

The Washington State Board of Education

Governance | Achievement | Transitions | Math & Science | Effective Workforce

Title:	Achievement Index Revision – Preparation for December AAW Meeting	
As Related To:	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Advocate for effective and accountable P-13 governance in public education. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Provide policy leadership for closing the academic achievement gap. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Provide policy leadership to strengthen students' transitions within the P-13 system.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Promote effective strategies to make Washington's students nationally and internationally competitive in math and science. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Advocate for policies to develop the most highly effective K–12 teacher and leader workforce in the nation. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposed letter to the AAW accurately reflect SBE priorities and intentions for next steps in the Index revision process? What have other states done to build their own accountability system that could inform these questions? 	
Possible Board Action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Materials Included in Packet:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
Synopsis:	<p>SBE will review and approve a proposed letter to the AAW to guide the discussion at the December AAW meeting.</p> <p>SBE will also review and discuss the questions presented in the AAW letter which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> College and Career Readiness subindicators. English Language Learner data. Tier labels. Performance Targets. 	

ACHIEVEMENT INDEX REVISION – PREPARATION FOR DECEMBER AAW MEETING AND NEXT STEPS

Policy Consideration

The Board will consider approving the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup letter, which directs the AAW to focus on specific topics at the December meeting. Those same topics are presented in this memo and will be discussed at this meeting.

1. If the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) approves the staff recommendation to go beyond high school graduation rates and include additional measures of College and Career Readiness (CCR) in a revised Index, what measures should be included? Which of these should only be publicly reported versus included in the calculation of an Index?
2. What are the best ways to address the inherent accountability challenges of incorporating the achievement of English Language Learners?
3. What tier labels are most appropriate to describe the performance levels of schools? Should the Index continue to use relative performance descriptors (Exemplary – Struggling), letter grades (A – F), or labels directly linked to an established standard (e.g. Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Approaching Expectations, Does Not Meet Expectations)?
4. How should performance targets be set for each performance indicator? Which subindicators, if any, should be norm-referenced and which should not?

Additionally, although it is not a new question for the AAW, SBE will continue to discuss issues of subgroup disaggregation.

Summary

Career and College Readiness

As part of their Elementary and Secondary Education Act flexibility requests, states have an opportunity to replace federal accountability with a coherent, aligned state accountability system. Recent developments in data systems across states make it newly possible to link K–12 data with post K–12 data including workforce, training, and two and four year college data. More than 17 states have added career- and college- readiness measures into their accountability systems. An initial analysis of the CCR measures by state is summarized in Table One.

In Washington, adding CCR measures to our revised Index is an opportunity to align accountability with the purpose of basic education as articulated in state law: “that which is necessary to provide the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the state-established high school graduation requirements that are intended to allow students to have the opportunity to graduate with a meaningful diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship” (RCW 28A.150.200 (2)).

Table 1: Career and College Readiness measures included in state accountability systems as described in ESEA flexibility applications (sorted from most often to least often used).

	ACT or SAT scores	Industry Certification or CTE endorsement	AP/IB success	Dual Credit	Work-Keys	Compass or Accuplacer	Advanced coursework	College remediation	Algebra in 8 th grade	College-ready cut scores on state tests	% 9 th graders credit deficient
Colorado	X										
Florida	X	X	X	X			X				
Idaho	X		X	X		X					
Illinois	X	X	X	X	X						
Indiana		X	X	X							
Iowa										X	
Kentucky	X	X			X	X					
Louisiana	X	X	X	X							
Maryland		X									
Missouri							X				
Nevada	X		X					X			X
New Mexico	X	X		X							
New York		X									
North Carolina	X				X						
Oklahoma	X	X	X						X		
South Dakota	X										
Wisconsin	X										

Policy Recommendations - National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practices issue brief: [Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools](#)¹

This issue brief was written in response to the availability of ESEA waivers and the opportunity for states to create innovative accountability systems that focus on preparing students for careers and college. Although many states are participating in one of two assessment consortia (PARCC and SBAC) with the ultimate goal of aligning assessments to the newly adopted CCR standards, this brief urges states to move forward with immediate incorporation of existing CCR measures. The brief lays out principles for states to consider as they move forward in this effort:

1. Use multiple measures including assessment, graduation, CCR, and school environment. The measures should be meaningful, actionable, and limited.
2. Provide incentives for schools to work with hardest-to-reach students, such as awarding 'bonus' points for four-year graduation rates, the percent of students enrolling in post-secondary education who do not require remediation, the percent of students enrolling on post-secondary education or obtaining family-wage employment within one year of graduation.
3. Set realistic targets that are based in research and are realistic given past performance. States need to identify schools and districts that are making the most progress, and set targets that reflect that level of performance.

Included in the multiple measures are the following recommendations:

- **Assessment:** The percent of students who are CCR as assessed by SBAC. This can be distinct from a lower graduation requirement, but states are urged to use the higher CCR standard for accountability purposes.
- **Graduation rates:** High school graduation is a critical milestone in readiness for next steps for students. States should include on time and extended graduation rate data.
- **Credit accumulation:** States should hold schools and districts accountable for the number of students who are on track to graduate as well as the number of students who are accelerated beyond the minimum.
- **Additional CCR measures:** States should include the percent of students who pass a dual credit course, who pass an Advanced Placement exam, an International Baccalaureate exam, or who receive a career certificate. Because the quality of dual credit courses varies, the report urges states to routinely evaluate whether the courses truly represent college-level work.
- **School environment:** Three methods that states use are student surveys, teacher condition surveys, and chronic absenteeism.
- **Other measures:** The report recognizes that many skills beyond just content knowledge will influence the degree to which students succeed including persistence, problem solving, and critical thinking. Because there are no states with the current capacity to measure these attributes, incorporating evidence of post secondary success is something states should consider such as college enrollment, remediation, and persistence.

¹<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1008COLLEGECAREERREADYGOALS.PDF;jsessionid=46410AF6E547591CD8BA6536BBD6DFC7>

Policy Recommendations - Education Sector's Data That Matters: Giving High Schools Useful Feedback on Grads' Outcomes by Anne Hyslop²

This report explores CCR measures and how they can be helpful feedback tools to ensure that high schools are preparing students for their future. The report recommends using both “indicators” of readiness, defined as things that are measured while students are still in high schools, and “evidence” of readiness which would include data collected after high school. Education Sector recommends that feedback for high schools should include both.

Type of measure	When it occurs	Characteristics	Examples
“Indicators” of CCR	Measured while students are still in high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally these measures are highly influenced or controlled by high schools; • Measures are generally known to be good predictors of post-high school success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Behavior • Course-taking patterns • ACT or SAT scores • AP or IB programs • Dual enrollment courses • Industry certification • Graduation rates
“Evidence” of CCR	Measured after students complete high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally these factors are less under direct control of high schools; • Measures actual success or attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College enrollment • Remediation rates • Persistence rates • College graduation rates • Participation in apprenticeship or training programs • Attainment of professional licenses or certifications • Earnings/employment data

English Language Learners

English Language Learners comprise one of the federal subgroups, and therefore states have been held accountable to increase their rate of proficiency on reading and math assessments. Under NCLB, 100 percent of students in every subgroup were expected to meet state standards by 2014. Under the current AMOs that were proposed by Washington to substitute for NCLB, schools must close proficiency gaps for their ELL subgroup just as they must close proficiency gaps for all subgroups.

Additional federal accountability for ELLs is addressed in Title III. Students are tested for English proficiency annually. There are four levels of proficiency: Level One–Beginning, Level Two–Intermediate, Level Three–Advanced, and Level Four–Transitional (proficient). When students reach Level 4 they are considered fully English language proficient and no longer qualify for support in either the federal Title III program or the state Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program.

² http://www.educationsector.org/sites/default/files/publications/HSFeedback_CYCT_RELEASE.pdf

Federal Title III accountability holds schools receiving Title III funds responsible for three outcomes, referred to as Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). Note that this acronym is similar to AMO but this is a separate set of expectations.

- AMAO–1: Annual increases in the number or percentage of children making progress in learning English. In Washington, this is measured as one scale score point gain from one year to the next. In 2012–13, the target is 67.5 percent of students making progress for a district to meet this AMAO.
- AMAO–2: Annual increases in the number or percentage of children attaining English proficiency. In 2012–13, the target is 14.2 percent transitioning for a district to meet this AMAO.
- AMAO–3: The number or percentage of students meeting AYP targets in the reading and math ELL cells. Under the ESEA flexibility waiver, the new AMO targets of closing proficiency gaps by 50 percent by 2017 will apply.

Accountability Challenges

There are several challenges inherent in the federal accountability system and revising the Achievement Index is an opportunity to address them. First, ELLs take statewide assessments*, but may not have the English language skills needed to understand the text or respond effectively in English. Therefore, the percent of ELLs meeting standard on these tests is not likely an adequate measurement of their performance.

A second challenge is that as soon as students reach English proficiency, they are no longer counted as ELLs. Therefore, just as students are most likely to be able to access the language in the test, they are not counted in that subgroup any longer and this dampens the performance of the subgroup.

Third, after transitioning, ELLs generally perform below the state average and perform particularly low in grades 6–8. There is no accountability for these students other than the “all students” group.

Finally, there is no specific expectation set for the amount of time it should take to acquire English proficiency or progress from one level to the next. There is therefore no definition of Long Term English Learners in our current reporting system. The result is that there are varying numbers of LTELs, but that information is not reported and there is no accountability for the number of LTELs.

Options to Explore in Response to these Challenges

First, adding the Washington Growth Model for the subgroup of ELLs is a strong first step to mitigate the challenges inherent in measuring proficiency. Each year, the vast majority of new ELLs enter in Kindergarten. In OSPI’s most recent annual report to the Legislature (December 2011), 66 percent of new ELLs were Kindergarteners³. Their student growth percentile data will be available in fourth grade. If the growth performance indicator incorporates adequate growth, targets for schools will be set in alignment with how many students are on track to meet

³ <http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2011documents/TransitionalBilingualReport2011.pdf>

standard within three years, or for these students, by the end of seventh grade. That represents eight years of instruction for many students.

Second, Washington could opt to create a new subgroup of former ELLs. This would ensure that sufficient attention is paid to these students, knowing that they tend to have lower rates of proficiency after transitioning than students who were never ELLs. This subgroup could be employed for both proficiency and for growth, so that even if the former ELLs are not currently proficient in large numbers, their growth rates can be included.

Other options to explore include the following:

- The percent of ELL progressing from one level to the next. This may present a data challenge but should be explored.
- The percent of ELLs who are LTELs. This would involve stakeholder outreach to explore the creation of an expectation for the amount of time that is reasonable for students to acquire English proficiency. In other words, how long is ‘too long’? Unlike other states, Washington has neither law nor commonly held belief on this topic. After deciding what is ‘too long’, this may still present a data challenge but should be explored.
- Student Growth Percentiles on the WELPA. This would require further exploration regarding whether or not this is a suitable assessment for this purpose. Additionally, Washington is likely to adopt new English Language Development standards as part of a multi-state consortium, so this is a rapidly changing landscape.

Tiers

The current Index applies tier labels to schools (Exemplary, Very Good, Good, Fair, Struggling). Index points from one to seven determine the tier.

Some states have adopted a letter grade system of A–F or a system of 1–5 stars. This is helpful to parents and stakeholders because it employs a known concept.

Letter Grades, 1-5 Stars	
Arizona Florida Indiana Louisiana New Mexico Oklahoma South Carolina Tennessee	A–F
Idaho Illinois Nevada	1–5 stars

Other states have used tier labels to convey a clear sense of state expectations for schools. For example, Oregon has a simple system of Outstanding, Satisfactory, and In Need of Improvement. There is little question which schools have met state expectations with those labels.

