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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
DATE: March 28, 2017
SUBJECT: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Update

PURPOSE:

To provide an update on the work of the ESSA Internal Committee and its subcommittees, specifically related to accountability. This update will provide a review of the use of summative ratings in other states. Additionally, we will provide an update on federal regulations, new guidance issued from the U.S. Department of Education (USED), and an update on State legislation.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

In December 2015, Congress was able to reach bipartisan agreement on an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization bill and passed the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) ESSA Internal and External Stakeholder Committees, along with seven subcommittees, began work in early 2016, collecting input from various stakeholders and developing a draft of Maryland's Consolidated State Plan. MSDE continues to work on a second draft for publication and comment before the final draft is submitted in September 2017.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Maryland State Department of Education, together with the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC), researched 23 states and D.C. to examine their systems for summative ratings. Additionally the MSDE research department produced a document titled *Review of literature on public accountability measures and summative ratings*, which is included along with a recent article from Ed Week. The review will cover the results of how these states determine and display summative ratings. Further there will be an update on actions from both the U.S. Congress and the Maryland Legislature.

ACTION:

For information only

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Accountability

**State Board Meeting
March 28, 2017**



Summative Rating Models from Sample States

State Models- Arizona

Guidance on weight	Indicators	K-8	ESSA
40%	Proficiency, Statewide Assessment	X	X
40%	Growth, Statewide Assessment	X	X
10%	Proficiency and Growth, English Language Learners	X	X
10%	Acceleration / Readiness Measures	X	X

Guidance on weight	Indicators	9-12	ESSA
40%	Proficiency, Statewide Assessment	X	X
20%	Growth, Statewide Assessment	X	
15%	High School Graduation Rate	X	X
15%	College and Career Readiness	X	X
10%	Proficiency and Growth, English Language Learners	X	X

Example of an A-F System – information provided gives weights (measures are not yet finalized); will move to an A-F system

State Models - California

California School DASHBOARD

Home Logout search for LEAs

Home / West Chavez Unified School District - San Joaquin / Equity Report

Equity Report

West Chavez Unified School District - San Joaquin County

Enrollment: 4,150 Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: 10% English Learners: 5%
 Foster Youth: N/A Grade span: K-12 Reporting Year: Spring 2017

Equity Report Status and Change Report Detailed Reports Student Group Report

The Equity Report shows the performance levels for all students on the state indicators. It also shows the total number of student groups that received a performance level for each indicator and how many of those student groups are in the two lowest performance levels (Red/Orange). The total number of student groups may vary due to the number of grade levels included within each indicator.

State Indicators	All Students Performance	Total Student Groups	Student Groups in Red/Orange
Chronic Absenteeism	N/A	N/A	N/A
Suspension Rate (K-12)		9	2
English Learner Progress (K-12)		1	0
Graduation Rate (9-12)		6	4
College/Career <small>Available Fall 2017. Select for Grade 11 assessment results.</small>		N/A	N/A
English Language Arts (3-8)		8	0
Mathematics (3-8)		8	1

Local Indicators Ratings

General information about the school district or school

Report description

List of state indicators

Overall performance category

Report navigation toolbar

Lists the number of student groups with information for each indicator

Lists the number of student groups receiving a red or orange on the state indicator

Example of Symbols and Colors

California - continued

Re: California dashboard x California School Dashb x fast-start-guide.pdf x Mary Gable

Secure | https://www.caschooldashboard.org/Content/fast-start-guide.pdf

Equity Report | Status and Change Report | Detailed Reports | Student Group Report

Report description
The Equity Report shows the performance levels for all students on the state indicators. It also shows the total number of student groups that received a performance level for each indicator and how many of those student groups are in the two lowest performance levels (Red/Orange). The total number of student groups may vary due to the number of grade levels included within each indicator.

List of state indicators

State Indicators	All Students Performance	Total Student Groups	Student Groups in Red/Orange
Chronic Absenteeism	N/A	N/A	N/A
Suspension Rate (K-12)	Yellow	9	2
English Learner Progress (K-12)	Blue	1	0
Graduation Rate (9-12)	Yellow	6	4
College/Career Available Fall 2017. Select for Grade 11 assessment results.		N/A	N/A
English Language Arts (3-8)	Blue	8	0
Mathematics (3-8)	Green	8	1

Overall performance category

List of local indicators

Local Indicators	Ratings
Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)	Met
Implementation of Academic Standards	Not Met
Parent Engagement	Not Met for Two or More Years
Local Climate Survey	Met

Performance level key
Performance Levels: Blue (Highest) Green Yellow Orange Red (Lowest)

Notes about information shown in this report
An asterisk (*) shows that the student group has less than 11 students and is not reported for privacy reasons. The performance level (color) is not included when there are less than 30 students in any year used to calculate status and change. An N/A means that data is not currently available.
Optional Narrative Summary
A narrative text box will be provided as an optional feature for local educational agencies to describe their performance on the state and local indicators. This option will be included in the Dashboard Coordinator Portal to be completed by LEAs. The optional narrative will be displayed as text summary paragraph at the bottom each report to provide additional context and information.

Note: The data reported for some state indicators are from prior years.

California Department of Education
March 2017

Navigation toolbar
Lists the number of student groups with information for each indicator

Lists the number of student groups receiving a red or orange on the state indicator

Information for local indicators

Other State Models - Illinois

Example of a State Using Words and Tiers

- Using the results from the accountability system for each subgroup at the school, each school will be provided a single, final summative designation.
 - Tier 1: **Exemplary School**: A school that has no underperforming subgroups, a graduation rate of greater than 67 percent, and whose performance is in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.
 - Tier 2: **Commendable School**: A school that has no underperforming subgroups, a graduation rate above 67 percent, and whose performance is not in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.
 - Tier 3: **Underperforming School**: A school in which one or more subgroup is performing at or below the level of the “all students” group in the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools.
 - Tier 4: **Lowest-Performing School**: A school that is in the lowest-performing 5 percent Title I schools in Illinois and those high schools that have a graduation rate of 67 percent or less.

Other State Models- Iowa

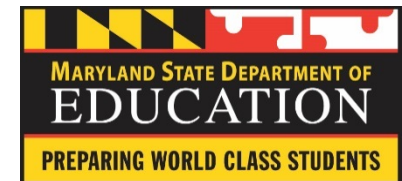
Table 14. Summative Determinations across Indicators.

ELEMENTARY – MIDDLE SCHOOL			HIGH SCHOOL	
Indicator	Points	LEVEL	Points	Indicator
Academic Achievement	30	A	30	Academic Achievement/Growth
	20	B	20	
	10	C	10	
Growth	50	A	50	Graduation
	40	B	40	
	30	C	30	
Progress toward ELP	30	A	30	Progress toward ELP
	20	B	20	
	10	C	10	
Conditions for Learning	30	A	30	Conditions for Learning
	20	B	20	
	10	C	10	
Participation	At or Above 95%	A	At or Above 95%	Participation
	NA	B	NA	
	Below 95%	C	Below 95%	

Example of a Dashboard with an A-C system and a point system

Table 15. Summative Determination Table School Example.

Indicator	Levels	Points	Weight	Weighted Points
Academic Achievement	B	20	1	20
Growth	A	50	2	100
Progress toward ELPA	C	10	1	10
Conditions for Learning	A	30	.75	22.5
Participation Rate – all students/subgroups	95%	10	1	10
Total	Pre-weighting: 120		Post-weighting: 162.5	



Other State Models- Massachusetts



Level Name	Criteria
Tier 1	School Percentile 90-100
Tier 2	School Percentile 50-89
Tier 3	School Percentile 25-49
Tier 4	School Percentile 11-24
Tier 5	School Percentile 6-10
Tier 6	School Percentile 1-5

	Status for ALL students	Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students
Core measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ELA and math scaled score 2. Science performance index 3. ELA and math student growth percentile 4. ACCESS progress (English language learners) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ELA, math, and science gap reduction 2. ELA and math student growth percentile 3. ACCESS growth (English language learners)
Additional measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chronic student absenteeism 2. Access to the arts 3. School climate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improvement in chronic absenteeism 2. Improvement in access to the arts 3. Improvement in school climate

Example of a Tiered System

Other State Models- New Jersey

FIGURE 4.13: Example: Calculating a Summative Determination

High School 1					
Indicator	All Student and Subgroup Performance*		Avg. Percentile Score (avg. of all students percentile and subgroup percentile)	Weight	Indicator Score (percentile x weighting)
	All Student Percentile	Avg. of Subgroups' Percentiles			
Academic achievement (percent of students grade-level proficient on statewide academic tests)	67	59	$((67+59)/2) = 63$	35%	$63 \times 0.35 =$ 27.3
Graduation rate (Average of four- and five-year)	74	72	$((74+72)/2) = 73$	35%	$73 \times 0.35 =$ 25.55
English language proficiency (percent of students making progress toward English proficiency)	80	Not applicable (English learners are their own subgroup)	80	20%	$80 \times 0.20 =$ 16
Chronic absenteeism (percent of students not chronically absent)	91	79	$((91+79)/2) = 85$ <i>See chart below for additional explanation</i>	10%	$85 \times 0.10 =$ 8.5
Summative Score (sum of indicator scores)					77.35
Summative Determination (percentile rank of summative score)					79th percentile

