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science Participation rate
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics, science Participation rate
High	End-of-course exams: English II, Algebra I, Biology I Graduation rate
How will Tennessee measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?	
<p>In Tennessee, school performance is measured by the percentage of students meeting annual targets. Unlike <i>NCLB's</i> adequate yearly progress (AYP) system, schools do not have to meet targets for the individual performance of each student group. Schools are held accountable for meeting: 1) achievement targets based on graduation rates and student proficiency in reading, mathematics and science; and 2) achievement gap closure targets that aim to narrow gaps among four comparison groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial and ethnic student groups performing below state average, compared with all students • Students from low-income families, compared with students not from low-income families • English-language learners, compared with students not identified as English-language learners • Students with disabilities, compared with students not identified as students with disabilities <p>Schools are evaluated based on whether they “achieve” or “miss” annual targets in the achievement category or achievement gap closure category. To achieve in either category, schools must meet half or more of their annual targets — conversely, they receive a miss for missing half or more of their annual targets. Schools also must satisfy the participation requirement for state assessments.</p> <p>Tennessee school report cards assign A-to-F letter grades in each core content area, but there is no final or overall grade used to rank school performance or determine accountability status.</p>	
Tennessee’s Accountability Model Achieve/Miss Categories, 2013	
<p>To “achieve” in the achievement category, schools must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test 95 percent of all students and each student group, and • meet half or more of their annual targets for achievement (including graduation rate targets for schools with a graduating class). <p>To “achieve” in the achievement gap closure category, schools must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test 95 percent of all students and each student group, and • meet half or more of their annual targets for achievement gap closure (including graduation rate targets for schools with a graduating class). 	
<p>Source: Tennessee ESEA Flexibility Request — http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/tn.pdf.</p>	

How will Tennessee identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority Schools* labels?

In Tennessee, both Title I schools¹ and non-Title I schools are eligible for Reward, Focus or Priority status. Schools are assigned to an accountability category based on overall achievement and progress in closing achievement gaps. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Tennessee developed separate criteria for identifying these schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	<p>High-performing schools are Title I or non-Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overall achievement in the top 5 percent for state assessments and high school graduation rates, and no significant gaps in achievement. <p>High-progress schools are Title I schools or non-Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student growth in the top 5 percent, based on TVAAS² value-added scores, and no significant gaps in achievement. 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Focus	<p>Title I or non-Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the largest achievement gaps between comparison groups a three-year average high school graduation rate that is less than 60 percent, or any student group with less than 5 percent scoring “proficient or advanced” on state assessments; or for high schools, any student group with less than 5 percent considered “proficient, advanced, or graduated.” 	School improvement plan with customized interventions aligned to needs assessment	<p>After three years, schools can exit Focus status by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no longer meeting the entrance criteria, or meeting achievement gap closure targets for two years in a row.
Priority ³	<p>Title I or non-Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overall achievement in the bottom 5 percent for state assessments and high school graduation rates, based on three-year achievement data. 	<p>Schools undergo one of four:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enter state-run Achievement School District (ASD) enter locally run “Innovation Zone” adopt SIG⁴ turnaround model adopt school improvement plan supervised by the local district 	<p>After three years, schools can exit Priority status by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no longer meeting the entrance criteria, or meeting achievement targets for two years in a row.

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) is used to measure student growth on state assessments. ³Priority Schools that enter the state-run Achievement School district must remain for five years. ⁴Schools currently operating under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG).

Source: Tennessee Dept. of Education — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/tn.pdf>.

Source: Tennessee ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/tn.pdf>.