Examples of clear state expectations for acceptable school performance	
Arkansas	Exemplary Achieving Needs Improvement Needs Improvement Focus Needs Improvement Priority Schools
Colorado	Exceeds Meets Approaching Does Not Meet
Kentucky	Distinguished Proficient Needs Improvement
Massachusetts	On track to Career and College Ready Off track to CCR Focus Priority
Oregon	Outstanding Satisfactory In Need of Improvement
Wisconsin	Significantly Exceeds Expectations Exceeds Expectations Meets Expectations Meets Few Expectations Fails to Meet Expectations
Iowa	Exceptional High Performing Commendable Acceptable Needs Improvement Priority

A minority of states have descriptive labels, which range from high to low performance, but do not necessarily reflect a state expectation. For example, does a “Fair” or “Progressing” school meet state expectations?

Descriptive tier labels	
Washington’s Current Index	Exemplary Very Good Good Fair Struggling
Connecticut	Excelling Progressing Transition Review Turnaround
South Dakota	Exemplary Status Progressing

	Focus Priority
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Performance Targets

The current Index sets performance targets for reading, writing, math, and science based on the percent of students who meet standard in a given year. For reading and writing, performance tends to be higher; and math and science is generally lower reflecting overall state trends.

The chart below demonstrates how the current Index score range of 1–7 relates to tiers. Each point in the range covers ten percentage points, with the exception that below 40 percent meeting standard receives a one regardless of how low it is.

Some tiers are essentially larger than others, covering anywhere from .5 Index points to 1.5 points. For example, a school with 75 percent of students meeting standard would receive a score of 5.5 and be in the “Exemplary” tier. A school with 100 percent of students meeting standard would receive a score of seven and would also be in the “Exemplary” tier.

Table 2 illustrates the relationship between percent of students meeting standard, the Index score, and the tiers. The final two columns display average elementary and average middle school performance for 2012.

Table 2: Current Index performance targets

% Met Standard	Index Score	Tier (Index Score Range)	2012 Average Elementary	2012 Average Middle School
90-100	7	Exemplary (5.5-7)		
80-89.9	6			
75-79.9	5		Very Good (5-5.49)	← Reading 70.5%
70-74.9				← Reading 69.8%
60-69.9	4	Good (4-4.99)	← Science 62.8%	← Reading 69.8%
50-59.9	3	Fair (2.5-3.99)	← Writing 61.4%	← Science 66.4%
45-49.9			← Math 59.4%	← Math 58.7%
40-44.9				
<40	1	Struggling (1-2.49)		

This reflects a criterion-based approach to scoring. One school's score is unrelated to other schools' performance, and it is possible for more and more schools to get a higher and higher score as overall student achievement improves. State average or median performance of schools is not taken into account. The rationale for this is that these are tied to the rate at which students meet standard, which is by definition the expectation for what all students should know and be able to do. Average performance is not a factor. Generally schools receive a much higher score for their reading and writing performance because most schools have higher rates of success in these subjects than science or math.

A contrasting approach would be normative, assigning points and tiers to relative differences among schools. For example, if overall state performance in science is so low that only 25 percent of students meet standard, a school with 40 percent of students meeting standard would earn a high score due to relative higher performance. AAW members will see options related to both criterion and normative approaches to performance indicators.

Subgroups

States must continue to *report* fully disaggregated data for state assessments, using the federal categories (see below). States must also set Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in reading and math for the 'all' students subgroup and all other major racial and ethnic groups, students from low-income families, English Learners, and students with disabilities. Washington set the AMOs to reducing proficiency gaps by 50 percent over six years.

Subgroups for federal accountability:

- All
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- Hispanic
- White
- Two or More Races
- Limited English
- Special Education
- Low Income

In terms of states' performance indexes, there is some latitude for states to consolidate subgroups in some circumstances. While some states continue to include fully disaggregated data in their respective indexes, others opt to create 'super subgroups' by combining some groups. Super subgroups can be used as part of the overall Index score which can drive the tier designation of schools. For example, Connecticut created a "high needs subgroup" which is made up of English Learners, students receiving special education instruction, and students receiving subsidized meals. Massachusetts created a similar high needs group but adds former ELLs. Florida takes into account the lowest 25 percent of students regardless of their subgroup. Oregon uses all of the federal subgroup categories and added another, which they call 'catch up' reflecting that these are students who scored below grade level on assessments.

States justify the creation of super subgroups as a response to several challenges:

- By definition, every student belongs to more than one subgroup and some belong to as many as five. For example, every student has a race/ethnicity and is also included in the

“all” category. Additionally, some students are also low income, have disabilities, and are English Language Learners. Supersubgroups eliminate the redundancy because students are combined into a single ‘at risk’ subgroup. This was particularly an issue under NCLB because a school’s failure to make the goal in any subgroup resulted in the school not making Adequate Yearly Progress. This concern can be minimized by an Index that is compensatory, rather than conjunctive, and by focusing on growth rather than just status.

- Small student populations (fewer than 20) need to be suppressed. Combining multiple subgroups can bring the N size above 20 and therefore make the subgroup visible. Utah, for example, argues that creating super subgroups captures 90 percent of schools, versus only 62 percent captured by lowering their ‘n’ size. Illinois and Nevada propose a hybrid of full disaggregation and super subgroups by employing a super subgroup only for schools with groups below the minimum ‘n’ size and for all other schools using fully disaggregated subgroup data.

The consolidation of subgroups into super subgroups raises some concerns. Grouping the performance of diverse subgroups together can mask the unique differences among groups and create confusion regarding appropriate intervention strategies. If a low-performing super subgroup includes students with disabilities, low income students, and English Learners, that does not mean that their needs are all the same or that the strategies to boost the performance of one subgroup will work for another.

Similarly, improving one subgroup but not another could make a school’s performance appear better than it should. One of the noted strengths of NCLB was the focus on each subgroup. Super subgroup could have the unintended consequence of obscure persistent lack of improvement in a small subgroup.

Finally, Board Members have repeatedly expressed a desire to include specific data for English Language Learners. Disaggregating data for one subgroup but not others could present issues of fairness. If the Index disaggregates ELL data, why not other subgroups as well?

The AAW was presented with a series of options regarding subgroups:

- A. Use current federal subgroups only
- B. Add new subgroups to the existing list. For example, former ELL or Catch-up students.
- C. Creating a super subgroup for schools with low N size.
- D. Both B and C.
- E. Other.

These options will be explored more fully at the December AAW meeting.

Background

To receive Elementary and Secondary Education Act flexibility, states are required to commit to several principles for improving student achievement⁴. There are four principles in all, but two of them in particular are related to the development of our revised Index, including:

1. College and Career Ready Expectations for All Students.
 - Adopting CCR standards in reading/language arts and math.
 - Administering annual, aligned assessments that correspond to those standards.

⁴ ESEA Flexibility, June 7, 2012. <https://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/documents/esea-flexibility.doc>

- Measuring student growth.
- 2. State-Developed Differentiated System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support.
 - State-developed system must 'look at' student achievement in at least reading/language arts and math.
 - Include all students and all subgroups of students identified in ESEA graduation rates for all students and all subgroups.
 - School performance and progress over time, including all subgroups.
 - Must take into account student growth.
 - Set new 'ambitious but achievable' annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and math for all districts, schools, and subgroups.
 - Provide incentives and recognition for "reward schools."
 - Publicly identify "priority schools" and ensure that districts meaningfully intervene.
 - Work to close achievement gaps by identifying "focus schools" with the greatest achievement gaps or in which subgroups are furthest behind.
 - Provide incentives and support for other Title I schools that are not improving or narrowing gaps.

Washington has received a conditional waiver of ESEA, pending the submission of a revised Achievement Index by June 30, 2013. SBE is partnering with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to this end. SBE has convened a stakeholder workgroup to provide input at each step of the Index revision process. This group is known as the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup, which had its first meeting in October. The AAW will meet three more times on the topic of the Achievement Index revision, and then will turn its focus to the development of a statewide accountability framework, as envisioned in E2SSB 6696.

Action

Consider a motion to approve the proposed AAW letter.

Achievement Index Revision: Preparation for the December AAW Meeting

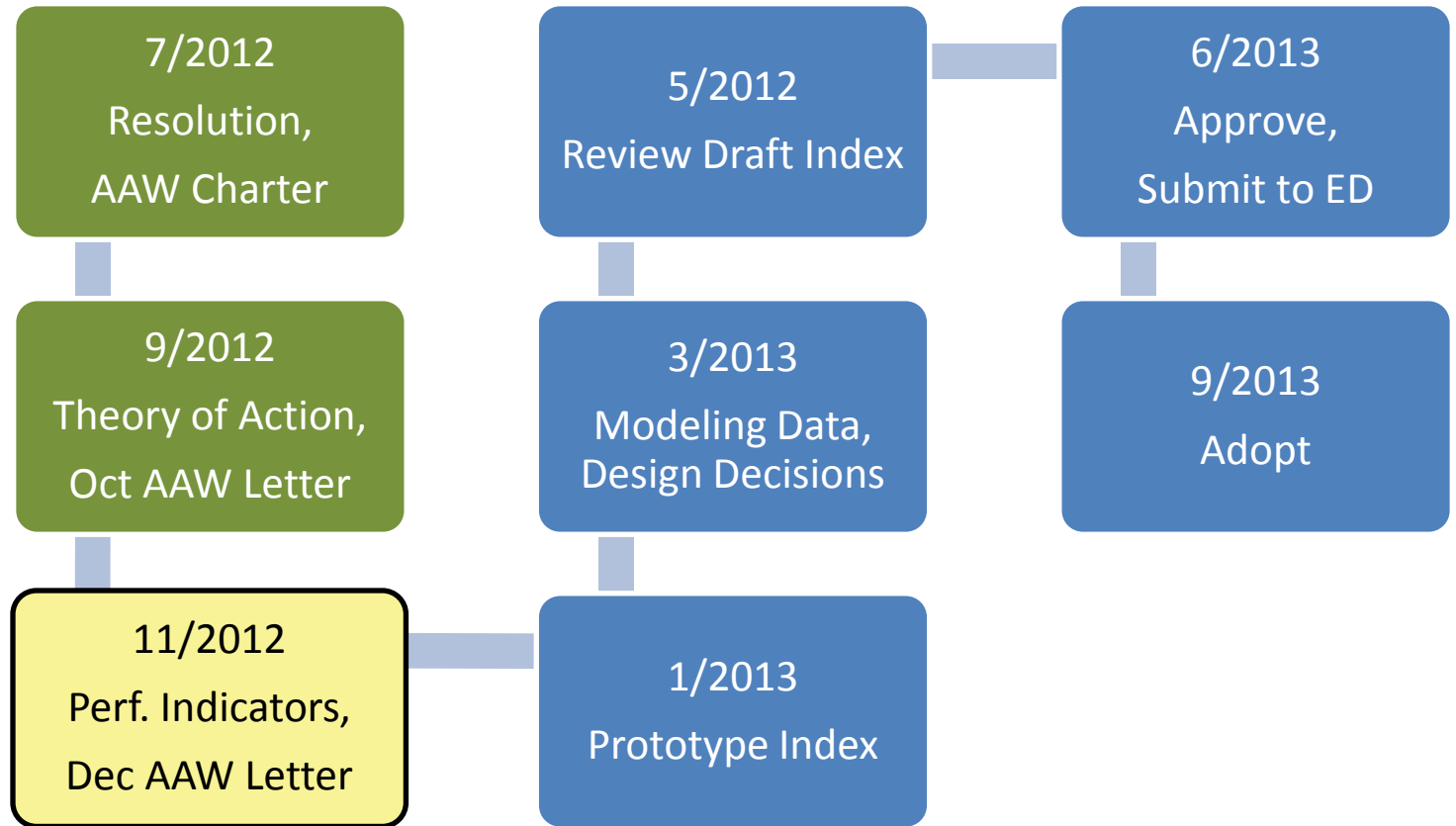
Sarah Rich
Policy Director
November 9, 2012

Objective: SBE Board Members will discuss and approve the next set of questions posed to the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup.