FIGURE 4.1: Overview of All ESSA (School Level) Indicators

Required Indicator	New Jersey's Measure(s)	Description	Proposed Weighting (see 4.2.D.ii below)
Academic Achievement	Proficiency rates on annual statewide assessments	Percentage of students in the school who meet grade-level standards on each annual statewide assessment in ELA and mathematics (grades 3-10)	35%
Academic Progress <i>(applicable to elementary and middle schools)</i>	Student growth percentile (SGP)	School's median SGP, which shows student's growth from one year to the next in ELA (grades 4-8) and mathematics (grades 4-7)	35% (elementary and middle schools only)
Graduation Rate <i>(applicable to high schools)</i>	Four-year and five-year graduation rates	Using the adjusted cohort methodology, percentage of students who graduate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within four years of entering ninth grade; and within five years of entering ninth grade <i>Note: Four- and five-year graduation rates will be weighted equally</i>	35% (high schools only)
Progress Toward Achieving English Language Proficiency	English learner progress on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0	Percentage of English learners making expected progress from one year to the next on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 summative assessment (K-12)	20%
School Quality or Student Success	Chronic absenteeism	Percentage of the school's students who are not chronically absent. Chronically absent is defined as not present for 10 percent or more of the school year, for any reason.	10%

Example of performance levels that end in a percentile not a letter grade





Other State Models- New Mexico

School Grading		EL/MS		HS	
		2016-17 2017-18	2018-19+	2016-17 2017-18	2018-19+
<i>Student Proficiency</i>	ELA, Math	25	33	20	25
	VAM	15		10	
<i>Student STEM Readiness</i>	Science		5		5
<i>School Growth</i>	VAM	10		10	
<i>Student Growth</i>	Q4 (25%)	20	5	10	5
	Q2-3 (50%)		12		10
	Q1 (25%)	20	25	10	15
<i>Opportunity to Learn</i>	Absenteeism	5	10	3	10
	Survey	5		5	
<i>College/Career Readiness</i>	Participation			5	12
	Success			10	
<i>Graduation</i>	4-Year Rate			8	6
	5-Year Rate			3	2
	6-Year Rate			2	1
	Growth 4-year Rate			4	4
<i>English Learner Progress</i>	Growth to Proficiency		10		5
			100		100
<i>Bonus Points</i>		5		5	
<i>Participation <95%</i>		Letter Grade Drop			

Example of a point system that leads to a letter grade

Other State Models- Vermont

Example of a state using performance levels with colors, words, and pictures

Level	Proposed Term	Proposed Iconography
1	Off-Target	
2	Near Target	
3	On-Target	
4	Bull's Eye	

Communication of Ratings

- Numbers/Tiers/Points
 - Traditional 0-100; 1-5
 - Non-traditional: 0-150; GPA
- Words
 - State determined language (below expectation, met expectations, etc.)
 - Federal language (priority, focus, comprehensive support, targeted support)
- Letter Grades
 - A-F
- Symbols
 - Stars (may be 4 stars, 5 stars, or other)
- Colors
 - Red, Yellow, Green
- Performance Levels
 - Categories based on scores
 - Described in words
- Dashboard
 - Rating by Indicator

States Reviewed*

- 23 States and DC (Breakdown is based on the States that were reviewed)
 - A-F System – 8 states (AZ, IN, LA, MI, OH, OK, TN, WV)
 - Dashboard – 1 state (CO)
 - Performance Levels – 9 states (CT, ID, IL, MT, ND, NJ, SC, VT, WY)
 - Stars – 3 states (DC, DE, NV)
 - Points – 2 states (IA, WA)
 - Tiers – 1 state (MA)

- *Data compiled by the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center/WestEd

Specifics on States

- See Hard Copy for State Analysis based on:
 - State
 - Changed or Changing Summative Rating
 - Summative Rating
 - Communication to the Public
 - Performance Levels
 - State Rationale/Notes

Additional Information

- Education Week Article – A-F School Rankings Draw Local Pushback
- Information provided by MSDE's Research Department

Recent Updates

- U.S. Congress
 - Regulations
- U.S. Department of Education
 - Revised guidance and template for submissions
- Maryland Legislation
 - House and Senate Bills

**The Different Types of Summative Ratings that are
Included in Draft Consolidated State Plans**

The table below contains the summative ratings, by state, that have been included in published draft Consolidated State Plans as of March 2017. In addition to the specific rating(s) being used, there is additional information provided to give further insight as to why the state selected those rating(s).

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Arizona	Yes	No	A–F grades	Online Report Card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I status • Grade • Attendance rate • Assessment scores 	Five levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A – Excellent level of performance per Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-241 • B – Less than excellent level of performance with final determination upon State Board of Education adoption • C – Less than excellent level of performance with final determination upon State Board of Education adoption • D – Less than excellent level of performance with final determination upon State Board of Education adoption • F – Failing level of performance per Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-241 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arizona passed legislation in 2015 (S.B. 1289) suspending the use of A-F grades in the 2015 and 2016 schoolyears. Legislation passed in 2016 (S.B. 1430) removed the A-F grading system from state law, instead requiring the state board to adopt the A-F system.
Colorado	Yes	Not Applicable	Colorado's School Performance Frameworks (Index)	Dashboard	Four performance bands with cut scores at the 15 th , 50 th , and 85 th percentiles. Three performance determinations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) • Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) • Neither 	

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Connecticut	Yes	Not Applicable	Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System (Index)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the outcome achieved for each indicator, the district or school earns points on a sliding scale proportional to the ultimate target for that indicator. The total percentage of available points earned by a school or district is the "accountability index" (C.G.S. Section 10-223e). The accountability index is the summative rating. It ranges from 0 to 100 and allows for meaningful differentiation. 	<p>Elementary and middle schools receive one of five categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Category 1 is for schools with an accountability index score of 90 or greater, Category 2 is for schools with a score of 70 or greater Category 3 is for schools with a score lower than 70. Categories 4 and 5 represent those identified for comprehensive or targeted support. <p>High schools will be classified separately (description is not included in draft state plan).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System creates a more comprehensive, holistic picture of how students and schools are performing. Focusing on a broader set of indicators, rather than annual assessments alone, guards against the narrowing of the curriculum to tested subjects, expands ownership of accountability to more staff, and allows schools to demonstrate progress on "precursors to outcomes," as well as outcomes.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Delaware	Yes	Yes	The Delaware School Success Framework (Index)	<p>Online Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator ratings (1-5 stars) Summative star rating Summative determination Numeric value to aggregate an overall score 	<p>Three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) Other <p>Overall school ratings based on this system will be used to identify schools for CSI, while subgroup performance will be used to identify schools for TSI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed from AYP, new system implemented SY 15-16 Numerous stakeholders in Delaware over the past few years have voiced their concerns with AYP. Recognizing that AYP does not honor the full complexity of school performance, DDOE engaged with stakeholders across the state to devise a comprehensive and authentic structure for measuring school, district and state performance that incorporates multiple measures related to college and career readiness for all students. The DDOE has included multiple measures in the accountability system since 2014-2015. The ESEA Flexibility Waiver catalyzed the creation of an accountability system framework anchored around academic achievement, growth, on track to graduation, and college and career preparation. Through early implementation, DDOE learned that a multiple measures accountability system provides a more comprehensive picture of school quality and performance. Stakeholder feedback for the ESSA state plan indicated that while many of the existing metrics are appropriate and meet ESSA statutory requirements, the DDOE should consider additional metrics based on DDOE and the broader education community priorities and values. Stakeholders expressed interest in adding a range of indicators to have a more complete and robust picture of schools. Starting in the summer of 2014, the DDOE engaged with stakeholders across the state to devise a comprehensive and authentic structure for measuring school and LEA performance. As a result of these consultations, the DSSF was designed to incorporate multiple academic and nonacademic measures related to college and career readiness for all students. The DDOE will continue to implement the DSSF to categorize performance of all public schools. To aid in meaningful differentiation between schools and between LEAs...