- Performance goal, pg. 41
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), pg. 41
- Measures (Approved for 2013,) pgs. 39-40
- Reward Schools, pg. 51
- Priority Schools, pg. 53
- Focus Schools, pg. 65

Virginia: 2013 Accountability Profile

What new performance goal did Virginia adopt after receiving waivers to <i>No Child Left Behind</i> provisions?	
Performance Goal ➤	To reduce by half the percentage of non-proficient students by 2017 — for all students and for all student groups
Grade Level	Measures (Approved for 2013)
Elementary	State assessments: reading, mathematics Participation rate
Middle Grades	State assessments: reading, mathematics Participation rate
High	End-of-course exams: reading, Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry Participation rate Graduation rate
How will Virginia measure school performance and student progress after receiving waivers?	
<p>In Virginia, school performance is evaluated in two ways. Schools receive annual accreditation ratings based on overall achievement. In addition to accreditation ratings, schools must meet annual targets for: 1) participation rate on reading and math assessments; 2) academic progress or growth, for all students, three proficiency gap groups, and each individual student group in reading and math; and 3) high school graduation rate. The three proficiency gap groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap group 1: students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students from low-income families (unduplicated) • Gap group 2: Black students, not of Hispanic origin, including students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students from low-income families, and • Gap group 3: Hispanic students, of one or more races, including students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students from low-income families. <p>Virginia replaced <i>NCLB</i> school improvement labels with school accreditation ratings and proficiency gap determinations. Like all states that receive waivers to <i>NCLB</i> provisions, Virginia will continue to report proficiency levels, or the percentage of students meeting annual targets, for all students and individual student groups.</p>	
Virginia’s Accountability Model, 2013	
<p>To make annual progress, elementary and middle grades must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet participation targets on reading and math assessments, and • meet reading and math performance targets for all students and proficiency gap groups. <p>To make annual progress, high schools must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet participation target on reading and math assessments • meet graduation targets, and • meet reading and math performance targets for all students and proficiency gap groups. 	
<p>Source: Virginia ESEA Flexibility Request — http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/va.pdf.</p>	

How will Virginia identify schools in its school accountability system, using the *Reward, Focus and Priority School* labels?

In Virginia, both Title I schools¹ and non-Title I schools are eligible for Reward status, but only Title I schools can be identified as Focus or Priority Schools. Keeping with the principles of flexibility, Virginia developed separate criteria for identifying these schools and differentiated levels of state intervention.

Category	Entrance Criteria	Interventions	Exit Criteria
Reward	<p>Title I and non-Title schools can be identified in three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) program selects top-performing schools based on all state assessments and college and career readiness. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program selects schools with high progress or performance and no significant achievement gaps. The Title I Distinguished Schools and School Divisions program recognizes Title I schools that meet or exceed annual targets. 	Public recognition and financial rewards	Identified annually
Focus	<p>Title I schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one or more proficiency gap groups failing to meet 95 percent participation rate on reading or math assessments, or in the bottom 10 percent of schools with largest gaps among proficiency gap groups 	School improvement plan with customized interventions aligned to needs assessment	<p>After two years, schools can exit Focus status by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> meeting annual targets for proficiency gap group(s) it has identified, and no longer ranking in the bottom 10 percent of schools with largest gaps among proficiency gap groups.
Priority	<p>Title I schools can be identified in four ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier I or Tier II SIG² school Title I high school with less than 60 percent graduation rate schools that fail to meet 95 percent participation rate in reading and math for three consecutive years, and schools in the bottom 5 percent of student performance in reading and math, based on all students 	<p>Tier I or Tier II SIG schools are expected to continue the established turnaround model; others choose from four models:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> turnaround model restart model school closure transformation model 	<p>After three years, schools can exit Priority status according to the reason the status was identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIG schools exit at conclusion of turnaround model schools with low graduation rates exit after 10 percent decrease of students not gaining diploma for two consecutive years schools with low participation exit after meeting participation target for all students for two consecutive years, and schools with low performance exit after meeting proficiency targets for all students for two consecutive years

Notes: ¹Title I schools are those that receive federal monies to serve a large population of students from low-income families.

²These schools receive funds under a federal Student Improvement Grant (SIG) to implement a turnaround model.

Source: Virginia ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/va.pdf>.

Source: Virginia ESEA Flexibility Request — <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/va.pdf>

- Performance goal pg. 51
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) pg. 49
- Measures (Approved for 2013) pg. 48
- Reward Schools pg. 56
- Priority schools pg. 59
- Focus Schools pg. 72

A Policymaker's Guide: Leveraging Longitudinal Student Data to Develop College and Career Ready High School Graduates

Introduction: The Power of Longitudinal Data

According to the 2008 Data Quality Campaign (DQC) Annual Survey, 46 states have implemented six or more of the DQC's ten essential elements in their longitudinal student data systems. However, building these systems is just the first step; in order to have maximum effect on student achievement, policymakers must begin to leverage the valuable data they house. Further, policymakers must take appropriate action in their states to push these systems to a level sophisticated enough to answer the most pressing questions in education.