Note:

- Ample time for discussion throughout the presentation.
- Aside from approval of the questions, no decisions expected on these topics until January.

Index Revision Timeline



AAW Questions for December

College and Career Readiness

Specific sub-indicators to measure college and career readiness?

Which included only for the public reporting, and which for Index calculation?

ELLs

Only measures of *academic proficiency and growth* or also *language proficiency and/or growth*?

Also include a subgroup of former ELLs?

Tiers

Relative performance descriptors, letter grades, or labels directly linked to an established standard?

Targets

How should targets be set?

Norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced?

National Governor's Association: *Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools (2012)*



Recommended Principles:

- Use multiple measures, including assessment, graduation, career and college readiness, and school environment.
- Provide incentives for schools to work with hardest-to-reach students.
 - On time and extended graduation.
 - Students not needing remediation in college.
 - Students enrolling in post-secondary education or obtaining family-wage employment within 1 year.
- Set realistic targets based in research and past performance.

Source: NGA, January 2012.

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1201EDUACCOUNTABILITYBRIEF.PDF>

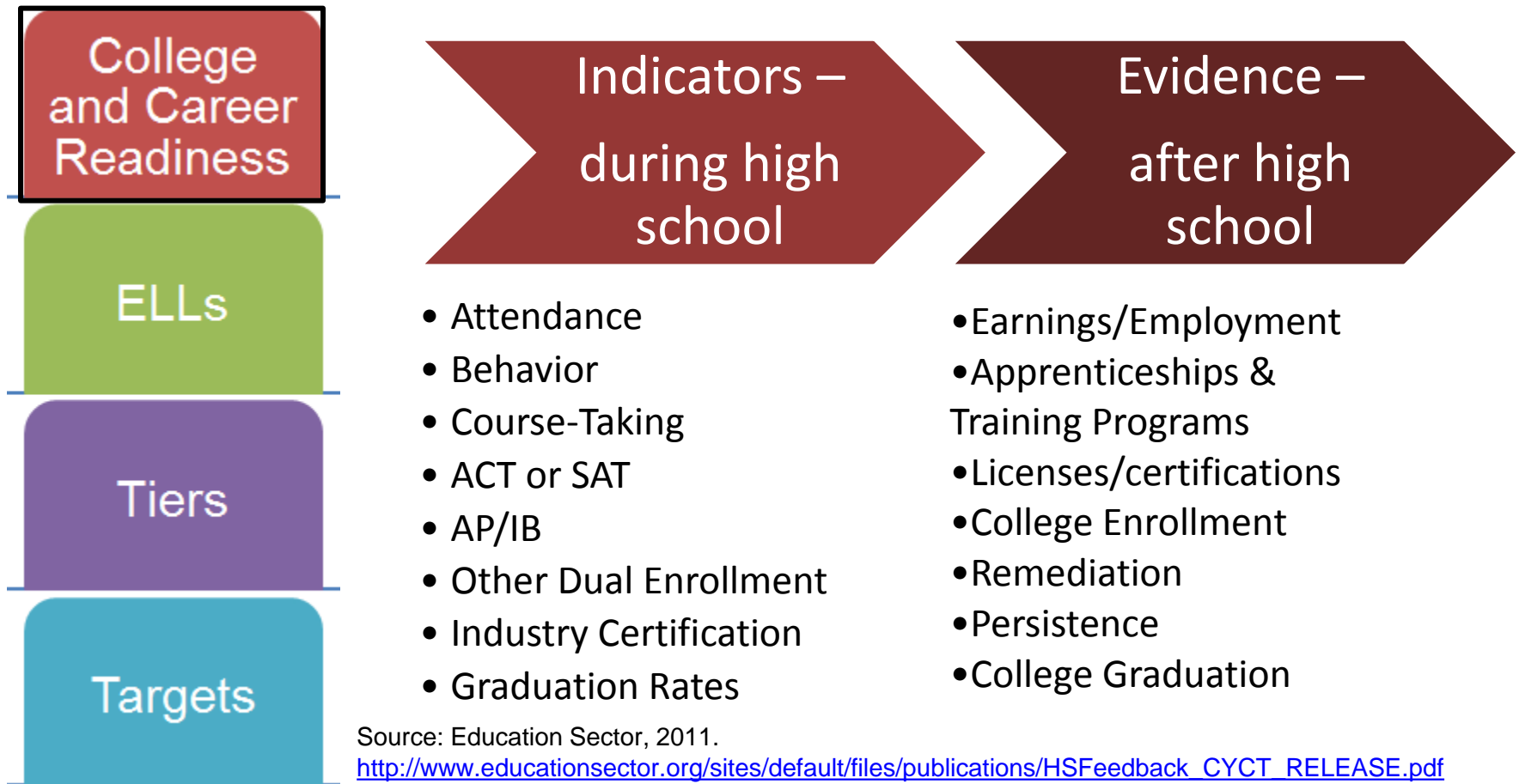
Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools Cont.



Multiple measures:

- CCR assessment (SBAC).
- Graduation Rates (on time and extended).
- Students 'on track' to graduate.
- Dual credit, AP, IB, career certification.
- School Environment: student and teacher surveys, chronic absenteeism.
- Other measures including persistence, problem solving, critical thinking. BUT no states have current capacity to measure these qualities so instead consider college enrollment, remediation, persistence.

Education Sector's *Data That Matters: Giving High Schools Useful Feedback on Grads' Outcomes* (2011)



Types of Dual Enrollment



Baccalaureate Degree Pathway

- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- University of Cambridge International Examinations
- Early College
- Gateway to College
- Running Start

Certification/Apprenticeship Pathway

- Technical College Direct Funded Enrollment Programs

Technical/Associate Degree Pathway

- Running Start
- Tech Prep
- Technical College Direct Funded Enrollment Programs

Source: OSPI Enrollment Website

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SecondaryEducation/CareerCollegeReadiness/DualCredit/default.aspx>

College
and Career
Readiness

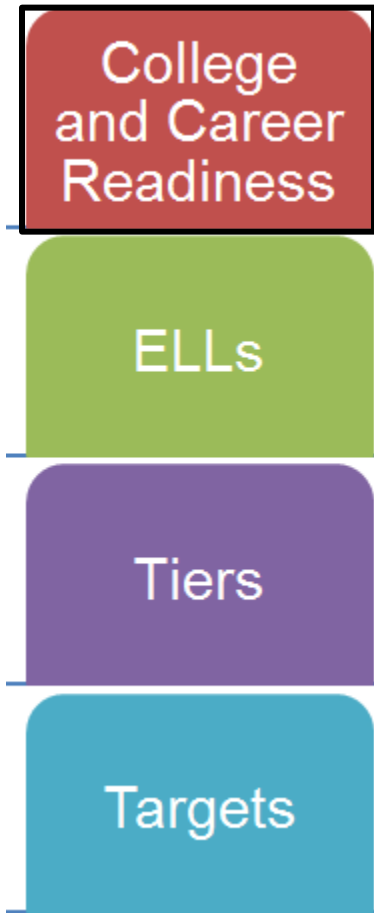
ELLs

Tiers

Targets

Questions?

RCW 28A.230.130



(1) All public high schools of the state shall provide a program, directly or in cooperation with a community college or another school district, for students whose educational plans include application for entrance to a baccalaureate-granting institution after being granted a high school diploma. The program shall help these students to meet at least the minimum entrance requirements under RCW 28B.10.050.

(2) All public high schools of the state shall provide a program, directly or in cooperation with a community or technical college, a skills center, an apprenticeship committee, or another school district, for students who plan to pursue career or work opportunities other than entrance to a baccalaureate-granting institution after being granted a high school diploma.

Source: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?Cite=28A.230.130>

E2SHB 1808: The Launch Act (2011)

College
and Career
Readiness

Within existing resources, all public high schools in the state shall:

ELLs

Work towards the goal of offering a sufficient number of high school courses that give students the opportunity to earn the equivalent of a year's worth of postsecondary credit towards a certificate, apprenticeship program, technical degree, or associate or baccalaureate degree...

Tiers

...this information shall encourage students to use the twelfth grade as the launch year for an advance start on their career and postsecondary education.

Targets

Source: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2011-12/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/1808-S2.PL.pdf>

Dual Enrollment



Type	Dual Credit Course Enrollments	HS Students In Dual Credit Courses	% of Total HS Students
All Dual Credits	455,914	177,410	47.0%
Tech Prep	193,102	120,539	31.9%
Advanced Placement	135,762	51,931	13.8%
Running Start	80,234	17,516	4.6%
College in High School	30,188	14,533	3.9%
International Baccalaureate	28,289	6,500	1.7%
University of Cambridge International Examinations	2,985	1,147	0.3%

Source: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/DualCredit.aspx?year=2011-12>

ESEA Flexibility: Overview



	ACT or SAT scores	Industry Certification or CTE endorsement	AP/IB success	Dual Credit
Colorado	X			
Florida	X	X	X	X
Idaho	X		X	X
Illinois	X	X	X	X
Indiana		X	X	X
Iowa				
Kentucky	X	X		
Louisiana	X	X	X	X
Maryland		X		
Missouri				
Nevada	X		X	
New Mexico	X	X		X
New York		X		
North Carolina	X			
Oklahoma	X	X	X	
South Dakota	X			
Wisconsin	X			

Source: staff analysis of Career and College Readiness measures included in state accountability systems as described in ESEA flexibility applications

College
and Career
Readiness

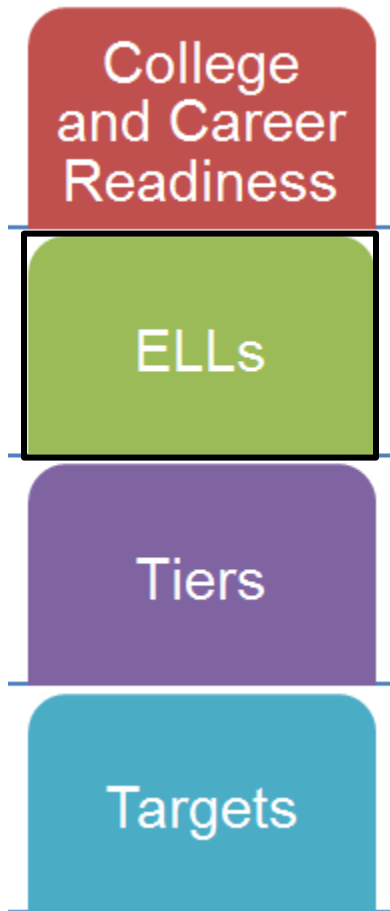
ELLs

Tiers

Targets

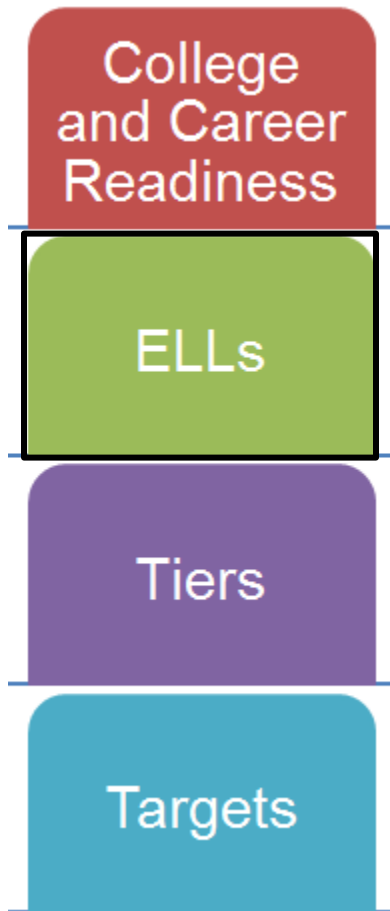
Questions and Discussion

English Language Learners – Accountability Challenges



1. % of ELLs meeting content standards is an inadequate measure of performance.
2. When students transition, they exit the subgroup which dampens subgroup performance.
3. Transitional ELLs generally perform below the state average and perform particularly low in middle grades and math and science.
4. There is no state expectation set for time in program or time to progress from one level to the next.