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes	School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School report cards Star (1-5) rating 	<p>Schools' summative scores will be determined based on calculating a "framework score" for all their students, as well as for each subgroup of students, as described in greater detail below. Schools will be assigned to one or more framework types based on grade configuration; the four framework types are Elementary School, K-8 School, Middle School, and High School.</p> <p>Schools will be assigned a summative rating based on cut points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 to 19.9 percent 20.0 to 39.9 percent 40.0 to 59.9 percent 60.0 to 79.9 percent 80.0 to 100.0 percent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DC's proposed School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) system presents an opportunity for DC to have a single statewide accountability system that differentiates performance among all schools. The STAR rating system will be run annually and shared with families and the community through school report cards. The same framework score methodology (see section 4.1D i-iii above) that is used in the STAR rating will be used to identify schools for improvement and support as comprehensive or targeted support schools. Schools with an overall framework score in the bottom 5 percent of schools will be identified for comprehensive support and schools with specific groups of students performing at the same level as schools identified for being in the bottom 5 percent for overall school performance will be identified for targeted support.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Idaho	Yes	Yes	Percentile ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idaho schools that are low performing and that show no improvement are identified. 	<p>Schools will be assigned one of three levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Expectations Improving Identified for Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive for bottom 5 percent of schools in terms of school rating index for all students, or Targeted for bottom 5 percent of schools in terms of school rating index for subgroups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISDE’s philosophy is to create a system that identifies schools that are both the lowest performing in the state and not improving. This philosophy addresses the following issues with any model that requires a school to be both high-performing and growing in order to not be identified for interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth Ceiling Issue: Within Idaho’s previous star rating system, it was possible for very high-performing schools to receive low ratings due to lack of growth, despite there being little room available for progress Low Baseline Issue: Previously, even if schools were growing at a fast rate, they could receive poor ratings due to low baseline performance The Accountability Oversight Committee’s (AOC) framework was approved in August 2016 and includes the full range of Idaho’s structure for ensuring students are college and career ready. Idaho believes defining success requires going beyond statewide test scores and should illustrate multiple measures reflecting the many facets of our students. The indicators that will be publicly reported reflect Idaho’s state values and will further empower educators and families to make good decisions about their children. Title I school ratings are just one part of the larger accountability picture, which will include measures of school climate, academic achievement, and teacher engagement as they become available. The purpose of Title I school ratings is to guarantee that schools with the most need receive support from ISDE. Therefore, the elements of the school-rating model that are specifically designed for this purpose are also intentionally aligned with the supports and interventions provided by ISDE. Further, it is critical for school ratings to be transparent and clear so that all stakeholders understand why a school is or is not designated to receive support.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Illinois	Yes	Not Applicable		Performance level designation	<p>Schools will receive a score based on school performance on long terms goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools that meet or exceed long term goals will receive 100 points Schools that are on track to reach their interim goals will receive a score based on their relative progress. Schools that have declined performance will receive 0 points. <p>Illinois proposes a five level system of summative rating – Mastering, Mentoring, Meeting, Leading, and Learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mastering is proposed for those schools within the top 15 percent of the state on all of the academic and school quality and student success indicators combined. Mentoring is proposed for those schools within the top 30 percent of the state on any one of the academic indicators and one or more of school quality or student success indicators. Meeting is proposed for those schools within the top 70 percent of the state on any one of the academic indicators and within the top 45 percent on one or more of the school quality or student success indicators. Leading is proposed for those schools within the top 85 percent of the state on any one of the academic indicators and within the top 60 percent on one or more of the school quality or student success indicators. Learning is proposed for those schools that do not fall within any of these previous four definitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders provided a great deal of input regarding both the number and naming of the summative determinations. There was support for not creating a summative determination of any kind, particularly for schools serving high-poverty communities. However, a summative determination is required in the final regulations and potentially disadvantages those same high-poverty schools by restricting their identification to a single summative assessment, rather than the full range of indicators in the accountability system. Support for a four- or five-tier system was offered by the Management Alliance, Advance Illinois, Chicago Public Schools, and other stakeholder groups. There was similar support for a simple to understand, three-tier summative system. In balancing the tension between simplicity and the need to reflect complex contextual factors, as well as the need to meaningfully differentiate schools, a system with four or more tiers addressed more of the expressed concerns and aspirations of the majority of stakeholders. The inclusion of different performance levels and acknowledgement of growth is included to avoid the regressive qualities of Annual Yearly Progress. This flexibility is also intended to address variance in indicators due to differences in performance (e.g., wider distributions and larger standard deviations). The majority of the indicators included in the accountability system have student-level data, with the exception of the school culture and climate indicator. A majority of the indicators have different scales and measures. These multiple scales and measures cannot be easily compared and are not always meaningful in a school-level accountability system. Each indicator will be mapped on to a common 100 point scale to resolve these differences and create a system that is consistent, comparable, and simple for all stakeholders to understand. Performance levels will be described in terms of the progress schools are making toward the identified interim and long-term goals for the individual indicators. The first performance level for each indicator

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Indiana	No	Yes	A-F grades	A-F grades with a numeric value	<p>The Education Department will calculate letter grades using three main factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State assessment passing rates • Growth factor, which measures how much a students improved or declined from one year to the next • New measure only for high schools that combines graduation rate, the number of students earning college credits and workplace credentials while still in high school and the number of students passing Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared goal was to add nuance to a system that has often been decried as punitive and overly reliant on test scores. • The new growth table could give teachers a better idea of how much students would need to improve each year to be recognized as high achievers. • The new model gives schools credit not just for students whose scores get better each year, but also for students who continue to pass the exam, considered one year of “expected growth.” • “The desire there was to make something that was more reflective of the teaching that’s going on in our schools...And while it may have more measures or layers ... it’s more fair and transparent for an educator or a parent to understand how their school is actually doing.”
Iowa	Yes	Yes	Scoring System	Score based on accountability indicator performance. Indicators rated on a 3 point scale (A, B, C)	For each school, a pre-weighted and post-weighted score will be calculated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on summative determinations, how they are calculated are pending input regarding the use of measures for accountability.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Louisiana	Yes	No	A–F grades		<p>Grades will be assigned based on School Performance Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A is given for score of 100 to 150 • B is given for score of 85 to 99.9 • C is given for score of 70 to 84.9 • D is given for score of 50 to 69.9 • F is given for score of 0 to 49.9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louisiana’s ESSA draft framework proposes three critical shifts in the design of the accountability system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring an “A” in Louisiana’s letter grade system signals mastery of fundamental skills. This will be achieved by raising expectations for what is required in order for a school to earn “A”-level points based on student achievement and attainment. ○ Adjusting school rating calculations to value more the progress of every individual child, including (a) measuring whether students are on a path to master fundamental skills; and (b) measuring how effectively students are advancing relative to their peers. This growth index will replace the current progress point system. ○ Adding an Interests and Opportunities measure to each school’s score (five percent). • The LDE will ensure that the distribution of school letter grades does not worsen throughout this transition by assigning school letter grades for the 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 school years based on the distribution of school letter grades by school type (e.g., K-8 v. combination v. high school) from the 2012-13 school year. The 2012-13 school year serves as the baseline as it is the year before Louisiana began its transition to more rigorous standards. The curve functions such that if schools generally decline in performance scores, then the distributions (K-8, combination and high school) will remain the same as in 2012-13 so as not to punish schools during the transition. Any school that maintains or improves its annual performance score as compared to the 2012-13 performance scores will not experience a decrease in its letter grade. Thus, if schools generally improve in performance scores, then the distributions will improve as they would in any other year.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Massachusetts	Yes	Not Applicable		Schools will be placed into one of six tiers based on their school percentile score.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school percentile score will include status for all students (based on state assessment performance), gap closing for high needs students, and measures for chronic student absenteeism, access to the arts, and school climate. Massachusetts is considering disentangling district designations from the designation of its lowest performing school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massachusetts’s new system will continue use of measures for student achievement, growth, and graduation data, and be updated with measures that create a more comprehensive picture of student opportunity and outcomes, with an increase value place on improvement. The move to average scale score as a metric is to capture more fine-grained achievement and progress increments than is currently provided by the Composite Performance Index. Use of mean Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) is to provide a more accurate measure of changes in year-to-year growth, as compared to use of median SGPs. Massachusetts has increased focus on school and district success in accelerating the progress of students who are the furthest behind.
Michigan	Yes	Yes	A–F grades	Letter grades will be scaled to an overall index based on a weighted average of a school’s performance in the individual components.	<p>Schools will be given a grade based on the percentage of performance goal met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A – Schools meeting 90 percent or more B – Schools meeting 80 to 89 percent C – Schools meeting 70 to 79 percent D – Schools meeting 60 to 69 percent F – Schools meeting less than 60 percent <p>Letter grades will be based on school performance in up to seven areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency, growth, graduation rate, English learner progress, school quality/student success, general participation, and English learner participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Michigan is committed to providing a clear and understandable accountability system for all stakeholders.” Michigan passed a law in 2016 (H.B. 5384) that requires the State Reform and Redesign Office to create an A-F grading system, but only for schools within the geographic boundaries of the restructured Detroit Public Schools. The legislation states that the system will take effect in the 2017-2018 school year, and will remain in effect until it is replaced by a statewide A-F system to be created by the legislature.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Montana	Yes	Yes	Performance levels	Summative ratings will be calculated as the percentage of points a school has earned.	Performance level designation will be made based on points earned. Schools will receive either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive, Targeted, or Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montana will develop a system of meaningful differentiation based on all indicators. Measures for school quality and success were supported by stakeholders. Under this system, schools will be judged on where their students start and whether students make progress from that baseline. This is a change from the previous “one size fits all” target score.
Nevada	Yes	No	Star rating (5-point scale) & 100 point index		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nevada is currently engaging stakeholders in discussions for establishing clear performance level descriptors for each star rating level. These performance level descriptors will then serve as the basis for point distribution for each indicator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This system represents an effort to establish a multi-faceted indicator system for all school levels, one that results in continuous improvement of all schools. The use of school quality indicators is for attention to the performance of low achieving students and subgroups. Indicator weights were chosen based on stakeholder input, and reflect Nevada values.
New Jersey	Yes	No	Performance levels	For annual summative determinations, relative percentile rankings will be used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each school and each subgroup within schools will be identified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceeds Target, Meets Target, or Below target. Performance level designation will be contingent on making necessary annual progress towards achieving state long-term goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This system is designed not to be a grading system, but to be a system for identification of schools in need of improvement. This system is designed to annually identify whether schools are on track to achieve state’s long-term goals. This system is also designed to track school performance relative to other schools in the state. This system will provide actionable information that schools, LEAs, and NJDOE can use to target resources and supports.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
North Dakota	Yes	Yes	Categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools will receive general support. Five percent of Title I schools that have lowest achievement and public high schools with graduation rate lower than 67 percent will receive comprehensive support. Schools with low performing subgroups will receive targeted support. 	Schools will be identified for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General support, Targeted support, or Comprehensive support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Dakota is moving towards school differentiation that can be easily communicated to LEA decision makers, teachers, parents, and the public.
Ohio	Yes	No	A–F grades		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and districts receive up to 10 measure grades, which are combined into six component grades. These component grades are aggregated to produce an overall letter grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ohio will continue to use the A–F letter grade system. In late 2011, the Ohio Department of Education reached out to parents and other stakeholders to solicit feedback on Ohio’s accountability system. At that time, schools and districts received a summative (overall) label such as <i>excellent</i>, <i>continuous improvement</i>, or <i>academic watch</i> to describe their level of performance. The stakeholder input, especially feedback from parents, was used to design a new accountability framework that moved away from the summative label, and instead issued A-F letter grades to provide greater transparency and clarity around the performance of each school or district. Ohio began using the new letter-grade approach on the report cards issued for the 2012-2013 school year. The Department has received significant positive feedback indicating that this rating system is easy to understand and provides meaningful differentiation between schools at various performance levels.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Oklahoma	Yes	No	A–F grades			<p>Text from the draft plan suggests that Oklahoma will continue to implement an A–F letter grade system, which will be “significantly reconfigured” to meet ESSA requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oklahoma’s current accountability system is an index system that awards points based on the proficiency level of the student on the assessment. Oklahoma currently uses an A–F grade card as a single indicator to represent the accountability system, and is operating under the assumption that USDE will require a single indicator as delineated in its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for accountability. Oklahoma’s current A–F accountability system must be significantly reconfigured to meet the requirements of the ESSA, as it currently only includes one of the required five indicators, with graduation rate counted as a bonus point only. <p>In accountability presentation to State Board is the following point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for the public to see how schools did on all indicators in the accountability system and overall. <p>From website (http://sde.ok.gov/sde/af-grades):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2011, the Oklahoma Legislature adopted an A-F School Grading System to provide incentives to schools for challenging all students to reach high levels of college and career readiness. The A-F report cards make school performance clear in a transparent manner easily communicated to the public. The report cards also give schools a tool to encourage more parental and community involvement. When parents and community members have a clear understanding of school performance, they can also help in tangible ways. Schools will still be accountable for helping their children meet grade-level performance standards, but the grading system also adds the dimension of allowing a school to show academic growth. A school’s grade also includes factors such as graduation and dropout rates, and attendance rates for elementary schools.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
South Carolina	Yes	No	Performance levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 performance levels • There are two models for consideration which could be used independently or in tandem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The dashboard model (speedometer visual with four categories) calculates results for each leading indicator using the point system and normative distribution of results to display school and district performance across multiple indicators. ○ The weighted point index applies weights to each category to preference certain categories over another and produce results based on those weights. 	<p>The state is considering three options, all of which include performance levels/categories, for the final summative rating—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: Normative Final Summative Rating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does Not Meet Expectations: bottom 2 deciles ○ Approaches Expectations: 3rd-5th deciles ○ Meets Expectations: 5-8th deciles ○ Exceeds Expectations: top 2 deciles • Option 2: Criterion Final Summative Rating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does Not Meet Expectations: <50 points earned ○ Approaches Expectations: 50-73 points earned ○ Meets Expectations: 72-94 points earned ○ Exceeds Expectations: 95-120 points earned • Option #3 Decision Model Final Summative Rating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does Not Meet Expectations: if performance in more than two indicators is in bottom quartile ○ Approaches Expectations: if performance in more than two indicators is below 50th percentile and no more than two indicators are in lowest quartile ○ Meets Expectations: if performance in all indicators is above the 50th percentile but performance in fewer than 2 indicators is above the 75th percentile ○ Exceeds Expectations: if performance in all indicators is above the 50th percentile and at least two indicators is above the 75th percentile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Carolina has a ‘Federal’ report card that assigns grades, but their local report cards do not. You will see South Carolina mentioned on some lists. • For the past several years, South Carolina has had two accountability systems, one for state requirements and one to meet federal requirements. ESSA allows the state to create one accountability system that meets state needs while addressing requirements in federal statute. • For the past year, the SCDE and the Education Oversight Committee have been working with stakeholders through workgroups to design a single state accountability system and a system to support districts and schools. The accountability system development is ongoing.