For many, the idea of longitudinal student data is new and, while researchers have long asked for this type of data from states, many policymakers are just discovering the power of using longitudinal data to inform their work. Simply put, longitudinal data is information (e.g., enrollment, assessment, program, course, teacher, etc.) on individual students collected over time, all of which is linked together in a single student record with a unique student identifier. By having all of a student's academic and performance information in one place, it is very easy to see where students are in their education and much easier to identify when opportunities for intervention were missed or whether or a program that he/she was enrolled in had an impact.

On a statewide level, policymakers can look at the student body as a whole to identify success, mitigate failures, and allocate scarce resources effectively. Longitudinal data enables policymakers to ask sophisticated policy questions that get at the heart of student success. Are students who score proficient in the 3rd grade still proficient in the 8th grade? What effect does early grade retention have on later academic success? By asking the *right* questions, policymakers can obtain answers that help them to understand the full financial and educational impact of potential legislative and administrative changes in state education policies.

The Critical Need for Better Information

Given the state of our economy, it is critically important for states to allocate resources efficiently and effectively. Similarly, states are under tremendous pressure to create jobs and stimulate their local economy. To achieve economic recovery they must attract and retain employers and develop a workforce equipped with 21st century skills to compete in an increasingly global market. To this end, states are working to create an academic environment where students graduate from high school prepared for both college and work. While this isn't an easy endeavor, it will be impossible without access to the right data.

As states complete their longitudinal data systems and enhance their program funding to follow students, they will be able to better assess their return on investment (ROI) on programs and policies in the future. At this time, however, few states have connected their financial and student tracking systems but as resources become tighter this will be the next critical focus for states.

Policymakers Using Data

Regardless of the specific role of a policymaker (e.g., legislator, governor, state schools chief, or school board member), he/she makes countless decisions that impact education policies every year. These decisions may come in the form of support for an administrative rule change, an amendment to a bill, or a critical school board vote. To have an effective impact on student achievement, policymakers need to inform these decisions with high quality, longitudinal data.

For example, years ago, the Texas legislature reviewed a proposal to retain students in the 3rd and 5th grades who did not pass the state's annual assessment in a given year. With the aid of the state's longitudinal data system, policymakers analyzed data showing the likely number of students this would impact statewide and which schools/districts would be impacted the most. Did these elementary schools have adequate facilities/staff for an expanded 3rd grade? What was the cost of keeping this many students in school an extra year? They could also review students' subsequent 4th grade scores to determine which schools and districts did a good job of getting these students up to grade level proficiency if they were promoted to the next grade even though they had not passed the prior grade level test. This could help to identify best practices at these schools that might be replicated at others. Using longitudinal data to analyze various retention strategies enabled Texas policymakers to weigh the good and bad of proposed policies to determine the most effective policy for positively affecting student achievement.

Policy Questions and Real World Examples

What follows is a set of questions, real examples, and action steps that policymakers can use as a starting point in their efforts to leverage their state's longitudinal data to better inform the development of a 21st century workforce.

Early Warning System

An early warning system can take many forms -- it simply depends upon what you want to be warned about. Many states are attempting to use these powerful data systems to warn educators which students are at the greatest risk of dropping out of high school. Given the alarming statistics on dropouts, states are well served to focus their initial efforts at ensuring students are prepared to graduate from high school.

- Question: What percentage of students dropping out of high school showed early signs of being at risk of doing so?
- State Example: The Indiana Department of Education recently began a pilot project to identify students at risk of not graduating high school within four years of entering the 9th grade. They look at attendance, mobility, middle school assessment scores, and retention data to develop a rubric to identify those most at risk.

