



Accountability Systems and ESSA State Plans

March 10, 2018

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Bellwether Education Partners

ˈBEL-,weth-ər\, noun;
A leader of a movement or activity;
also, a leading indicator of future trends.

We are a national nonprofit focused on dramatically changing education and life outcomes for underserved children. We do this by helping organizations accelerate impact and improving public policy and practice for the education field.



We change policies and perceptions and strengthen and support organizations

Change policies and perceptions

Field influence: idea generation, thought leadership, publishing

Strengthen and support organizations

Policy
analysis &
research

Strategy &
growth
planning

Organizational
effectiveness
& efficiency

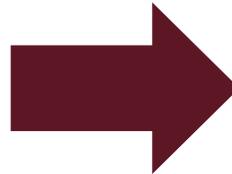
Implementation
support

Educational
program
evaluation

Field cultivation: convenings, facilitation, best practice sharing

Bellwether partnered with the Collaborative for Student Success for this project; Our “theory of action” for the project was...

ESSA provides states opportunities on a number of fronts...



...But it also presents new risks.

We convened an independent peer review process of state plans in order to:

- Serve as an **independent** review apart from the federal process;
- Capture **strengths and weaknesses** of each state’s plan; and
- **Provide feedback** to parents, educators, and state policymakers, and advocates.

Our independent peer review of state ESSA plans had five primary goals

- 1 **To look beyond mere compliance** with the federal process, and encourage all states to adopt a common, high bar.
- 2 **To provide a resource** for state leaders working to help all students succeed.
- 3 **To provide actionable feedback** for states to help ensure that their systems are serving all students and providing a more equitable learning environment that fosters success.
- 4 **To create public-facing, user-friendly resources** that help communities understand the complicated ESSA state plans.
- 5 **To promote best practices** and discourage weaker accountability components in Round II submission states.

We created our own rubric to assess elements of high-quality plans



GOALS



**STANDARDS AND
ASSESSMENTS**



INDICATORS



**ACADEMIC
PROCESS**



**ALL
STUDENTS**



**IDENTIFYING
SCHOOLS**



**SUPPORTING
SCHOOLS**



**EXITING
IMPROVEMENT STATUS**



**CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT**

Peers asked themselves these questions when writing their reviews

Goals	Are the state's vision, goals, and interim targets aligned, ambitious, and attainable ? Why or why not?
Standards and Assessments	Is the state's accountability system built on high-quality standards and assessments aligned to college and career readiness? Why or why not?
Indicators	Are the state's chosen accountability indicators aligned to ensure targets and goals are met and likely to lead to improved educational outcomes for students? Why or why not?
Academic Progress	Has the state created sufficient incentives for schools to care about both student proficiency and student growth over time ? Why or why not?
All Students	Does the state system mask the performance of some subgroups of students , or does it have adequate checks in place to ensure all students (including all subgroups of students) receive a high-quality education? Why or why not?
Identifying Schools	Is the state's plan to identify schools for comprehensive and targeted support likely to identify the schools and student groups most in need ? Why or why not?
Supporting Schools	Are the state's planned interventions in comprehensive and targeted support schools evidence-based and sufficiently rigorous to match the challenges those schools face ? Why or why not?
Exiting Improvement Status	Are the state's criteria for schools to exit comprehensive and targeted support status sufficient to demonstrate sustained improvements ? Why or why not?
Continuous Improvement	Has the state outlined a clear plan to learn from its implementation efforts and modify its actions accordingly , including through continued consultation and engagement of key stakeholders? If not, what steps could the state take to do so?

Peers then rated each category on a scale of 1-5

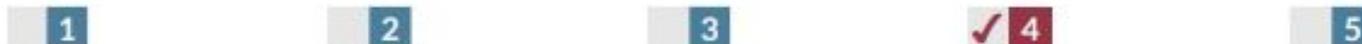
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Indicators: Are the state's chosen accountability indicators aligned to ensure targets and goals are met and likely to lead to improved educational outcomes for students? Why or why not?



All Students: Does the state system mask the performance of some subgroups of students, or does it have adequate checks in place to ensure all students (including all subgroups of students) receive a high-quality education? Why or why not?



From there, the Bellwether team averaged across the peers and combined peers' comments with our own; the peers then met for a two-day convening to align on final scores and comments

Major findings by the numbers



Only 2 states explain how they plan to use all available set-aside funds for school improvement



12 states leave large gaps between expected graduation rates and proficiency rates



15 states lack clear, easy to understand ratings for all schools



20 states are silent on consequences for missing the 95 percent participation rate



24 states do not define a certain amount of progress in order to exit improvement status



41 states do not incorporate all student subgroups into ratings for all schools

However there were several states that had exemplary plans on each of our rubric categories...

States that earned a rating of 5, by category



GOALS

- Louisiana



ACADEMIC
PROCESS

- Arizona
- New Mexico
- Tennessee
- Minnesota



SUPPORTING
SCHOOLS

- New Mexico
- Indiana
- New York
- Rhode Island



STANDARDS AND
ASSESSMENTS

- Vermont
- New Mexico
- New Jersey
- Washington
- California
- South Dakota
- Idaho
- Maryland



ALL
STUDENTS

- NO STATE



EXITING
IMPROVEMENT STATUS

- Nevada
- Indiana



INDICATORS

- New Mexico



IDENTIFYING
SCHOOLS

- Louisiana



CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

- New Mexico

Measures of school quality or student success – the “fifth indicator” – provide opportunities for the arts in state accountability systems

As part of the requirements for receiving Title I funding, states must identify the components of their accountability systems with special attention given to the indicators required by ESSA.

All indicators must be valid, reliable, comparable statewide and disaggregated for ESSA subgroups. They include:

1. Measures of student achievement and growth in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) at both the high school and elementary/middle school levels;
2. High school graduation rates;
3. Measures of language proficiency for English language learners (ELLs); and
4. **At least one measure of school quality or student success**

The school quality or student success indicator **provides opportunities for the arts in state accountability systems**. Some states are taking advantage of those opportunities....

Several states are including opportunities for the arts as part of the measures for school quality and student success

School Climate	Iowa, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, and South Carolina incorporate measures of school climate into their accountability and reporting system through student and parent surveys
Arts Participation	Connecticut, Illinois, and Michigan include access to arts education as part of their planned accountability systems under ESSA
Well-rounded education	District of Columbia, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan and Minnesota — incorporate a well-rounded education, which includes the arts and music, as part of their current or future accountability systems
Arts as options in the postsecondary and career readiness components	New Hampshire and Wyoming include the arts as options in the postsecondary and career readiness components of their accountability systems

There are many details that states will finalize over the next year, including...

1. School identification systems

- Not all states have **finalized indicator weights**
- Only 3 states (LA, NM, MN) have estimated how many schools will be **identified as in need of support**
- There will likely be **many schools identified in each state**: Louisiana, for example, estimates that 43 percent of schools will be identified

2. School supports and improvement plans

- Many states **were vague about the supports they will provide** to schools identified in need of support
- The law required **evidenced-based interventions and supports**; arts education could be one factor to consider here

3. School improvement funding

- Only 2 states explain how they **plan to use all available set-aside funds** for school improvement

How can the arts education fit into the ongoing discussion about accountability needs?

- Best practices, searchable by state and rubric category
- Individual state plan analysis
- Commentary from peer reviewers
- Full report breakdown



Group Discussion:

- What is promising about your state's plan? Where is there room for improvement?
- Are there other states you're looking to for inspiration?
- What will you or your organization focus on in the coming months/year to advocate on behalf of your state's plan?
- What coalitions will be necessary to make change?