State	State Plan Available?	Changed or Changing Summative Rating?	Summative Rating	Communication to Public	Performance Levels	State Rationale / Notes
Tennessee	Yes	No	A–F grades		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A, B, C, D, F 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennessee passed legislation in 2016 charging the state board with developing an A-F system (S.B. 300). In 2015, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a law requiring the annual state report card to include an A-F grading system for all schools. This new summative grade will give parents, educators, and stakeholders a summative overview of their schools and a baseline comparison across schools and districts. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year every school will receive a summative letter grade that is aligned to the Tennessee accountability framework, under ESSA.
Vermont	Yes	Yes	Performance levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each measure and for the school as a whole, a scale is generated which describes the degree to which the school is meeting the “target”. Vermont will use scale scores to communicate school level performance to parents. Schools will receive a performance level (which is associated with a term/name and iconography). 	<p>Four levels with proposed terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 1—Off-Target Level 2—Near Target Level 3—On-Target Level 4—Bull’s Eye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vermont Agency of Education, school systems, and the public are committed to moving from a language that focuses on schools as “failing to meet” targets to one that focuses on continuous improvement for all. Using scale scores to communicate school level performance will “rightfully focus schools on improving the educational outcomes of all students, so that gains made by students will be “counted” whether or not they cross an arbitrary line of proficiency”.

Washington	Yes	Not Applicable	Washington Achievement Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 point scale • Numeric score • Associated color rating <p>The specifics, including the performance thresholds within the 1–10 range, colors and associated mapping to the scores, will be evaluated and established by SBE and OSPI with input from the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School performance scores will be a combination of both an all students score and a targeted subgroups score. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington will revise the Washington Achievement Index and implement it under ESSA. • When enacting E2SSB 6696 in 2010, the legislature intended a Washington Achievement Index to be used for federal and state accountability. However, the Index did not meet all requirements of NCLB, but has been used for the purpose of recognizing schools for high achievement and for improvement. Beginning in 2012, the state moved forward with further development and full implementation of a revised Washington Achievement Index to fulfill the legislature’s intent in Phase II of developing the accountability system and to realize a fully integrated and differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. Since October 2012, the SBE has been collaborating with OSPI and a workgroup of stakeholders, the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup (AAW), to develop the revised Washington Achievement Index.
West Virginia	No	Yes	A–F grades			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-F grades approved by state board of education in November 2016. • On March 8, 2017 the state Board of Education voted to stop using an accountability system that gives A-F grades • The vote means A-through-F grades for schools won't be released in fall 2017. • The board says a new accountability system will be developed using "multiple measures." Board President Tom Campbell says the board wants to "evaluate the best solution for our schools and communities." • The A through F system had replaced one that put each school in one of six categories with a "success" ranking at the top and a "priority" ranking indicating areas requiring improvement.

Wyoming	Yes	Not Applicable	Performance levels	Performance level designation	<p>Levels of performance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeding Expectations, • Meeting Expectations, • Partially Meeting Expectations, and • Not Meeting Expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wyoming is integrating its state and federal accountability systems. Under ESSA, Wyoming will use the framework that is used for state accountability purposes as required by the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA). In other words, the state school accountability system will be used to make federal accountability determinations. This means that schools will no longer have two accountability ratings. • School performance levels are determined from a variety of data sources, and are calculated to help determine which schools are doing well and which schools are in need of assistance.
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TO: Karen B. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools

FROM: Dara Zeehandelaar Shaw

DATE: March 12, 2017

SUBJECT: Review of literature on public accountability measures and summative ratings

Summary

The question of whether and how accountability impacts student achievement is a relatively well-studied one. However, that literature generally does not ask about which *type* of accountability system has the greatest impact (grades, stars, words, etc.) Further, the research on how parents and the public specifically perceive *ratings* is virtually non-existent. However, the overall body of research suggests that any type of public accountability measure, ratings included, can affect student achievement, parental decision-making and satisfaction, public support, and housing values. The research does not suggest the “best” form of labeling and calculating summative ratings, or even whether having a summative rating is “better” than not having one, because the tradeoffs inherent in the various choices are largely dependent on what stakeholders want.

Accountability positively impacts student achievement.

Most of the literature on the impact of accountability asks “how having does an accountability system (versus not having one) affect student achievement and/or teacher behavior.” This is a fairly large body of literature. Only a handful specifically ask “how does having a *summative rating system* (versus either having no system, or having a different system) affect student achievement?” Both types of [studies find a positive](#) impact.¹

Grades affect parent satisfaction.