Decreasing the dropout rate is a critical step for states in their economic recovery plans. However, the next components of our early warning systems must dig deeper into the data. Current research indicates that students who score below proficient on 8th grade state tests are much less likely to enroll in a rigorous college prep curriculum and pass AP exams. Therefore, academic interventions in high

school will likely not increase their ability to graduate *college and career ready* if they are this far behind entering high school. States and all stakeholders involved would be better served if an early warning system were put into place to identify students in earlier grades that need academic interventions. For example, what percentage of students identified as “at risk” in the 3rd grade are still there in the 6th and 8th grades and which schools/districts are doing the best job getting them “out of risk”?

Longitudinal data systems can provide important early warning indicators beyond high school as well. As these systems link with postsecondary data, policymakers should be looking, for example, at the relationship between students enrolled in remedial courses and students not graduating college.

By asking the right question, policymakers can more efficiently allocate resources to the students most at risk of failing to reach their potential.

Graduation Rate

Employers are looking for real information on what is happening with students in the state’s P-12 system. A key indicator that helps them (and others) evaluate the local workforce is the graduation rate. However, many have been skeptical of published graduation rates because there are numerous ways to calculate these rates and few lend themselves to comparison. With longitudinal student-level data we have a clearer picture of the academic competencies of our graduates including information on the type of diploma earned and the pathways taken to get there. An increasing number of states report the ability to calculate the rate identified in the NGA Graduation Rate Compact and we are finally getting to a place of consistency across states.

- Question: What is the four-year graduation rate as defined by the National Governor’s Association and what is the outcome for all students?
- State example: The Delaware Department of Education’s website provides both the NCLB and the NGA graduation rates for the state, districts, and schools disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., ethnicity, English language learner, Special Education, etc.).
- State example: The Louisiana Department of Education has expanded its accountability system to include other indicators that reflect student outcomes. High schools are awarded points based on student outcome with the most points awarded for students who graduate on time after completing a college ready curriculum. Fewer points are awarded for students who obtain a regular diploma, a GED, or dropout altogether. The new system is causing school officials to work harder to reduce their dropout rate and to increase student participation in college and career ready courses of study.

Understanding which schools and districts are producing the best outcomes for its students enables a state to better define best practices and assist the schools that aren’t performing at a high enough level. As stakeholders gain confidence in the state’s indicators, parents can make better decisions for their children and employers can have a clear picture of the state’s workforce.

Teacher Effectiveness

One of the most powerful uses of a longitudinal data system is the ability to examine the teacher student link. It is well documented that teachers are the single most important factor in student achievement. It is with this in mind that the NCLB law places great emphasis on Highly Qualified Teachers. However, without longitudinal data, we cannot truly know how effective a teacher is in the classroom. By linking data about teachers to student data, states will have evidence of teacher effectiveness that can be used in a variety of ways (e.g., targeted professional development, student placement, evaluating teacher preparation programs, etc.). While this is a more recent topic of conversation in most states, a few have been working on this issue for some time and many states can learn from their experiences.

- Question: Which teachers have the highest percentage of students achieving one year's growth after one year of instruction and what do these teachers have in common (e.g., years of service, credential type, teacher prep program, district, etc.)?
- State example: Tennessee's Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) is a statistical methodology that looks at a student's entire testing history to estimate a projected academic path for that student. When the student deviates (either positively or negatively) from the expectation, the difference is attributed to effectiveness of the teacher.
- State example: The Louisiana Educational Accountability System links students with teachers and researchers, using a value-added model, compare teachers from different teacher preparation programs to determine program effectiveness. As a result, the state's teacher preparation programs that are identified as producing the most ineffective teachers have had to redesign their program or face declining enrollment.

The examples above demonstrate the valuable ways that this information can impact student achievement. When we can identify effective teachers, we can better highlight best practices and provide targeted professional development. We can also begin to work with the higher education community in designing programs that prepare better teachers at the outset, further reducing the cost of professional development.

College and Career Ready Graduates

Educating students so that they graduate fully prepared for the demands of college or the challenges of entering the increasingly competitive workforce is perhaps the most critical issue facing policymakers today. In today's economy, states cannot afford to wait until students arrive in college to determine if they were adequately prepared in high school and employers can't afford to hire a state's graduates who are woefully unprepared for entry level work. Currently, states are appropriating huge sums of money by having to teach the same content twice – once in high school and then again in college remediation courses. Employers are seeing decreasing productivity and are, therefore, losing the edge in this global market. Policymakers must ask "actionable" questions of their state data systems to ensure that graduates are prepared.