English Language Learners – Additional Challenges

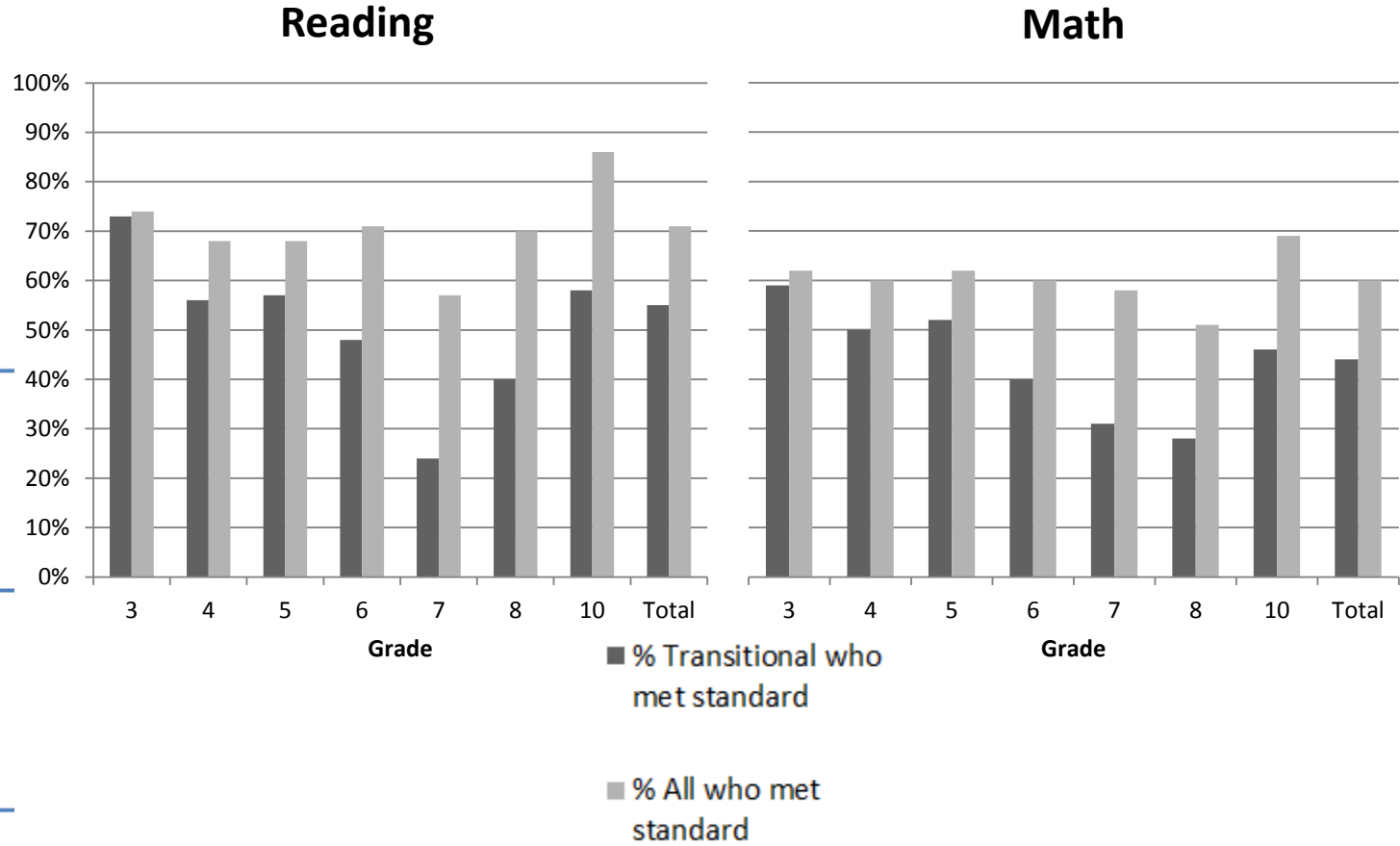
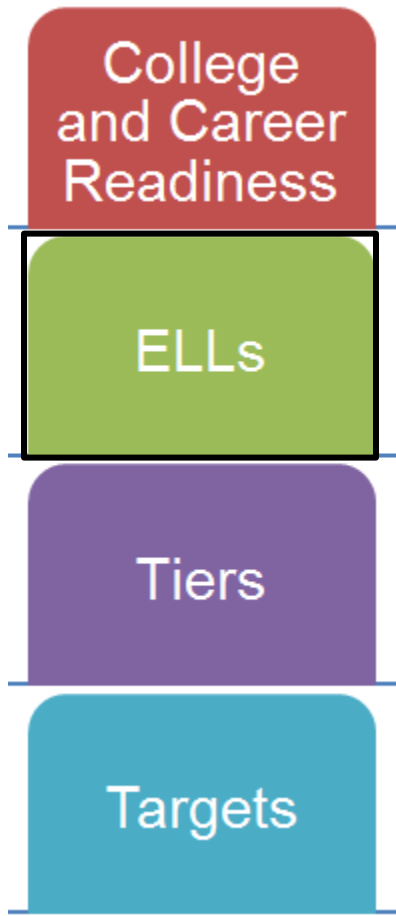


1. Many educators are not fully trained to work with ELLs.
2. Shortage of qualified staff for bilingual models and newcomer programs.
3. District and school confusion about ELL program models.
4. Districts and schools report challenges in building connections to ELL families and communities.

Source: Education Northwest's Effective Practices for English Language Learners and their Implementation in Washington Schools (2009)

http://www.k12.wa.us/QEC/pubdocs/TBIP/Education_Northwest_ELL_Demonstration_Year_2_Report_11-30-09.pdf

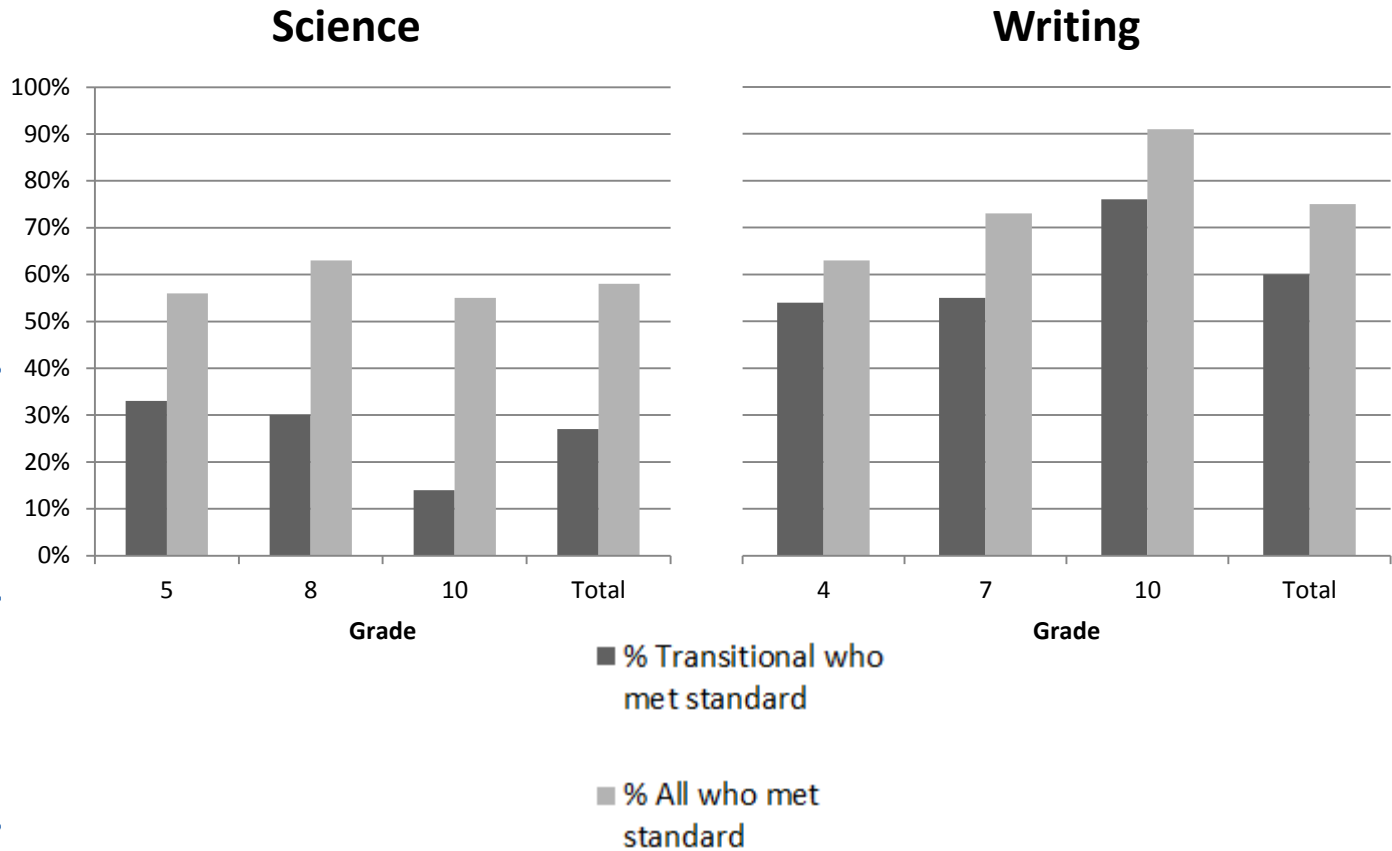
Transitional ELLs and MSP/HSPE Performance (2010-11)



Source: OSPI Educating English Language Learners in Washington State 2010-2011 (December 2011).

<http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2011documents/TransitionalBilingualReport2011.pdf>

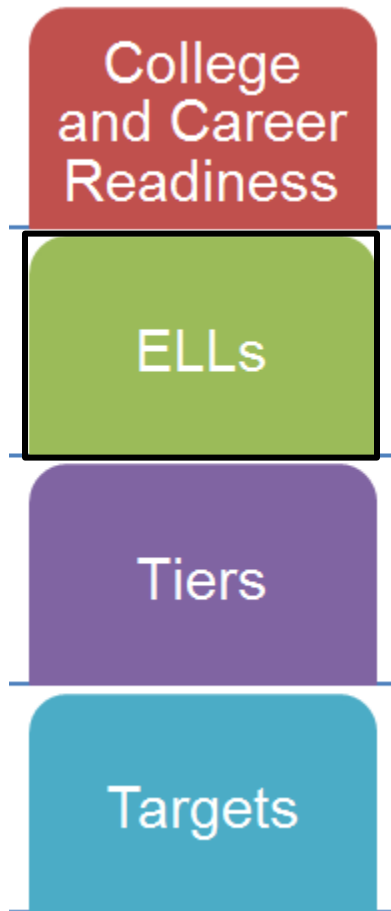
Transitional ELLs and MSP/HSPE Performance (2010-11)



Source: OSPI Educating English Language Learners in Washington State 2010-2011 (December 2011).