Several [studies](#) (mostly of New York City, which uses A-F grades) agree that parental satisfaction is related to official measures of accountability such as school report cards and summative ratings, even controlling for school characteristics and demographics. In addition, when New York City schools’ letter grades [dropped](#) after the implementation of higher standards, parental satisfaction also declined even though nothing else about the schools had changed. Another [study](#), also of New York City found that, after a school received a “D” or “F” grade, parents were actually satisfied with how their schools responded the following year—parents believed that the schools were spurred to action upon receipt of the poor grade.

¹ Research also shows that [positive](#) change in grade has a negative effect teacher attrition (and vice versa), and more generally that schools that perform poorly on any type of accountability measure tend to have higher teacher turnover (for example: Clotfelter et al. 2004; Feng et al. 2010).

Grades affect public support (donations and bond measures).

Florida uses A-F grades. A 2009 [study](#) of those grades found that schools that received a high grade did not see a greater amount of voluntary contributions to the school, but schools that received a low grade saw a decrease in contributions. (Further, donations to a school serving low-income and/or minority students were more sensitive to their grade.)² However, a 2002 [study](#) of Texas found that school performance in general (not specifically as defined by grades) is not related to the likelihood of passing a school bond measure.³

Grades affect housing values.

It is [well-documented](#) that test scores are reflected by housing values. But unless schools have a grade assigned to them and/or include data other than proficiency on standardized tests, home buyers are reacting to their own definition of a “good” and “bad” school based on test scores. A grade (or other summative rating) sends a clearer signal of quality. Again in Florida, a 2004 [study](#) found that the housing market responds to grades, even if the schools in question are essentially identical in a variety of aspects including average test scores. For example, an “A” grade was worth \$9,000 more than a “B” grade (in 2000), even if the schools were otherwise identical and had virtually identical test scores. However, the findings suggest that the results are temporary and fade with time. This result has been [replicated](#) in other housing markets.

Studies of grades in other (non-school) contexts show that consumers do respond to them.

[Studies](#) of whether restaurant revenue is sensitive to letter grades do not show a clear relationship—some find that letter grades [impact](#) sales, [others](#) do not.⁴ Independent restaurants [benefit](#) from positive Yelp reviews, but large chain restaurants do not.

The format of summative ratings for schools does matter, but mostly for the highest- and lowest-performing schools.

A 2014 [study](#) compared parental satisfaction to the *type* of rating system (grades, performance index, percent proficient, and words describing proficiency). As expected, no matter the format, parents reported higher levels of satisfaction with stronger schools. However, parents saw a school with a “good” letter grade as better than a school with a “good” performance index (i.e. a numerical score given to the school). Said another way: parents were more satisfied with a school that received an “A” than a school that received a “108 out of 120,” even if the schools were otherwise identical. On the low-performing end, parents saw a school with a “poor” letter grade as worse than other schools. (Meaning: parents were less satisfied with a school that received an “F” than a school that scored poorly using another system, even if the schools were otherwise identical.)

The best system is likely defined by the stakeholders.

Whether stakeholders *want* summative ratings at all depends on what the state already uses as public accountability measures, how clearly that information is presented, and how school report cards are generally perceived. It also [matters](#) what stakeholders value: stakeholders who want well-rounded schools prefer a summative rating that combines multiple elements, while those who believe schools

² Research on public institutions besides schools finds that satisfaction affects residents’ willingness to increase local taxes, for example for police services (Donahue and Miller 2006; Glaser and Hildreth 1999; Simonsen and Robbins 2003 as cited in Jacobson, et al., 2014).

³ There is additional research on whether and how *test scores* affect local elections and/or business support for schools. However, these studies are inconclusive and do not address summative ratings specifically.

⁴ Studies do find, unequivocally, that grading systems positively affect restaurant hygiene and food safety.

should focus on academics prefer either a dashboard or a summative rating that weighs academics very high.

There is also an inherent [tension](#) in whether there should be summative ratings at all—on the one hand, the public often demands simple measures of accountability, but on the other such simple measures can undermine public trust and satisfaction with education without resulting in any actual greater oversight.

(Not to mention there is a separate discussion about how accountability measures should be “rolled up” in a single measure that cannot be gamed.)⁵

Data Quality Campaign [recommends](#) that states “engage stakeholders” and “think creatively” about public accountability measures, so that parents and the public can understand and act on the information. Engagement around utility is especially important because parents do [consider](#) test scores when making decisions about schools, but also safety, proximity, and demographics when that information is available.

For Maryland, it looks like there are some suggestions in response to Q17 on the survey (letter grades, 1-100, 4.0 scale, words, etc.) There is also some feedback on whether schools should be in “competition” against each other, i.e. whether summative ratings should be assigned based on percentiles or cut-offs.⁶

Finally, experts recommend that the system should be stable, whatever its form. Stakeholder perceptions and actions are affected by public accountability measures; if these measures change for no other reason than a change in the way they’re calculated, it not only affects stakeholder (and school) behavior, but also increases skepticism among stakeholders that the measures mean anything at all.

⁵ Superintendents in Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas do not seem to [support](#) A-F grades (although it is not clear whether they do not support summative grades of any form, or just those labeled A-F).

⁶ A 2016 [study](#) finds that comparing a local school to other schools in the state, to the nation, and to other countries lowers how parents evaluate their local school. In some cases, the lowered evaluation is justified—before seeing the comparisons, the parent’s view of their local school was higher than the school’s quality.

EDUCATION WEEK

A-F School Rankings Draw Local Pushback

Critics call method simplistic; backers tout transparency

By Daarel Burnette II

March 7, 2017

As states overhaul their accountability systems under the new federal K-12 law, officials in some are pushing to replace or revamp A-F grading for schools, which supporters tout as an easy way to convey to the public how schools stack up. [← Back to Story](#)

In recent years, **at least 18 states have adopted** some version of a system that relies mostly on standardized-test scores and graduation rates to generate letter-grade report cards, similar to the ones students receive throughout the school year. Legislation is pending in a handful of states to join that group.

But in some states that already have them, A-F systems have received fierce backlash from local superintendents and school board members. They complain that the letter grades oversimplify student success or shortfalls, increase pressure to pay attention to tests, ignore school quality factors other than test scores, and demoralize teachers and parents.

Local officials in at least four states are using this year's window of opportunity provided by the **Every Student Succeeds Act** to push back against A-F systems. ESSA, which goes into full effect for the 2017-18 school year, requires states to change several components of their accountability systems, including the measures states must use to calculate rankings and how often they report rankings to the public.

In West Virginia, recently elected **Democratic Gov. Jim Justice said in his State of the State speech** this year that he always thought his state's letter-grade system was ineffective, and he ordered his education department to replace it with a new one.

More than 200 local superintendents in Texas are **urging their state legislature**—where the leadership remains in favor of the A-F grading system—to repeal it before it goes into full effect next year, after a "what-if" set of grades was released by the state department earlier this year that ranked many of the state's well-respected suburban districts as performing below average.

And a group of Louisiana superintendents who have long complained about the state's A-F system are **attempting to delay its ESSA accountability plan** from being submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. They say they will create their own accountability system if the state superintendent moves forward with one they say places their already-ambitious A-F accountability system "on steroids."

Which States Grade Their Schools?

At least 17 states have or are developing some form of A-F grading system for their schools. Proponents say the format makes it easier for the public to understand where schools stand academically. Critics say the letter grades oversimplify the picture of student success and school quality.



"Accountability needs to bring gentle pressure to all of us," said Hollis Milton, the superintendent of the West Feliciana Parish schools and the president of the Louisiana Association of School Superintendents. "But when it becomes Draconian, it begins to affect morale."

Source: Education Commission of the States

Cautions Raised

Advocacy organizations such as the Foundation for Excellence in Education—founded by former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush—and Chiefs for Change have urged states to hold fast to A-F systems or other systems that rank schools in an easy, understandable way for the public. Letter grades in particular, they say, force districts to pay attention to disparities between black and Latino students and their white peers and can spark rapid change.

"States should have clear and transparent summative-rating systems that are actionable for parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in communities and are clearly communicated for all stakeholders," said Mike Magee, the CEO of Chiefs for Change, which includes state and district superintendents.

Any new overhauls of accountability systems in these states, officials with the Foundation for Excellence in Education have **told state officials during ESSA strategy sessions**, will result in a tipping point that would reverse academic growth.

ESSA and School Report Cards

ESSA requires states to evaluate schools based on English-language proficiency, graduation rates, and scores on statewide achievement tests. They also must add at least one new indicator of school quality or student success, such as school climate, chronic absenteeism, discipline, or college and career readiness. The law also requires statewide report cards to be issued on an annual basis and to report more information to the public, such as per-pupil spending.

Governors and legislators, who shoulder a growing share of education costs, often butt heads with state education departments and local officials on just how straightforward and transparent they're being with the public about the academic status of their districts. And parent groups and accountability hawks have long complained that slogging through more-traditional state report cards filled with reams of data, caveats, and online drop-down menus will give even the most data-tolerant of education wonks a pulsating headache.

But as education departments have begun to release the first rounds of letter grades in recent years, local officials—especially suburban superintendents—have taken exception to the way the grades are calculated. Such systems fail to convey the dynamics of all that goes into a student's success, they argue, and they take issue with the kinds of data sometimes folded into the grades.