- Question: What percentage of students scoring proficient on the state's test still require remediation once enrolled in college?

- State example: The California State University system worked with the California Department of Education to add a voluntary section to the state’s 11th grade assessment reflecting English and math college-ready standards. As a result of learning their score, students know as they enter the 12th grade if they are ready for college level courses. If their score indicates that remediation would be needed upon enrollment, they can use their senior year to get extra support in these subjects. If their score is high enough, they can skip the placement test once enrolled.

Action Steps for State Policymakers

- *Advocate* for stable annual funding for your state’s longitudinal student data system. Engage your state education agency in discussions around the cost of developing and maintaining a data system that includes, at a minimum, DQC’s ten essential elements. While there are some up front information technology (IT) costs, the bulk of the costs post-development should be geared towards building the capacity to use the system and the data at the state, district, and school levels.
- *Implement* standardized course and exit codes statewide. When districts and schools use different definitions and codes across the state, it is difficult to maintain data quality and difficult to effectively deal with an increasingly mobile student body. Exit codes must be reflective of actual student outcomes to ensure that students not graduating in four years are not labeled as “dropouts”.
- *Require* state institutions of higher education to link and share data with the state’s P-12 system. Your state will never have the evidence to demonstrate college and career readiness without data on higher education enrollment, persistence, remediation, and graduation. High schools need to have this information on their graduates if they hope to effectively redesign their schools to increase these rates.
- *Require* that your state’s teachers be given a unique identifier and that their records be linked with their students’ records. Work collaboratively with teacher unions to appropriately and effectively develop this link as it is critical in state efforts to evaluate and improve teacher preparation programs, direct professional development funds effectively, and hold teachers accountable for their performance.

Moving from Building to Sustaining

It may surprise some that the difficulty in building these systems is not primarily technical in nature but political and cultural. State IT staff, working closely with top vendors, have successfully navigated the technology involved in building the systems and sharing the data. What we have been less successful at is negotiating the inherent changes in how education stakeholders think about and use data. Everyone from Governors on down to teachers and parents have access to student level data for the first time and are trying to understand how it’s different and what it enables them to do. It is these very real cultural changes that slow down and hold up the full implementation of longitudinal data systems.

In order to effectively use longitudinal data systems to inform policy and improve student achievement over the long term, policymakers need to work to sustain their data systems in the following ways.

- *Culturally*, all stakeholders need to shift from reporting data for compliance purposes to using data to guide all education decisions, especially those focused on improving teaching and learning.
- *Politically*, policymakers need to ensure that educational institutions and other critical systems, such as postsecondary and pre-k education, child welfare, juvenile justice and health care, share student-level data—while protecting student confidentiality—to improve student achievement.
- *Organizationally*, states need to create governance structures to ensure the effective and appropriate collection and use of high-quality longitudinal data, especially as data are shared across agencies, districts and other traditional boundaries.
- *Financially*, states need to continue to invest in the development, maintenance and growth of their education data systems, including helping educators, parents and other stakeholders learn how to use the information produced by the systems.

Policymakers need to become champions of their data systems so that IT professionals can develop and maintain a state of the art system flexible enough to collect the data that will answer the policy questions of today, tomorrow, and ten years from now. The need for data to inform policy will not change, but the technology and infrastructure needs to be able to answer those questions will and policymakers need to provide sustained support to ensure they have the tools they need to do their jobs.

Conclusion

All 50 states are moving towards implementing longitudinal student data systems. However, if these systems are simply used as a means to more efficiently report data for compliance purposes we will have missed a great opportunity for real innovation in our efforts to increase student achievement and build a 21st century workforce. Their true power comes from our ability to use the valuable data housed in these systems to make better decisions and, as a result, allocate resources more efficiently within states. Policymakers must take advantage of this unique opportunity to engage education stakeholders in their states and begin a discussion about how to leverage this data and develop state specific questions whose answers will lead to real change.