<http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2011documents/TransitionalBilingualReport2011.pdf>

English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21)



\$6.3 million federal grant to consortium of states led by Oregon:

Arkansas, California, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, West Virginia

Partners include Stanford and Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO)

Purpose: develop new English language proficiency tests aligned with Common Core State Standards.

States must adopt new common English language development standards, likely modeled on California.

ELL Considerations

Goal: coherent, aligned state and federal accountability

Do not want: misalignment between state accountability (Index) and federal accountability (AMO and AMAOs)

Example of potential misalignment: a district meeting AMAOs (Title III) and yet is identified as a Focus school in the Index due to ELL performance (Index)

College
and Career
Readiness

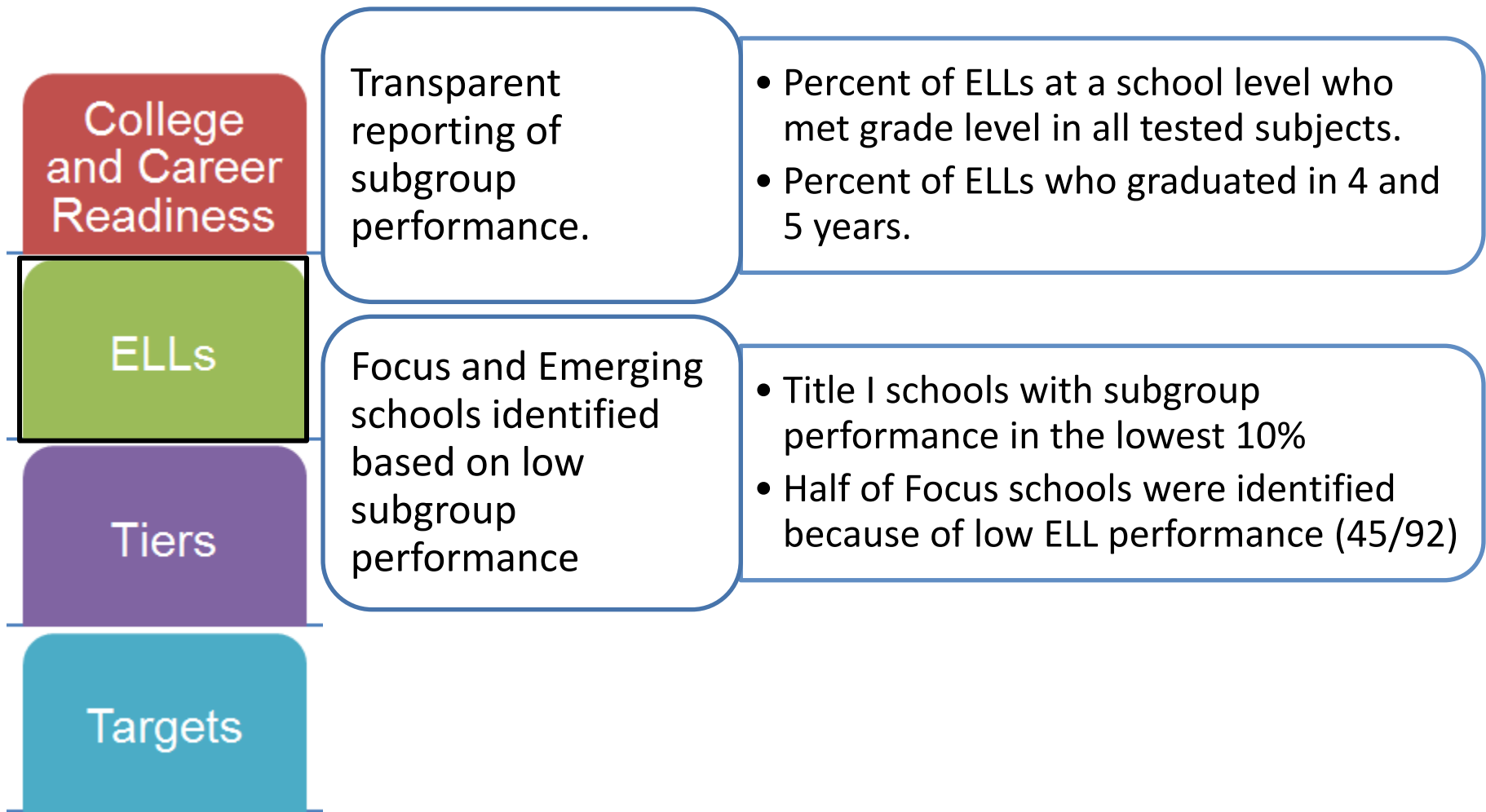
ELLs

Tiers

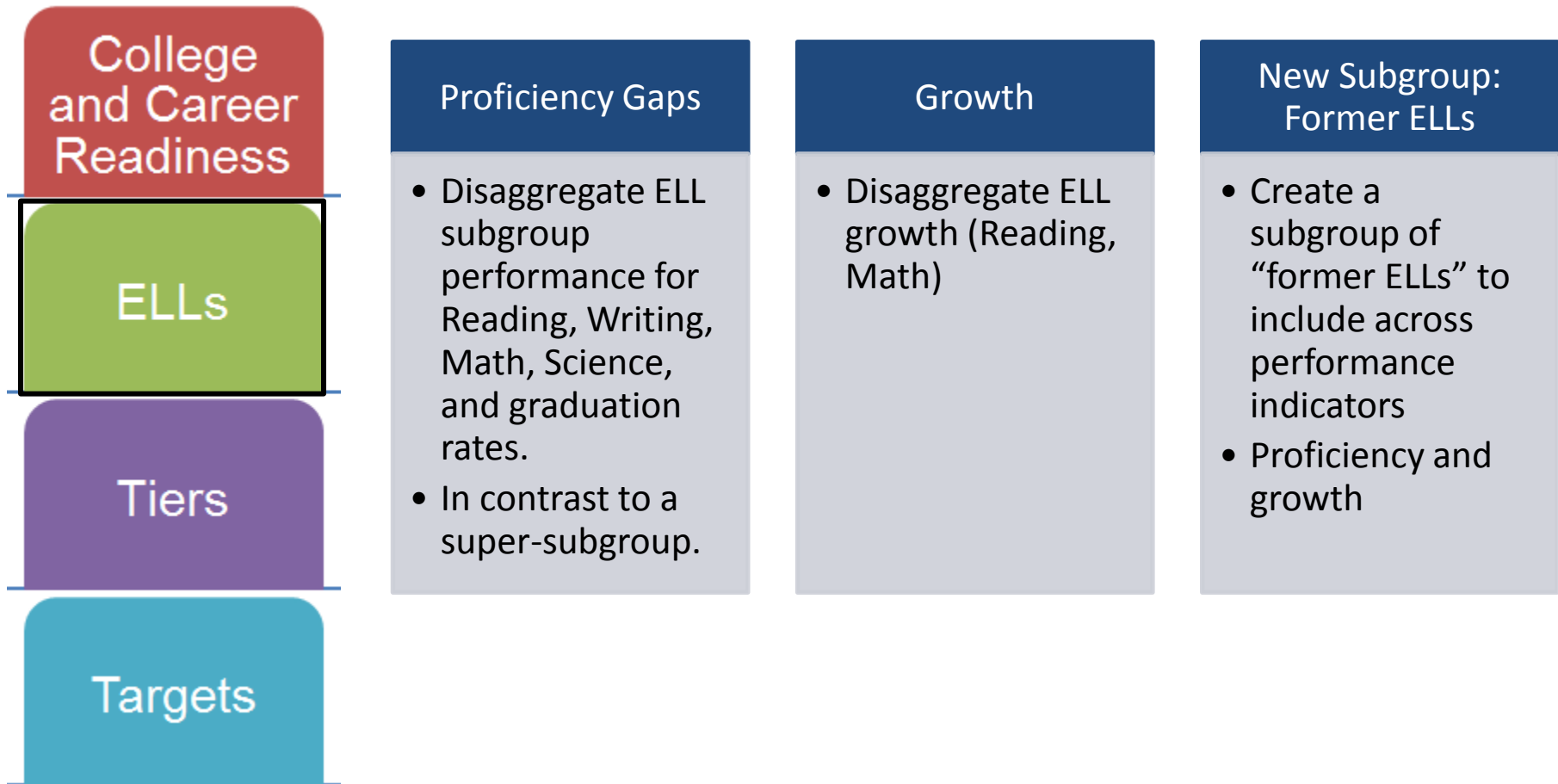
Targets



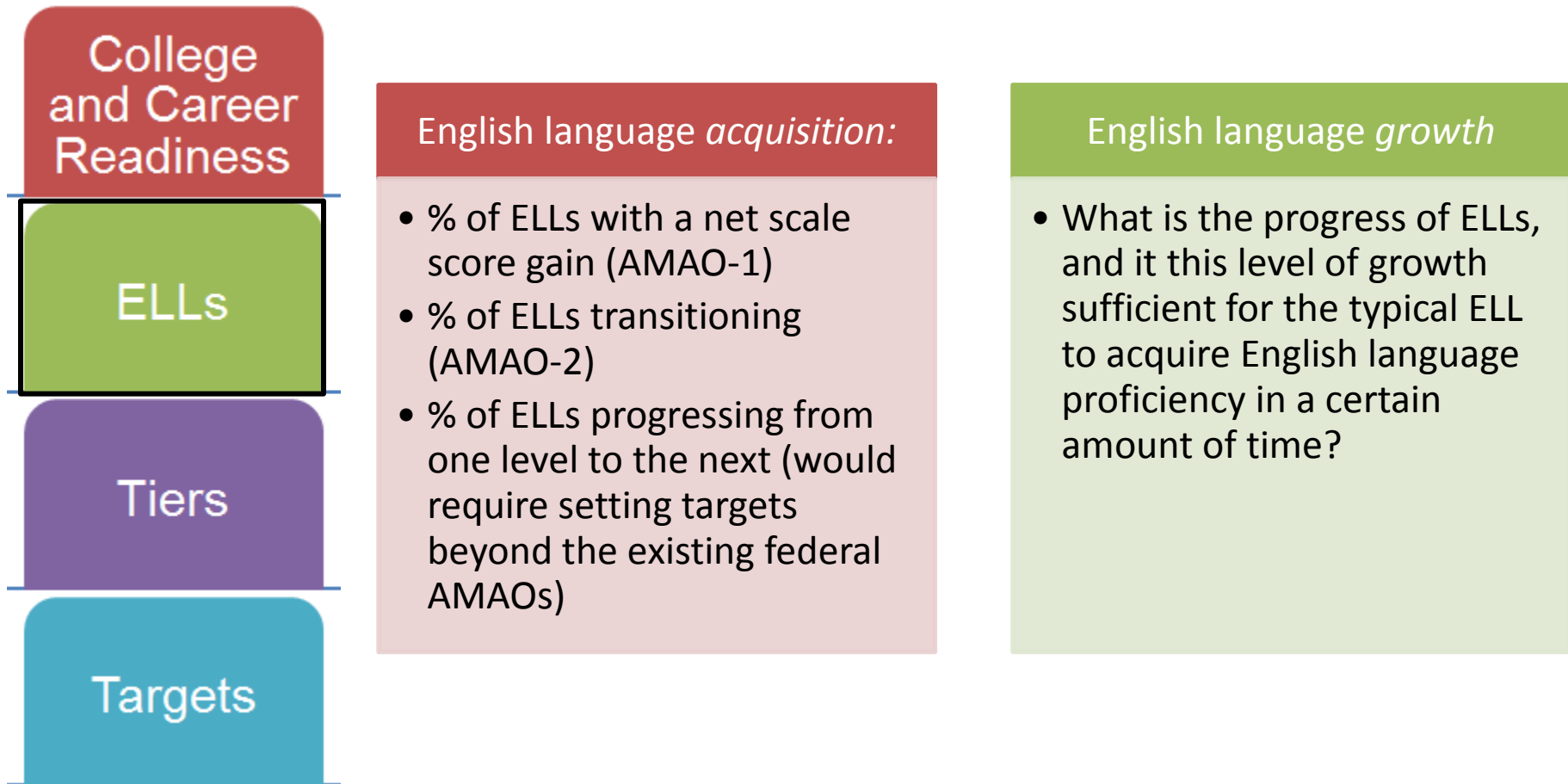
Strengthening Accountability for ELLs: ESEA Commitments