To many district superintendents, ESSA is a prime opportunity for their education agencies to break away from a corporate-style accountability movement in the past decade that, in their view, led to mass firings of teachers, state takeovers of schools, and swift administrative turnover with few academic gains to show for it.

The A-F approach still has momentum in some places. Currently, according to the Education Commission of the States, Georgia, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Washington have bills to introduce letter grades to their report cards.

Jim Justice, West Virginia's new governor, laid out one rationale for replacing those systems in his annual speech to legislators.

"Think about A through F for our schools," he said. "We do it on a bell curve. ... 'These get an A. These get an F. All the big meat and potatoes [schools] get a C.' And we call out to the world and say, 'Come to West Virginia. Our schools are mostly all C's.' I don't get it. That's got to go."

In Louisiana, the state's accountability system has created a fissure between the state chief and local superintendents.

John White, the appointed state superintendent, has proposed raising the academic bar for schools in order to receive an A on the state report card, which has upset local superintendents. They have pushed for the state to wait until September to turn in its ESSA accountability plan instead of April. White's department did not respond to a request for interviews.

Policy Splits

In some states, such as Alabama and Texas, the first round of letter grades has sparked a fierce backlash from local superintendents.

Alabama's legislature in 2012 ordered that by 2014 the education department issue letter grades, but the department has yet to do so. The state board and state Superintendent Michael Sentance decided late last year to give the public raw information that would determine the letter grades, but not the letter grades themselves. Sentance told local news media that he has seen negative effects that letter grades have had across the country.

Texas released preliminary grades on its website earlier this school year, with **a memo from Mike Morath, the state chief** that said: "The ratings in this report are for informational purposes to meet a legislative requirement and represent work-in-progress models that are likely to change before A-F ratings become effective in August 2018. No inferences about official district or campus performance in the 2015-16 school year should be drawn from these ratings, and these ratings should not be considered predictors of future district- or campus-performance ratings."

More than half of Texas' schools got a C or lower in student achievement. More than 200 of the state's superintendents quickly denounced the grades as flawed, simplistic, and demoralizing.

Debbie Gillespie, a school board member of the Frisco Independent district, a wealthy system outside Dallas, said her district sent out waves of communication to explain that its C in the college- and career-readiness category was based on the district's absenteeism rate, not the quality of its dual-enrollment or Advanced Placement courses.

"Our grade is lower than what the perception is," Gillespie said. "We have outside forces telling us that we're failing, and that's not true. When you look at these grades, it's meant to shame us. We're not shameful. We're doing great things."

Not every superintendent agrees.

Last week, the school board of Comal Independent, a suburban district outside San Antonio, **passed a resolution in support of the letter grades**. That's despite the two C's and two B's the district got on its report card.

"I think the bottom line for us is, we philosophically believe that accountability is a good thing," said Kerry Gain, the district's assistant superintendent for curriculum and academic services. "We serve our public school children, and we believe we should be held accountable on whether or not they are learning. That could be a crazy stance, but that's where we are."



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Designing Accountability

Three Approaches to School Classification Systems

By Laura Jimenez, Scott Sargrad, Samantha Batel, and Catherine Brown March 2017

Center for American Progress



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Part of a Series on Implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act

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Introduction and summary

Beginning in 2001, the federal education law known as No Child Left Behind, or NCLB, required every state to operate a system of school performance management based on annual student outcomes. Classifying school performance is one part of this broader system of accountability, which also includes data collection and reporting, delivery of supports for school improvement, and distribution of resources to districts and schools. Yet classification systems have often received negative attention because they have been more often associated with high-stakes shame and punishment practices than with continuous school improvement.¹

This is due in large part to federal school classification requirements, which were specific by design to label and differentiate treatment of schools based on whether they met annual reading and math proficiency targets.² This often led to narrow or simple pass/fail categorization systems based on schools meeting incrementally increasing state targets for test scores and graduation rates. Schools that made progress but failed to meet these targets went unrecognized.

Federal law did allow states to classify schools using performance measures beyond test scores. But any additional measures simply meant more ways to fail, as they too were subject to the pass/fail yardstick. As a result, states stuck to the limited measures required by NCLB for their federal accountability systems.

In response to this limitation, several states created their own accountability systems—which were used within the state and not for federal accountability purposes—to measure other factors that were critical to their visions for school success and student learning.³ Nonetheless, states still based these systems primarily on academic proficiency.

Fast-forward to 2017. Measuring only how well students read, write, and do math falls woefully short of assessing the range of skills students need to succeed today. Of the slightly more than 11 million jobs created since the Great Recession, all but 100,000 of them have gone to workers with at least some college education.⁴

We live in a global, technology-dependent, rapidly changing economy in which reading and math skills are not enough to compete for today's jobs. As a result, to succeed in the current workforce, students need to learn to adapt to technology and to work independently and with one another.

The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, which reauthorized NCLB in 2015, gives states the chance to respond to this demand. Under ESSA, states have an opportunity to develop dynamic school classification systems that measure a wider range of student outcomes assessing readiness for college and careers.

Toward this end, the Center for American Progress has designed three school classification system models that capture a broader range of student performance than systems of the past. This report provides an overview of these designs—including performance indices, matrices, and decision rules—in addition to their benefits and drawbacks. The report also includes recommendations for states to keep in mind so that they can meaningfully measure and compare school performance, thereby identifying the schools most in need of support.

Overview of ESSA

The Every Student Succeeds Act ushers in a broader view of student success that recognizes the realities of the current workforce and aligns with its trajectory.⁵ It also acknowledges that students today need a more holistic and well-rounded education to succeed, requiring states to use additional measures of school quality or student success alongside more traditional academic measures to classify schools.⁶ For a more detailed analysis of these additional measures, see CAP’s “Innovation in Accountability” report.⁷

In addition to this broader view, ESSA drives states to diversify their accountability systems by requiring overall, or summative, school classifications based on objective student outcome data. ESSA also requires states to collect and report more nuanced data about school performance and school context, such as chronic absenteeism rates and per-pupil funding amounts. As a result, states are now required both to identify schools needing the most support and to produce annual report cards that include more holistic data, allowing for strategic deployment of state- and district-level resources to improve student performance.

Under the existing ESSA regulations, states have two years to design and launch their school classification systems, which are complex and take time to develop.⁸ The measures and formulas that states use must meet specific technical standards set by the law, including validity, reliability, and meaningful differentiation. To be valid, each indicator in the system must be an accurate measure of what it intends to measure. Reliable indicators produce measurement results consistently, and when combined, the measures must “meaningfully differentiate” schools along each of the school performance measures.⁹

Once submitted, these systems will undergo technical review and approval by the U.S. Department of Education. The technical reviews will also examine the extent to which states’ school classification systems meet the law’s requirements to annually differentiate school performance using all of the measures in those systems.

States must also, with limited exceptions, identify low-performing schools for either comprehensive support and improvement or targeted support and improvement every three years. By default, then, there will be a third group of schools not identified for support and improvement.¹⁰

The existing ESSA regulations clarify that states may choose to classify schools using only these three categories as they design their systems. Or they might opt to create additional categories that further distinguish school performance, such as an A through F or five-star system, while also identifying schools for support and improvement as required by law.

To create these summative classifications, indices—meaning systems that sum to 100 percent, as an A through F system would—are often the first that come to state policymakers' minds. However, there are other approaches that states can use to combine school performance results into a summative rating, including matrices and decision rules.

A deeper look at ESSA's specific school identification requirements

Under ESSA, all schools must receive performance information annually, and states must identify two groups of low-performing schools—comprehensive support and improvement schools and targeted support and improvement schools—at least once every three years.

Comprehensive support and improvement schools include the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools statewide, high schools with graduation rates below 67 percent, and Title I schools with chronically low-performing subgroups of students that have not improved after receiving additional targeted support.¹¹

Targeted support and improvement schools have subgroups of students that are performing as low as all students in the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools. In addition, states must annually identify schools with consistently underperforming subgroups, as defined by the state.¹²

To identify these schools, ESSA requires states to use the following indicators:

1. **Academic achievement**, which measures grade-level proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics in the third through eighth grades and once in high school
2. **Graduation rate**, which measures the four-year adjusted cohort high school graduation rate and, at the state's discretion, an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate

3. For elementary and middle schools, **growth based on the required annual assessments**, or another academic measure that the state chooses
4. **Progress in achieving English language proficiency** based on English learner, or EL, performance on the state English language proficiency assessment
5. One or more measures of **school quality and student success**, which may vary by grade span

States must assign “substantial weight” to each of the first four indicators in their school classification systems, and together, these indicators must be afforded “much greater weight” than the fifth indicator.¹³ States also have some flexibility in how to define these indicators, but they must remain within the law's requirements. For example, the existing ESSA regulations clarify that states may measure multiple performance levels of academic and English language proficiency, allowing states to move away from the reliance on a single cut score.

For this report, CAP developed the following definitions of indicators to illustrate the requirements and flexibility in how states may define the indicators in their systems. Each of the examples takes advantage of this flexibility by measuring a dynamic range of performance rather than relying on a simple cutoff score or yes/no format. Items 5 and 6 serve as possible options, as states could use either of them or others of their own design.