Resources

1. Data Quality Campaign, *Measuring What Matters: Creating a Longitudinal Data System to Improve Student Achievement*, http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/publications-measuring_what_matters.pdf
2. The Center for Public Education, *Measuring student growth: A guide for informed decision making*, http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/site/c.kjJXJ5MPIwE/b.3570269/k.B44C/Measuring_student_growth_A_guide_for_informed_decision_making.htm

3. Data Quality Campaign, *Every Student Counted: Using Longitudinal Data Systems to Calculate the National Governors Association's High School graduation Rate and Improve Student Success*, http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Publications-Every_Student_Counted-073107.pdf
4. Data Quality Campaign, *Developing and Supporting P-20 Education Data Systems: Different States, Different Models*, http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/meetings-dqc_quarterly_issue_brief_011508.pdf
5. Achieve, *Closing the Expectations Gap 2008: An Annual 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers*, <http://www.achieve.org/files/50-state-2008-final02-25-08.pdf>
6. Data Quality Campaign, *Linking Teacher and Student Data to Improve Teacher and Teaching Quality*, http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Meetings-DQC_Quarterly_Issue_Brief_031207.pdf
7. Data Quality Campaign, *Benefits of and Lessons Learned from Linking Teacher and Student Data*, http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/publications-benefits_of_and_lessons_learned_from_linking_teacher_and_student_data-120607.pdf
8. Achieve and The Education Trust, *Making College and Career Readiness the Mission for High Schools: A Guide for State Policymakers*, <http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/C95222E3-A526-4E70-9FC6-52B93C10FD01/0/MakingCollegeandCareerReadinesstheMission111908.pdf>
9. Achieve, *Identifying Potential Dropouts: Key Lessons for Building an Early Warning Data System*, <http://achieve.org/dropouts>

Criteria	Essential Question
Basic KSAs	Does it assess the basic knowledge and skills students need to live, learn and work in the 21st century?
Higher Order Thinking	Does it assess the critical thinking and complex problem solving skills students need to live, learn, and work in the 21st century?
Meaningful	Does the measure have meaning or currency outside of the accountability system?
Clear	Can the measure be clearly communicated and understood by the public?
High Needs	Does it address students with the highest need?
Pathways	Does the measure promote high aspirations, regardless of their future pathway? (college, career, military)
Feasible	Is it feasible to implement this measure with fidelity at the state level? Political, administrative, technical
Whole School	Does it hold the whole school accountable? Does it define quality across the whole school building? (Curriculum, instruction, opportunities to learn, resources)
Aligned	Does it promote alignment across the system?

Indicator	Basic KSA	Higher Order Thinking	Meaningful	Clear	High Needs	Pathways	Feasible	Whole School	Aligned	Trade Offs	Overall Ranking
Growth Scores State Standardized Tests: grades 3- 8 (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies)	●	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	●	Promotes alignment and measures development over time rather than benchmark status. Constraints are hyper focus on the test scores not addressing whole school quality. Challenges at exit level where large growth gains still don't meet postsecondary readiness trajectory.	1
Extended Performance Tasks	●	●	○	◐	○	○	◐	◐	◐	Generate better data on complex thinking, and focuses curriculum on readiness skills. Tasks must be integrated into regular instruction and meet technical adequacy requirements. Large scale version is not feasible at this point to without infrastructure to support implementation.	2
Reporting on Subgroups	◐	◐	◐	●	●	○	●	○	◐	Critical to addressing the achievement gap, highly rated by stakeholders. Technical constraints relate to N size variability - at what point is a subgroup a subgroup, statistically versus reality?	3
Input measures on School Programs/Program Reviews	○	○	●	◐	○	◐	●	●	○	Incentivizes investment in a whole school curriculum in exchange for a focus on activities vs. outcomes. Ensures curriculum is aligned with goals, allows multiple pathways that all address readiness; requires curriculum revision as an all-school activity and requires external reviews.	4
Graduation Rates	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	○	Critical prerequisite to postsecondary success; established and familiar focus of policy and research; clear target motivates some students. Tends to be more of an endurance measure than quality, with tremendous variability in KSAs and subject to manipulation.	5
Performance on College Aptitude Exam (SAT/ACT)	●	○	●	●	○	◐	●	○	○	Exchanging a measure that has high currency outside of the system for a narrow focus and non-actionable data to inform individual student improvement. Offers longitudinal trend data and is normally distributed. An eligibility not a readiness measure; no real or natural cut score.	6
Performance on Commercial Career Readiness Exam (e.g., WorkKeys)	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	Provides an alternative/complement to college readiness measures that is used by employers as well. Basic skills assessment. Trade currency for rigor/challenge.	7
Percent Passing College Placement Exams	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	Useful tool with value outside the system in exchange for a narrow focus on basic skills. Procedural representation of postsecondary readiness. Focuses attention on the problem and linked to fiscal and financial issues. Diagnostic at item level analysis with individualized interventions.	8