Strengthening Accountability for ELLs: Opportunities



Strengthening Accountability for ELLs: Options to Explore



College
and Career
Readiness

ELLs

Tiers

Targets

Questions and Discussion

Tiers and Targets – Current Index



% Met Standard	Index Score
90-100	7
80-89.9	6
70-79.9	5
60-69.9	4
50-59.9	3
40-49.9	2
<40	1

Tiers and Targets – Current Index



% Met Standard	Index Score	Tier (Index Score Range)	2012 Average Elementary	2012 Average Middle School
90-100	7	Exemplary (5.5-7)		
80-89.9	6			
75-79.9	5	Very Good (5-5.49)		
70-74.9			← Reading 70.5%	← Writing 71%
60-69.9	4	Good (4-4.99)	← Science 62.8%	← Reading 69.8%
50-59.9	3	Fair (2.5-3.99)	← Writing 61.4%	← Science 66.4%
45-49.9	2		← Math 59.4%	
40-44.9				← Math 58.7%
<40	1	Struggling (1-2.49)		

Tiers

	Descriptive Labels	Letter Grades	State Expectations
College and Career Readiness	Current Index: Exemplary – Struggling	A-F letter grades	On track to Career and College Ready Off track to CCR Focus Priority
ELLs			
Tiers	Retains current structure	Employs a concept familiar to parents	Conveys a clear sense of state expectations for schools
Targets			

Targets: Criterion or Norm Referenced for Each Performance Indicator



Proficiency	Growth	CCR
Criterion or Norm?	Criterion or Norm?	Criterion or Norm?
Current Index is primarily criterion referenced	Growth is norm referenced; Adequate growth combines with criterion referenced	

College
and Career
Readiness

ELLs

Tiers

Targets

Questions and Discussion

Subgroups Revisited

Options	+/-
A. Use current federal subgroups only.	Full disaggregation by existing subgroups. Some stakeholders want additional disaggregation.
B. Use current subgroups PLUS add new subgroups – former ELL, ‘Catch-up Students’.	Stronger accountability for former ELLs and for struggling students. Adds significantly more complexity.
C. Create super subgroups for schools with low N size.	Makes gaps visible; may combine subgroups of students with very different needs.
D. Other	
E. Both B and C	

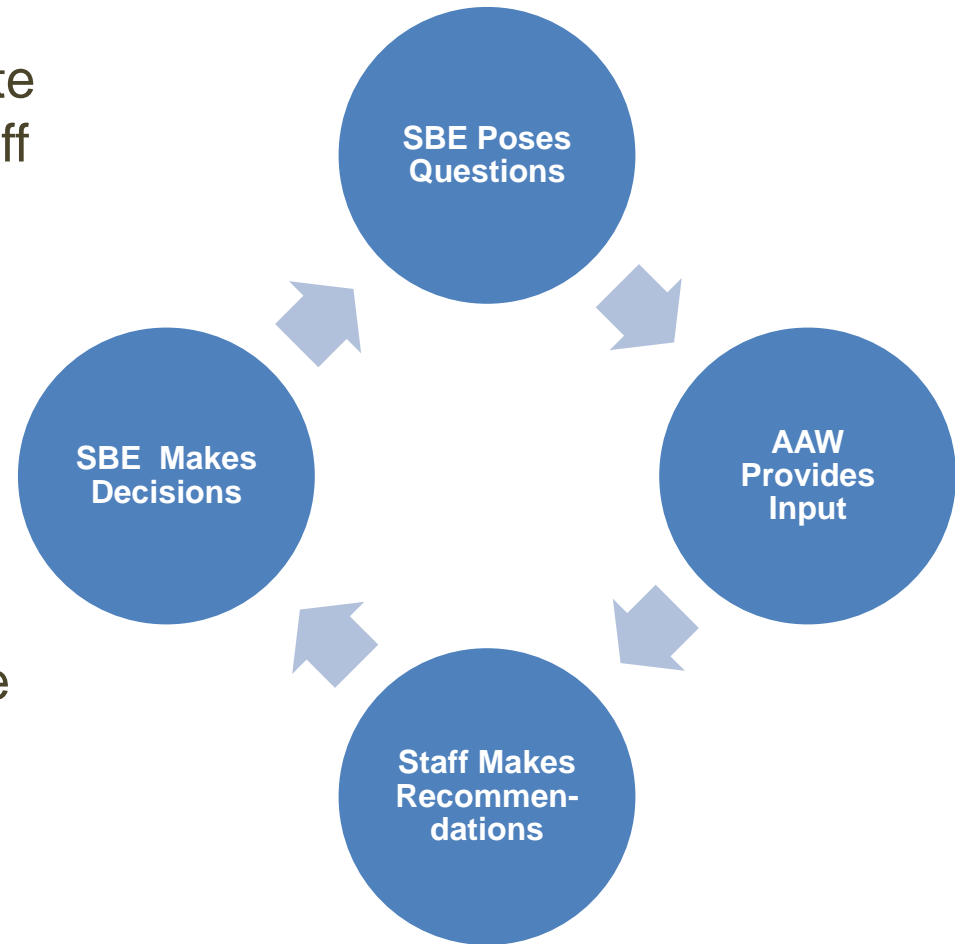
Current federal subgroups:
All
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
Black or African American
Hispanic
White
Two or more races
Limited English
Special Education
Low Income

Super Subgroup of “At Risk” Students Would Make Gaps Visible

Subgroup	Schools with 20 or more Students	Schools with 1-19 Students	Schools with Zero Students	% of Schools with "Visible" Subgroups
Pacific Islander	21	742	1404	3%
American Indian	51	1265	851	4%
Black	293	1110	764	21%
Two or More Races	467	1199	501	28%
Limited English	436	1001	730	30%
Asian	491	983	693	33%
Hispanic	1124	759	284	60%
Special Education	1262	673	232	65%
Low Income	1689	312	166	84%
White	1739	301	127	85%

Looking Ahead

1. In December, the AAW will devote a day to these questions and staff will summarize their input.
2. In January, Board Members will have an opportunity to review AAW input and staff recommendations.
3. Board Members will be asked to take action on areas where there are staff recommendations.



College
and Career
Readiness

ELLs

Tiers

Targets

Questions and Discussion

Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools

Executive Summary

The federal government announced in late 2011 that as an alternative to waiting for Congress to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the U.S. Secretary of Education would consider requests from states to waive certain requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The opportunity to request waivers carries with it a requirement that states develop new systems of accountability that support educators, improve academic achievement, and close achievement gaps.

The federal waiver process presents a unique opportunity for states to create accountability systems that focus on preparing students for college and careers. After careful consideration of current state and district accountability models for high schools and conversations with a number of state education leaders about accountability, the NGA Center for Best Practices recommends that states consider the following principles when designing a college career readiness accountability system for high schools:

1. *Use multiple measures to determine school and district performance* in the areas of assessment, graduation, college and career readiness, and school environment;
2. *Provide incentives for preparing the hardest-to-serve students for college and career*, including comparing the performance of schools and districts with similar student populations; and,
3. *Set realistic targets for accountability measures* that are grounded in research and realistic given past school or district performance.

As governors and other stakeholders work on new models of school and district accountability, it is critical that performance measures be closely aligned to overall state goals, such as preparing all students for college and careers. With the creation of new, innovative models of college and career readiness accountability systems, policymakers can focus on the policies and supports that schools and districts need to close their achievement gaps.

Introduction

The federal government announced in late 2011 that as an alternative to waiting for Congress to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the U.S. Secretary of Education would consider requests from states to waive certain requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The opportunity to request waivers carries with it a requirement that states develop new systems of accountability that support educators, improve academic achievement, and close achievement gaps. New state models of accountability must not only hold districts and schools responsible, but also create systems of support and recognition for schools that are performing well.

States have a unique opportunity to build new systems of accountability that are innovative and experimental. If successful, their innovations could eventually be used as part of a federal accountability system that holds states and local education agencies responsible for the success of educators and students in ways not found in most modern accountability systems. States also have the opportunity to change the elements of

current state accountability systems that have not been effective in improving educator quality, improving student outcomes, and closing achievement gaps.

What Is Wrong with the Current Federal Accountability System?

In 20 states, both a state and a federal accountability system are in place for schools. The federal waiver process presents an opportunity to bring the two systems in line and expand their focus to include preparing students for college and career. The measures used under NCLB do not provide a full picture of student performance. Moreover, the goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014 is unrealistic.

Measures Not Meaningful

The measures of student performance that NCLB requires do not capture the full picture of a student's performance in school. Under NCLB, states are required to assess students in mathematics, English/language arts, and science in grades three through eight and once in high school. Additionally, states must include one "other" measure of performance for which schools and districts are held accountable. Traditionally, the other measures have been schoolwide attendance in elementary and middle schools and the four-year cohort graduation rate in high schools.

Though all of those measures are important components of student performance, they are deficient for three important reasons. First, the measures serve as a disincentive for schools to support struggling students. Research suggests that accountability based on student performance on state assessments, rather than on student growth, has led schools to focus on students whose scores are closest to the "proficient" level. That often means that students whose scores are lower get less attention and remediation.¹ Further, struggling students may be discouraged from staying in school because removing them from the group of students taking state assessments can improve a school's chance of meeting federal expectations. The practice of "pushing out" students is difficult to docu-

ment; however, practitioners acknowledge that some students, often those whose performance is significantly lower than their peers', are not encouraged to stay in school or provided with the supports they need to persist.²

Second, aggregate measures of performance can hide the students who are most at-risk. For example, average school attendance does not highlight the number of students who miss a significant number of days. Although it is important to monitor how the school is doing as a whole, it is much more important to monitor how many students are missing an inappropriate amount of school. Research suggests that the probability of graduation is nearly two-and-a-half times better for a student who has 10 or fewer absences than for a chronically absent student (one who missed more than 10 percent of school days in a year).³ Whole-school attendance averages may hide students who are falling off track.

Finally, the measures of student performance are not sufficient to provide a full picture of student or school performance. A singular focus on proficiency does not allow a school (or teacher) to earn credit for a student who has grown academically over the course of a school year but still fails to earn a "proficient" score on an assessment. The use of growth measures is one way to address that concern. Using growth allows schools to earn credit for the ability to help students grow academically in spite of being behind. Measuring growth could benefit schools that serve a significant number of students who are not on track to graduate, are overage, or are English language learners, or who require special education services.