1. Achievement:

- Performance on state assessments in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, for all students and for each subgroup
- Calculated based on whether all students and each subgroup are meeting or making progress toward their state-set targets for the percentage of students achieving at grade level
- Additional credit if the performance of low-income students, students with disabilities, or ELs is in the top 25 percent of the state

2. Growth or another academic indicator:

- Percentage of students making meaningful growth in English language arts and mathematics based on state assessments, for all students and for each subgroup
- Meaningful growth means at least one year's worth of growth for students who are at or above grade level and more than one year's worth of growth for students who are below grade level
- Also includes the percentage of ELs who reach the proficient level on the state's English language proficiency assessment within one year of enrollment in the school

3. High school graduation:

- The four-year cohort rate, or the percentage of students who graduate in four years or less with a regular high school diploma, calculated by taking the number of students who enter 9th grade; adding any students who transfer into the cohort during the 9th grade and the next three years; and subtracting any students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die¹⁴

- The extended-year adjusted cohort rate, for five, six, or seven years, as applicable to the state¹⁵

4. English language proficiency:

- Required for ELs only
- Performance on state assessments in English language proficiency
- Calculated based on whether all students in the EL subgroup are meeting or making progress toward state-set targets for the percentage of students reaching English language proficiency
- Additional credit if ELs attain English language proficiency in 3 years or less

5. Culture and climate as a measure of school quality and student success:

- Student, parent, and teacher engagement, as measured by surveys; chronic absenteeism; suspension and expulsion rates
- Measured for all students and for each subgroup

6. College and career readiness as a measure of school quality and student success:

- Participation rates—calculated as the share of students enrolled—in advanced coursework or exams and career and technical education courses
- Performance in advanced coursework or exams, calculated based on students meeting specific benchmarks for courses or exams; attainment of industry-recognized certificates
- Participation of middle school students in high school-level courses

Overview of school classification systems

School classification systems provide specific kinds of value to policymakers, educators, and parents. First, school classifications help state policymakers prioritize which schools need support to ensure the progress of all students toward the state’s learning goals. They also help align the state’s K-12 educational program with related programs administered by postsecondary and workforce systems to meet college and career readiness goals. Second, school classifications help educators target resources to the needs of the whole school and within individual classrooms to meet student learning targets. Third, classifications help parents compare school quality based on which schools are meeting learning goals and for which students.

States can ensure that their school classification systems accomplish these goals by measuring a broader range of student learning, including postsecondary and workforce outcomes. Some of these measures include industry-recognized certification program enrollment, college attainment rates, and college remediation rates, which signify that students were not ready for the academic demands of credit-bearing coursework. College dropout rates are also higher for students of color and low-income students, so persistence rates for all student groups are important data to collect.¹⁶ Additional indicators of readiness for college and careers are detailed in CAP’s “Making the Grade” report.¹⁷

States have an opportunity to link these measures with how they have defined college and career readiness, as most states have articulated a formal definition of this term. Having a broad definition of college and career readiness will also help the state prioritize what it measures toward that goal.

The importance and challenge of including performance of student subgroups

To be meaningful, the goal of college and career readiness must be attainable for all students. To achieve this vision, combined state, district, and school efforts must close significant and persistent achievement gaps, which occur when one student group statistically outperforms another.¹⁸ However, data from international, national, and state-level sources all confirm that nonwhite, disabled, poor, and non-English-speaking students perform more poorly than their peers outside of these groups.¹⁹

NCLB first exposed these achievement gaps by requiring states to report disaggregated annual achievement data. While the law aimed to close these gaps, they persist despite incremental progress.²⁰ Even after making statistical adjustments to proficiency rates under NCLB, by 2005—four years after the law passed—the rates of schools making “adequate yearly progress” started to decline.²¹ Any school missing a single target for any subgroup for two years in a row initiated particular actions, such as offering free tutoring or the option for students to transfer to a higher-performing school. By 2011, more than half of schools in all states were labeled as failing due to missing performance targets for subgroups.²²

NCLB’s lockstep yearly targets also failed to consider actual rates of progress of student groups, and the law punished schools for missing targets regardless of any improvement. With so many schools failing, it was difficult to target limited resources where they were needed most.

A civil rights bill at heart, ESSA plays a critical role in exposing and closing achievement gaps to ensure that schools are serving all students well. And under this law, states will likely wish to avoid labeling a school as failing if it misses a single target for a single subgroup while also ensuring that schools make progress for all students.

Accordingly, as states consider the three school classification designs detailed in the next section, they may want to identify where and how they can strike a balance between disproportionately high and low weighting of subgroup performance. For example, states can add safeguards for subgroup accountability to any school classification system. Specifically, if a subgroup falls below a certain threshold on any indicator over a certain number of years, this information could

be publicly reported and the school could be notified, flagged as needing additional support but not designated as a low-performing school, or identified as a low-performing school. Additionally, such schools could drop one level on the classification system—for example, go from a B rating to a C rating.

States may also wish to set learning targets that account for where students start, as some did under the NCLB waiver initiative.²³ Under this initiative, most states set targets that cut the achievement gap in half over six years. Under ESSA, states have complete discretion on setting their targets, so long as they do so for each measure of learning required by the law, apply the targets to every subgroup, and set the same timeline for all students. Accounting for where students start is a powerful signal that states value progress and can act as positive reinforcement for schools.

As states discuss the design of their school classification systems, one critical question to answer will be how great an impact they want subgroup performance to have on how schools are classified and treated as a result of this performance.

Design Principles

CAP used the following principles in developing each of the school classification system designs.

Offer clarity, transparency, and rich information to parents

School ratings, as well as the indicators that lead to those ratings, should be transparent and clear to parents and should reflect meaningful differences between schools. Parents care about school performance, as it helps inform school choice—when available—as well as any additional supports parents may need to obtain for their children. Therefore, information about school performance ought to clearly convey to parents how their children perform along each of the school classification system's measures, signify in what areas their children might need additional support, and allow parents to easily compare school performance.

Reward high levels of growth for all students, including those above and below grade-level expectations

School classification systems signal whether students are on track to meet state-determined visions for education. However, since students enter school at widely different levels of learning, systems should hold schools accountable for showing high levels of growth and getting students on a trajectory that will lead them to success. Students below grade level should make more than a year's worth of growth, and students at or above grade level should make at least a year's worth of growth.

Meaningfully differentiate between school quality and performance

Meaningful differentiation refers to the extent to which performance on an indicator adequately sorts school performance along a spectrum. For example, if schools cluster around a value or range of values on a particular indicator, this indicator may not distinguish school performance as well as indicators with a range of values at the bottom, middle, and top of the performance spectrum. States should test for meaningful differentiation through a trial data run of each indicator, using past student performance data when available. However, even if an indicator does not meaningfully differentiate schools, states may still wish to include it in their school classification systems because it signals what the state values. For a more detailed description of meaningful differentiation, see CAP's "A New Vision for School Accountability" report.²⁴

Three school identification system designs

This section presents the pros and cons of three school identification system designs for schools to consider: the performance index design, the matrix design, and the decision rules design. Each of these models takes a different technical approach to creating a summative determination. For example, a state using an index would assign a weighting, or percentage, to each indicator to calculate a single score or letter grade. Matrices, on the other hand, combine the performance of two or more dimensions of performance, such as status and growth, for each indicator. States would then assign school classifications based on how schools perform on each dimension. Finally, in a rules-based system, a state would set a threshold for performance on each indicator; a “yes” or “no” response would lead to a subsequent question; and ultimately, the combination of the responses would result in a school classification.

Performance index design

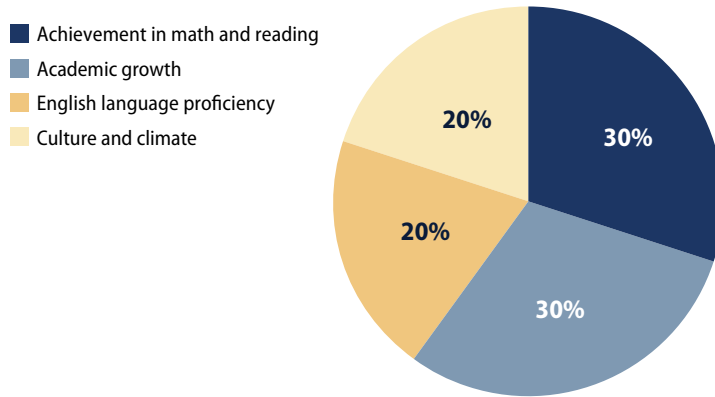
A school performance index is a school classification system that weights each indicator to sum to 100 percent. For example, a state that weights an indicator as 25 percent of a school’s overall rating would multiply that indicator’s raw score, such as 75 out of 100 possible points, by 25 percent. The state would then sum the subtotals for each indicator to determine a school’s total score, which can be translated into a letter grade; color; symbol, such as star ratings; or kept as a number score. Using this approach, each indicator’s percentage weight is the relative weight of that indicator compared with the whole. As a result, indicators with a greater weight will have a larger impact on the total.

Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate using the index approach with possible weightings of individual indicators for a total of 100 percent. The figures are merely an illustrative example of weightings that are in compliance with ESSA requirements; states can use different weightings than are in this example.