Indicator	Basic KSA	Higher Order Thinking	Meaningful	Clear	High Needs	Pathways	Feasible	Whole School	Aligned	Trade Offs	Overall Ranking
Performance in IB/AP courses	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	Expensive for districts, cost-saving for students. External currency and spans all subject areas. Sets a high bar. Exams consistent across districts and states; more complex assignments. Access issues, bar might be too high for all students. Needs CTE complement.	9
Performance in Dual Enrollment	●	◐	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	Requires availability of dual enrollment programs, policy considerations to promote them. The higher number of college credits earned in HS, the higher the probability of postsecondary success.	10
Participation in IB/AP courses	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	Incentivizes activity over achievement. Increases access to a high bar for participating students offering more complex assignments and expectations. Not all students might need for desired career aspirations. Measure best implemented with CTE Acceleration/Certification for balance.	11
Participation in Dual Enrollment	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	Requires availability of dual enrollment programs, policy considerations to promote them. Promotes activity vs. performance. Large variance in courses requiring external review.	12
Educator Evaluations	○	○	●	○	○	○	◐	●	○	Holds adults accountable for overall school rating, yet high variability/unreliable methods for conducting evaluations when applied to such a high stakes context. Also, political feasibility is an issue that must be considered.	13
Input measures on Teacher Quality	○	○	●	◐	○	○	●	●	○	Focusing on inputs (teacher prep) and not student outcomes in exchange for holding adults accountable in the system. Need criteria to evaluate the input measures, but not strong research to understand relationship between inputs and outcomes.	14
Performance or growth of the lowest 25%	●	◐	○	●	●	○	●	◐	○	Focuses on the students who need the most help a critical population that could span (or be missed by) subgroup data, but typically applied to measures that focus on content knowledge.	15
College Persistence Rates	●	●	●	●	○	●	◐	●	●	Data systems and infrastructures challenges. Holding K-12 accountable for a higher ed measure, assumes causation for an outcome prone to factors beyond the control of K12 educators.	16

Indicator	Basic KSA	Higher Order Thinking	Meaningful	Clear	High Needs	Pathways	Feasible	Whole School	Aligned	Trade Offs	Overall Ranking
Absolute Scores State Standardized Tests: grades 3- 8 (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies)	●	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	●	Narrow focus on content knowledge, bubble kids, kill/drill. Well established and typically correlate to first-year college GPA. Challenges are that they have low performance levels and ceiling effect issues.	17
End of Course Exams: ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies	●	○	○	●	○	○	●	◐	○	When done well, EOC Exams can represent the cumulative knowledge in core content areas. Too many concerns in the state about the rigor, quality, and relevance of the current instruments and they are not connected to postsecondary aspirations/pathway.	18
HS Grades	●	◐	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	Well established, familiar to public; somewhat of a composite measure; single metric for all subjects and courses; and no additional costs to administer. Challenges include highly variable composition; difficult to say what it measures; subject to false precision and gaming.	19
Participation in ACT/SAT	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	Promotes an activity that connects to postsecondary aspirations. Incentivizes an activity of taking the test not the quality instruction that promotes student success with them. Trading Access for learning	20
College Matriculation Rates	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	Data and technology infrastructure. Threat of gamification - pushing students into colleges when they are not ready nor wanting to go. Measure of how well high schools focus on college, tangible goal with strategies to increase; yet Indicator is influenced by outside factors.	21
College Acceptance Rates	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	Narrow measure of postsecondary options. Needs to be accompanied by other measures. Measure of how well high schools focus on college and promote student aspirations; eligibility does not equal readiness.	22
Self-Reported School Climate	○	○	○	◐	○	◐	◐	●	○	Can cover a much wider range of variables, can be sufficiently reliable, relatively inexpensive, and generate actionable information. Challenges are the general distrust of self-reported information, can't be linked to high stakes accountability, and requires additional time for completion.	23
Metacognitive Assessment	○	◐	○	◐	○	○	○	●	○	Can cover a much wider range of variables, can be sufficiently reliable, relatively inexpensive, and generate actionable information. Challenges are the general distrust of self-reported information, can't be linked to high stakes accountability, and requires additional time for completion.	24