Performance Goals Are Unachievable

The requirement that all schools reach 100 percent proficiency by 2014 is perhaps the most significant challenge for states. A number of states, such as **Missouri** and **South Carolina**, were required to increase the number of students meeting adequate yearly prog-

ress (AYP) targets by 7 percent to 8 percent a year for a decade because they started out with only a few students reaching a very high bar for proficiency.⁴ Such large gains are not found in the schools demonstrating the greatest amount of growth nationally, let alone all of the schools in a state, making the goal of 100 percent proficiency virtually unattainable.⁵ The aspirational aspect of the goal helped bring to light the importance of helping all students succeed; however, that particular target runs contrary to the research on goal setting, which has found that in any area, goals must be achievable, as well as challenging and meaningful, if they are to motivate people to work harder.⁶

In 35 states more than a quarter of the schools failed to make AYP in 2008–09. In nine states more than half of all the schools missed the target.⁷ As annual targets continue to rise on the path to 100 percent, the number of schools labeled “failing” under the NCLB definition grows each year. For instance, nearly 87 percent of the schools in **New Mexico** missed performance targets in the 2010–11 school year.⁸ Even in **Tennessee**, a first round Race to the Top grantee, only half of the schools are meeting federal performance standards.⁹

Recommended College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools

Teachers and school administrators focus on the things for which they are accountable. Research indicates that in grades and subjects in which there are tests whose scores are components of district or school accountability, student achievement improves.¹⁰ In a time when there is a national consensus that schools should focus on students’ college and career readiness, it is critical for states to design accountability systems that measure the numbers of students who are college and career ready. Many states have already embarked on that path. After careful consideration of current state and district accountability models for high schools, and conversations on accountability with a number of state education leaders, the NGA Center recommends

that states consider the following principles when designing a college and career readiness accountability system for high schools:

1. Use multiple measures to determine school and district performance.
2. Provide incentives for preparing the hardest-to-serve students for college and careers.
3. Set realistic targets for accountability measures.

This brief focuses explicitly on accountability for high schools because the high school level presents the greatest opportunity for state innovation, and it is the point where college and career readiness becomes a reality for most students. This focus, however, is not intended to suggest that assessments and accountability are unimportant in earlier grades. College and career readiness measures are harder to capture for students in elementary and middle school, given the amount of time remaining in their school careers. However, states could tailor the proposed model to hold elementary and middle schools accountable by limiting the emphasis on college and career readiness measures, as many of the states that submitted first round waiver applications did. School-level accountability is but one component of a state’s accountability structure. States also need to continue their focus on student- and educator-level accountability, as well as to determine supports and rewards for students, educators, schools, and districts.

Use Multiple Measures

When building new accountability systems, states need to include a broad range of measures that take into account the full picture of student performance. Yet, states must also guard against including too many measures in their accountability systems. The measures selected need to be *meaningful*, that is, each must be directly linked to the overall performance goal of college and career readiness. Each must be *actionable*, so that teachers and administrators know how to help students improve on that particular measure. And each must be *limited*, so that teachers and administrators are not stretched too

thin or overwhelmed. The NGA Center recommends states build their high school accountability systems to include measures in the areas of assessment, graduation, college and career readiness, and environment (see the appendix for a full list of proposed measures).

Assessment

Many current state high school assessments address knowledge and skills that students learn early in high school. Unfortunately, those assessments do not provide information about whether a student is ready for college and career. The large number of students who require remedial coursework after they enter postsecondary education demonstrates the importance of focusing on preparing and then assessing students' college and career readiness. Providing college students with remedial coursework now costs an estimated \$1.4 billion annually.

¹¹ To address that problem, 45 states have joined forces in two consortia (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) to develop common assessments that will identify whether students are prepared for college and careers and provide the states with more detailed information about their numbers. Although much work remains to design and validate the assessments, states should begin planning to incorporate information about the college and career readiness of their students into their new accountability systems immediately.

For the areas of mathematics and English/language arts, states should plan to use the new assessments to hold schools accountable for the percentages of students who score at the levels "college and career ready" and "approaching/emerging college and career readiness," as well as the percentage whose growth is "adequate," as determined by the state. States should include those measures for an assessment on science as well, but they will have to use state-developed assessments to obtain the information for the foreseeable future. States may also want to include other subjects, such as history or other subjects assessed through end-of-course exams, to provide a more robust picture of student learning in their accountability system.

The federal Race to the Top assessment grant program requires that states participating in the two consortia establish common performance-level definitions across the performance continuum, including "college and career ready" (CCR). The model included in this brief operates under the assumption that the scores required for high school graduation and for the designation "college and career ready" are different. The term "approaching/emerging college and career readiness" (A/E CCR) is used to signify the level directly below CCR, which could be used initially as the graduation score level by the 25 states that require or plan to require an exit exam for high school graduation.¹²

The assumption of different score levels for graduation and college and career readiness is in place for two reasons. First, to prevent large numbers of students who have not been in the system long enough to have had extensive exposure to the content aligned to the Common Core State Standards from being deemed "not ready" for college and careers. Second, to protect the integrity of the CCR performance level from pressure to lower the expectation. The CCR level must truly represent performance that indicates readiness for credit bearing courses for postsecondary institutions to use the score in placement decisions. In this scenario, over time, states could increase their annual targets to the point where their graduation expectation is the "college and career ready" level. When a state decides that the CCR level is the graduation requirement, then that score category would receive greater weight in the proposed index.

Graduation

High school graduation is the single largest hurdle that students must clear to enroll in postsecondary education and training. Students who do not graduate high school are less likely than others to become employed and, on average, earn less than their peers with some postsecondary education.¹³ An accurate, cohort-based measure of the number of on-time graduates in a given year is an essential measure of system performance. Forty-five states will have released their four-year cohort graduation rates.¹⁴

The four-year cohort graduation rate must remain the common benchmark against which all schools are judged. Four years is the traditional time for a student to move through high school. However, more than 20 percent of high school students do not graduate in four years.¹⁵ The persistence of students beyond four years must be rewarded as a valuable alternative to dropping out. Schools and districts should be accountable for an extended, five- or six-year-cohort graduation rate. Just as a marathon runner's time is tracked even after he or she has missed a qualifying time, states should continue to encourage students to earn a high school diploma beyond four years and should continue to track them. Currently, only 10 states have approval to use extended-year rates in federal accountability decisions. Of the 11 states that submitted waiver applications in the first round, four proposed to include an extended-year graduation rate.¹⁶ The number of states using an extended-year rate is likely to increase as longitudinal cohort data become more available.

Credit accumulation is a measure of the pace at which a student is progressing through high school. States should monitor, and hold schools accountable for, the number of students who are on track to graduate, as well as the number who are accumulating credit at a faster pace than traditionally expected. Accountability based on accelerated credit is beneficial for two populations of students. Students who are off track need to be able to accumulate credit at a faster pace than traditionally expected to graduate within four years. Schools should also encourage students who demonstrate readiness for college to progress with their studies at an accelerated pace. Accelerating those students benefits the school in terms of efficiency, as well as the student, who can earn college credit at little or no cost. A majority of states can currently capture credit accumulation, and all of those that accepted federal funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are required to do so by September 2012.

Interim Measures of College and Career Readiness

All states have the data to calculate the measures proposed by the NGA Center, except for the information from the college and career readiness assessments under development by the two federally funded assessment consortia (PARCC and SBAC). Until those exams are available, in the 2014–15 school year, states will need to identify interim assessment measures for determining the percentage of students who are ready for college and work. For some states, that may mean using a cross-walk score from another assessment, such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), to estimate a percentage of students who are college and career ready. (The National Assessment Governing Board plans to release a cross-walk study providing this information.) Other states might choose performance on college entrance exams, such as the SAT or ACT, for calculating readiness.

Although those methods are necessary in the interim until the new assessments are available, states should not place great weight on these scores in their accountability systems because they are, at best, estimates. In the case of the SAT, moreover, they reflect students' aptitude, not their mastery of college and career readiness standards.

College and Career Readiness

States should hold schools and districts accountable for the percentage of students who pass a dual enrollment or dual credit course, who score “proficient” on an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exam, or who earn a career certificate, as a way to further encourage college and career preparation. Students who obtain college credit in high school—through dual enrollment, dual credit, or AP or IB programs—are more likely to enroll in college and complete a degree.¹⁷ Many districts assess students in dual credit and enrollment courses, yet the quality of those courses can vary across schools and districts. States should consistently evaluate whether the courses truly represent college-level work. At the same time, students who earn a career certificate are better prepared for entry into a job or further training. Leaving high school with college credit or a career certificate not only shows that a student is ready for postsecondary success but also provides a head start toward that objective. **Indiana, Florida, and Oklahoma** currently include these measures in their state accountability systems as a way of recognizing those important indicators of college and career readiness.

Research suggests that an additional set of attributes that states have not begun to assess are also critical for a student’s preparation for college and career (see the text box “Other Measures of College and Career Readiness”). As assessments for those skills become available in the future, states may want to include the scores in their accountability systems.

School Environment

School environment is one of the most important measures of school and district performance, but it is often overlooked. There are three critical methods that states can use to monitor school environment: student surveys, teacher conditions surveys, and analysis of chronic absenteeism.¹⁸ School working conditions surveys consistently indicate that the culture and working conditions in a school affect teacher and student performance. Many states, such as **North Carolina** and **Maryland**, administer school working conditions surveys. They use the data to make policy decisions and also require districts to use them to cre-

Other Measures of College and Career Readiness

State assessments in content areas such as mathematics focus entirely on the knowledge and skills outlined in standards. It is absolutely critical that students master that content to meet the standards. But research indicates that many other student attributes are critical for success in higher education.^a

Critical thinking, problem solving, and even persistence are critical not only for students entering higher education but also for those going directly into the workplace. To date, no state has incorporated the acquisition of such skills into its accountability system. But if the goal is truly to prepare students for life beyond high school, states need to incorporate them into curricula, assessments, and even accountability systems.

States may also want to consider actual postsecondary outcomes. Metrics such as enrollment, remediation, and persistence can help determine whether schools are meeting the ultimate goal of college and career readiness. Incorporating those measures into the accountability system could lead educators to think about nonacademic skills as components of their improvement efforts.

a. David T. Conley, “Redefining College Readiness” (Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center, 2007). Available at: <https://www.epiconline.org/files/pdf/RedefiningCollegeReadiness.pdf>.

ate district improvement plans. North Carolina also uses the results of its surveys to evaluate school principals on their ability to improve working conditions. Working conditions survey items vary from state to state. For example, some ask respondents whether academic expectations are clearly communicated, about the level of student engagement, and whether an atmosphere of safety and respect exists.

The use of student surveys appears to be growing. Some foundations have invested in studying the extent to which student surveys predict how much the students are learning. The Measures of Effective Teaching project (MET) is examining what students' perceptions of their teacher, their learning environment, and their school can tell schools and school districts about what happens in classrooms and how to improve both teacher practice and student learning.¹⁹

Student attendance data can also be helpful. The percentage of students missing school for extended periods can indicate student disengagement, which is often a precursor of dropping out of school.²⁰ Student disengagement can occur, for example, when the student is not receiving the academic, social, or emotional supports he or she needs to be successful in school. Students learn and retain information when they are engaged, which they cannot be if they are missing school. Holding schools and districts accountable for chronic absence data can help prevent student disengagement.

Other Considerations

States should consider aggregating the scores for each individual measure into an index that provides a single, overall score or letter grade for a school or district. Although states will likely place different levels of emphasis on the various metrics, general guidelines can be followed when assigning points:

- Assessment and graduation measures should account for at least half of all points allocated, with each accounting for no less than 25 percent, and

should include a greater emphasis on growth and the four-year-cohort graduation rate.

- College and career readiness and school environment measures should each account for at least 10 percent of all points allocated.
- Bonus points available should be no greater than the weight for the smallest category of points elsewhere in the index (e.g., college and career readiness, school environment), so that schools and districts cannot completely ignore any category.

In particular, it is critical that graduation measures remain a significant component of the new accountability systems to ensure that schools have a direct incentive to serve all students. If the graduation rate does not receive significant weight in the index, schools will not see positive increases in their accountability scores if they achieve significant graduation rate improvements. At the same time, schools could increase their accountability scores without increasing their graduation rate. It is essential that states not allow one of the most important outcomes of high school to be overlooked.

Provide Incentives for Preparing the Hardest-to-Serve Students for College and Career

Schools and districts should receive additional credit for supporting all students on the path to college and career readiness, with a special emphasis on hard-to-serve student populations. Bonus points should be awarded for year-to-year improvement in:

- The percentage of students scoring at the “college and career ready” level on the new federally funded assessments;
- The four-year-cohort graduation rate;
- The percentage of students demonstrating success on a college and career readiness measure;
- The percentage of students demonstrating accelerated credit accumulation;
- The percentage of graduates enrolling in post-

secondary education or obtaining employment with a family-sustaining wage within one year of graduation; and

- The percentage of students enrolling in postsecondary education who do not require remediation.

Each of those measures should include additional emphasis on improvements made by students who are overage and undercredited, limited English proficient, or receiving special education services and those who scored in the bottom 25 percent on assessments in eighth grade. For example, states could give more weight to a school's scores on measures for students in those special populations.

Further, states should incorporate a "peer index" when determining the rating of a school, to account for differences in hard-to-serve student populations (off track, overage and undercredited, limited English proficient, receiving special education, or performing poorly on state assessments). Both **California** and the New York City school district use a peer index that accounts for the "degree of difficulty" facing a school. As, for example, a competitive diver is awarded points for executing a dive based on its technical difficulty (referred to as "degree of difficulty"), in that model, schools are rewarded for improvements both in overall performance and in the performance of students whose proficiency levels are the school's lowest.

A peer index compares a school's scores on the identified measures to a set of schools, known as "peer schools," that have similar student body characteristics (such as percentages of students scoring at the "basic" level on state assessments, for example). Schools that outperform their relative peers receive more points for the particular measure. In that system, schools are also compared to the overall state

average on particular measures. Creating a peer index ensures that schools are on a level playing field when their performance is judged.

Set Realistic Targets for Accountability Measures

Although it is important to set ambitious goals for student performance, being overambitious and unrealistic can be detrimental to efforts to improve schools. One of the greatest lessons learned from NCLB is that states should not set a goal that is too ambitious. Individuals may disregard a goal if it does not seem achievable.²¹ For states, the most challenging aspect of setting performance targets is setting ambitious targets that are not unrealistic.

Performance targets should be realistic given the starting points of the students and the resources available to help them improve. States should consider their targets in relation to leading schools, districts, and states. As state longitudinal data systems become fully operational, states need to identify schools and districts that are making the most progress and calibrate subsequent state improvement targets to reflect the progress that those models demonstrate is possible.²² For example, **Colorado** produces a report for each school and district that details individual student growth—disaggregated by subpopulation—in comparison with the rest of the state.²³ A state that aims to increase the percentage of high school students with college credit may choose to benchmark its performance to past growth in the percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam or to the state with the greatest five-year increase on that indicator (**Vermont**, at 6 percent).²⁴ While taking into account new funding opportunities and policy changes, states should aim for relatively consistent progress across the length of the goal. Delaying expected gains until the end of the performance period may not spur immediate action.

Establish Transparency as the Foundational Principle of Accountability

Accountability for public spending is essential. Transparency is an effective way to engender public trust. Over the last 10 years, states have increased the amount of data that they report publicly. The movement toward accountability through transparency should continue and expand. States should not only report an expanded set of disaggregated performance data but should also begin to report school, district, and state education spending decisions. However, when determining how much and which data to report, it is important to balance transparency and the integrity of the accountability system. Transparency should not take precedence over ensuring that the data points used to make decisions about school ratings or accreditation are sound and accurate.

The ability to monitor performance and to study the particular aspects of success and failure is critical for ensuring system transparency and identifying areas for improvement. For example, states can require that information about the postsecondary outcomes of students be provided to high schools. Those data are critical, as they enable teachers and administrators to calibrate their preparation of students with postsecondary expectations. Forty-four states have the technical ability to provide this information to all high schools, but to date, only eight provide evidence of college readiness in individual high school feedback reports to all schools.^a States also can monitor student mobility in high schools, to track which schools are net importers or exporters of students and how that affects accountability measures, such as graduation rates.

Transparency of financial data can accomplish two things. First, it can be a check against the improper uses of funds, which may arise with greater spending flexibility. Second, it can enable practitioners and researchers to identify areas where efficiencies could be achieved. To obtain this transparency, the states could publicly report financial information on their state education agency websites. States could also create a common financial reporting system for all schools, districts, and education agencies to use, as **Rhode Island** recently did through its Uniform Chart of Accounts.^b

a. Anne Hyslop, "Data That Matters: Giving High Schools Useful Feedback on Grads' Outcomes" (Washington, DC: Education Sector, 2011). Available at: http://www.educationsector.org/sites/default/files/publications/HSFeedback_CYCT_RELEASE.pdf.

b. For more information, see <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Finance/funding/Uniform%20Chart%20of%20Accounts/>.

Conclusion

As states embark on designing new models of school and district accountability, it is critical that the performance measures be closely aligned to overall state goals, such as preparing all students for college and career. Once the U.S. Department of Education approves the new accountability systems, and perfor-

mance targets that are realistic and meaningful are in place, policymakers can focus on the policies and supports necessary for schools and districts to close their achievement gaps. States are in a prime position to lead in designing new, innovative college and career readiness accountability systems for high schools that will ultimately become the foundation for a reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

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Appendix. Proposed State High School Accountability Measures

Categories	Measures			
Assessment	% of students rated “college and career ready” on assessments in English/language arts and math	% of students rated “approaching/emerging college and career readiness” on assessments in English/language arts, math, and science ^b	% of students meeting “adequate” growth	
Graduation	4-year-cohort graduation rate	5- and/or 6-year-cohort graduation rate	% on track to graduation in 9th grade	% of students accumulating more credits than typically gained in 1 year
College and career readiness ^a	% of students who score “proficient” on AP/IB exam, pass a dual credit/enrollment course, or earn a career certificate ^c			
School environment	Teacher working conditions survey	Student surveys	% of students who are “chronic absentees” ^d	
Bonus ^e	% of students rated college and career ready on assessments in English/language arts and math	4-year-cohort graduation rate	% of students who score “proficient” on AP/IB exam, pass a dual credit/enrollment course, or earn a career certificate	% of students accumulating more credits than typically gained in 1 year
	% of graduates enrolling in postsecondary education or obtaining employment with a family-sustaining wage within one year ^f	% of students enrolling in postsecondary education who do not require remediation ^f		

a. There are many factors beyond test scores that research suggests are important for a student’s preparation for college and career. As states develop ways to measure these attributes, they should look to incorporate the information into their accountability system. For more information see the text box “Other Measures of College and Career Readiness. .

b. Please see the explanation of the difference between these two categories in the text, under the subhead “Assessment.”

c. The calculation should be based on the 9th grade cohort.

d. A “chronic absentee” is a student who misses at least 10 percent of school days.

e. The bonus should be for year-to-year improvement, with special emphasis on the hardest-to-serve populations.

f. As states progress in their ability to link K–12 and postsecondary longitudinal data systems, actual postsecondary outcomes, such as the two outlined here, could be added to, or eventually replace, other proxy measures of college and career readiness in a state’s high school accountability system.

Notes

- 1 Helen F. Ladd and Douglas L. Lauren, "Status versus Growth: The Distributional Effects of School Accountability Policies," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 29, no. 3 (summer 2010): 426–50.
- 2 Linda McNeil, Eileen Coppola, and Julian Vasquez Heilig, "Avoidable Losses: High-Stakes Accountability and the Dropout Crisis," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 16, no. 3 (January 31, 2008).
- 3 Baltimore Education Research Consortium, "Destination Graduation: Sixth Grade Early Warning Indicators for Baltimore City Schools, Their Prevalence and Impact," Baltimore, MD, 2011. Available at: <http://baltimore-berc.org/pdfs/SixthGradeEWIFullReport.pdf>
- 4 Annual improvements varied by state depending on where a state placed its proficiency cut score. Schools in states such as Missouri and South Carolina were required to accomplish significant growth annually because they started out with few students reaching a very high bar for proficiency.
- 5 Robert Linn, "Toward a More Effective Definition of Adequate Yearly Progress" (paper prepared for the Measurement and Accountability Roundtable sponsored by the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity and Diversity, Washington, DC, 2006). Available at: <http://www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/ewi-old/research/k12equity/Linn.htm>.
- 6 Edwin Locke and Gary P. Latham, *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990); see also Locke and Latham, *Goal Setting: A Motivational Technique that Works!* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984).
- 7 Shelby Dietz, "How Many Schools Have Not Made Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind Act?" Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy, March 2010.
- 8 Joy Resmovits, "With No Child Left Behind Overhaul Stalled, More Schools 'Failing'" *Huffington Post*, July 26, 2011. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/26/no-child-left-behind-failing-schools_n_910067.html.
- 9 Tom Humphrey and Lydia X. McCoy, "Gov. Haslam seeks No Child Left Behind Waiver," *Knoxville News Sentinel*, July 30, 2011. Available at: <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2011/jul/30/gov-bill-haslam-seeks-no-child-left-behind/>.
- 10 Bryan A. Jacob, "Getting Tough? The Impact of Mandatory High School Graduation Exams on Student Outcomes," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 23, no. 2 (summer 2010): 99–122.
- 11 *Paying Double: Inadequate High Schools and Community College Remediation* (Alliance for Excellent Education issue brief, August 2006). Available at: <http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/remediation.pdf>.
- 12 Center on Education Policy, "State High School Tests: Changes in State Policies and the Impact of the Colleger and Career Readiness Movement" (Washington, D.C.: 2011). Available at: http://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent_file.cfm?Attachment=Dietz%5FHSEE2011%5F120811%2Epdf. States that have exit exam requirements are responsible for determining the score level required for graduation. This score level may be set individually or collectively using one of the score levels developed by the PARCC or SBAC consortia. Given governors interest in comparability of assessment scores, states with exit exam requirements should consider establishing a common performance level for high school graduation.
- 13 Daniel Princiotta and Ryan Reyna, *Achieving Graduation for All: A Governor's Guide to Dropout Prevention and Recovery* (Washington DC: National Governors Association, 2009). Available at: <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0910ACHIEVINGGRADUATION.PDF>.
- 14 Bridget Curran and Ryan Reyna, *Implementing Graduation Counts: State Progress to Date, 2010* (Washington, DC: National Governors Association, 2010). Available at: <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1012GRADCOUNTSPROGRESS.PDF>.
- 15 Chris Chapman, Jennifer Laird and Angel Kewal Ramani, "Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972–2008," *National Center for Education Statistics report 2011-012* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011012.pdf>.
- 16 For a summary of the proposed metrics in the state waiver applications submitted in the first round, see <http://www.edweek.org/media/13waiver-c1.pdf>.
- 17 Melinda Mechur Karp, et al., "The Postsecondary Achievement of Participants in Dual Enrollment: An Analysis of Student Outcomes in Two States" (St. Paul, MN: National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota, 2007). Available at: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=547>.
- 18 In states that are moving to greater emphasis on proficiency-based models of learning, the measurement of chronic absenteeism should in no way be considered a barrier to allowing students to gain credit outside of the school day. The measurement of chronic absenteeism should focus on those students that are taking courses that require regular attendance at school (whether in a building or online).
- 19 For more information on the MET project, see <http://www.metproject.org/>.
- 20 John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio Jr., and Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts* (Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises, 2006).
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Linn, "Toward a More Effective Definition of Adequate Yearly Progress."
- 23 For an example of a district growth summary report, see <https://cedar2.cde.state.co.us/documents/Growth2009/DistrictSummary/1220.pdf>.
- 24 College Board, "7th Annual AP Report to the Nation" (New York: College Board, 2011). Available at: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/7th-annual-ap-report-to-the-nation-2011.pdf>.