Indicator	Basic KSA	Higher Order Thinking	Meaningful	Clear	High Needs	Pathways	Feasible	Whole School	Aligned	Trade Offs	Overall Ranking
% of students who filled out a career plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	By making it a box to check, may have less meaning. Important goal if implemented with fidelity providing access to sometimes privileged information and advancing aspirations. Not a measure of readiness, many students will change career plans, and wide variance in level of effort.	25
HS Exit Exams: ELA & Math	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Too many concerns in the state about the rigor, quality, and relevance of the current instrument. Eliminating exit exam while still measuring graduation rates further incentivizes schools to push students though without having to demonstrate mastery at an exit level benchmark.	26
Performance on military exams	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Unique indicator with outside currency for students with military aspirations; low passage rates and challenge level to prepare students for a full range of postsecondary options. Best used as complement with career and college-oriented measures.	27
% of students completing a college application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Important goal for accessing important privileged procedural information and goes beyond graduation rates, measures aspiration not readiness, can be "gamed" by having everyone apply and falls short of matriculation.	28
# of Students who fill out a FAFSA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Requires parent/guardian involvement, need to consider undocumented students. Should be accompanied by other efforts (e.g., financial literacy). Could help students who don't think college is affordable see it as an attainable goal.	29

Goal: All students should have the knowledge, opportunity and skills to be college ready, career ready and life ready for the 21st century.

KNOWLEDGE Do all students have knowledge to be successful?	OPPORTUNITY Do all students have the opportunities to be successful?	SKILLS & ABILITIES- Do all students have the skills and abilities to be successful?	FUTURE SUCCESS
<p>Primary Schools: Readiness assessment that focuses on emerging literacy, numeracy and social and emotional development</p>			
<p>Elementary and Middle Schools: <u>1. Status Scores on Standardized Assessments</u> Grades 3 and 4: Focus on English language arts (ELA) and Math Only Grades 5 through 8: ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies, every grade, every year <u>2. Growth Scores on Standardized Assessments in ELA and Math</u> <u>3. Growth Scores on Standardized Assessments in ELA and Math</u> <u>4. Improving the performance of bottom 25% of students</u></p>	<p>Elementary and Middle Schools: School Climate/Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Evaluation to include student surveys • Principal Evaluation Student access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts programs; • Artistic and academic Gifted and Talented Programs; • World languages Teacher Quality Input Measures</p>	<p>Elementary and Middle Schools: Extended Performance Tasks Authentic Assessments</p>	<p><i>Other Indicators that can be reported on a District Level as South Carolina Longitudinal Information Center for Excellence (SLICE) becomes operational:</i></p> <p>College/Certification Programs: Acceptance Rates Matriculation Rates Remediation Rates Persistence Rate Industry Certification</p>
<p>High Schools: 1. Graduation Rates – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-time • 5-year • Improving the graduation rate of bottom 25% 2. Career Readiness – Multiple Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkKeys (Silver or better) • Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) 3. College Readiness – Multiple Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter Balanced 11th grade test or HSAP • ACT, SAT and/or COMPASS • End-of-Course Assessments </p>	<p>High Schools: School Climate/Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Evaluation to include student surveys • Principal Evaluation Teacher Quality Input Measures Student access, participation and performance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IB/AP exams • Approved Industry Certification Exams • Dual Enrollment Courses • Adult GED & High School Diploma completion for 17 to 21 year-olds • World languages • Arts programs • Dropout Recovery Programs • Virtual Opportunities </p>	<p>High Schools: Extended Performance Tasks Authentic Assessments Work-based Learning Service Learning</p>	