FIGURE 1

How elementary and middle school student outcomes contribute to a school's annual rating

Sample indicator weighting for school performance index for elementary and middle schools



ESSA requires that the academic indicators—which include academic proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics, academic growth, English language proficiency, and graduation rate for high schools—are each afforded substantial weight and “much greater weight” when combined.²⁵

The indicators in Figure 1 measure the performance of all students in elementary and middle school for each subgroup, with the exception of English language proficiency, or ELP, which only applies to the English learner subgroup. Additionally, the percentages are rates of students who meet or exceed the specific performance targets on each indicator for each subgroup.

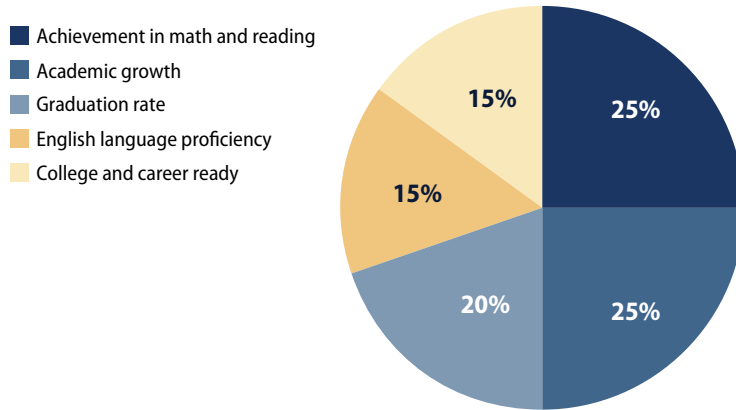
This system has three academic indicators—proficiency, growth, and ELP—and one nonacademic indicator—culture and climate. The system gives an equal weight of 30 percent to academic proficiency and growth, indicating that both static, point-in-time achievement and progress are important when generating a more complete measurement of student learning. The remaining indicators are weighted at 20 percent, which is consistent with national trends.²⁶

In this example, states could include subgroup performance by allocating each subgroup a percentage weighting of each indicator. To do so, states could divide the indicator’s percentage by the number of subgroups so that the percentages subtotal to 100 percent of that indicator—that is, designate each subgroup as the same percentage of a percentage. This method provides the performance of each subgroup an equal weighting.

FIGURE 2

How high school student outcomes contribute to a school's annual rating

Sample indicator weighting for school performance index for high schools



The indicators in Figure 2 include example weightings for high schools. As in Figure 1, these weightings follow the national trends described in CAP’s “Making the Grade” report.²⁷

As in the elementary and middle school example index, states could include subgroup performance by allocating each subgroup a percentage weighting of each indicator.

Example school classification categories for school performance indices

States may translate the results from a performance index into school classification categories, such as a letter grade; symbol, such as stars or flags; a color; or a term, such as “highest performing school.” Table 1 below shows a range of possible school classification categories.

TABLE 1
Sample school classification categories for school performance indices

Performance range	Sample school classifications
90–100%	A grade, five stars, green color, “highest performing school” label
80–89%	B grade, four stars, yellow color, “progressing school” label*
70–79%	C grade, three stars, yellow color, “progressing school” label
60–69%	D grade, two stars, red color, “targeted support and improvement school” label
Less than 60%	F grade, one star, red color, “comprehensive support and improvement school” label

* **Correction, March 10, 2017:** This table has been updated to reflect an accurate school classification label.

Pros and cons of an index

One important benefit of a school performance index is that it allows states to place greater emphasis on indicators that they value. For example, if a state hopes to use growth as an indicator to identify and reduce significant achievement gaps across certain schools, it could assign academic growth a greater weighting than academic proficiency. Greater weightings of growth could also incentivize schools to pay additional attention to students whose growth has stalled. As a result, indicator weightings should reflect a state’s goals for student learning. This flexibility, though, is limited by the existing ESSA regulations, as the weighting of nonacademic indicators cannot be used to remove a school from a low performance designation.²⁸

In addition, school performance indices typically create summative classifications that are simple to understand, such as A through F letter grades. Most parents are already familiar with this grading system, making it easy for them to compare schools and make a more informed choice. It also provides a clear picture of whether a school is one that parents likely want their child to attend.

However, the summative ratings of a school performance index are compensatory, meaning higher performance on one indicator offsets low performance on another. As a result, summative ratings may mask low achievement: For example, a school with an A letter grade may have struggling subgroups. Without reviewing the performance of each indicator, parents may not have a complete understanding of how a school will serve their child.

School performance indices also translate the performance of individual indicators to a uniform performance scale, which can require several, at times complicated, steps. For example, to combine academic proficiency—usually expressed as a rate or percentage—with a measure of school culture and climate—which may be qualitative responses from a survey—states must first normalize the indicators so that the scores are on the same scale.

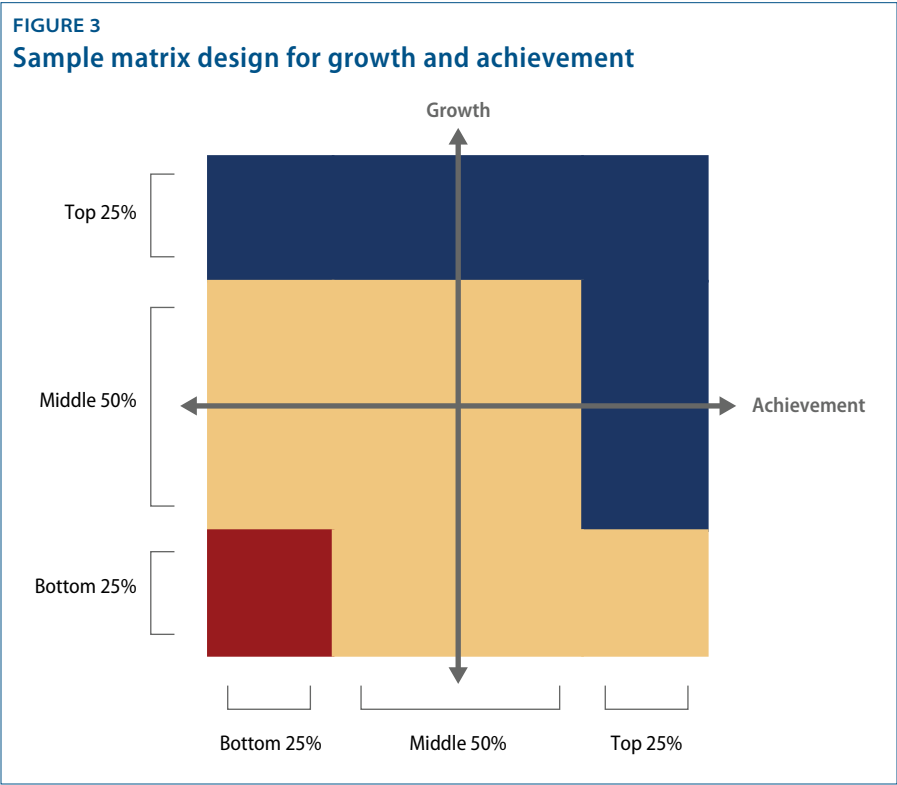
Finally, rolling up performance into a single score can omit critical context that provides essential information as to why a school is performing the way it is. For example, a school's performance likely relates to conditions within the district, such as how the district allocates resources to each school. Resource allocation may not be captured in a performance index.

Matrix design

A matrix design uses multiple, intersecting dimensions of performance on an indicator to determine an overall classification. In this example, each dimension represents a scale of performance, such as low, medium, and high. Matrices usually have two axes, an x-axis and a y-axis, that states can apply to each indicator—that is, one matrix for each indicator—or combine for all indicators—that is, the school receives an average x-axis calculation for all indicators and an average y-axis calculation for all indicators, resulting in one matrix.

For example, the sample matrix design in Figure 3 below has two dimensions: growth and achievement. The dimensions are placed along the x- and y-axes, forming four quadrants that reflect different levels of achievement and growth. Low achievement and low growth are in the bottom left; high performance and low growth are in the bottom right; low performance and high growth are in the top left; and high performance and high growth are in the top right.

In theory, this design could create four groups of school performance—one in each of the quadrants. If states wish, they could further differentiate each quadrant by adding, for example, quartiles of performance and growth. Figure 3 includes the bottom 25 percent, the middle 50 percent, and the top 25 percent of performance and growth to create three color categories. Using this approach, states could create up to nine groups of school performance.



Pros and cons of matrix designs

Matrices allow states to determine a school's rating using a more robust consideration of performance on a single indicator. As in the example above, the matrix has more frequent cut points—the performance quartiles—and allows for further differentiation of school performance based on the amount of growth students exhibit. Thus, the important question this type of design answers is not merely whether students grew but by how much. This design also allows states

and districts to concentrate their efforts on schools with students that have the lowest growth rates. From the school’s perspective, this dissection of growth creates disincentives for focusing on a small subset of students whose performance hovers just below a single threshold. Parents can also select schools that have the highest growth rates.

Matrices, however, are not as clear-cut as letter grades, so it may not be as easy for parents or the public to understand how the school is performing. Since the indicators do not culminate in a single score, parents may need to review more dimensions of performance and fit the pieces together themselves to gain an overall understanding of how well a school is doing. This drawback is an important consideration as states weigh trade-offs between simplicity and complexity.

Decision rules design

Decision rules models classify schools based on state-determined thresholds of performance for multiple indicators. Typically, this takes the form of binary if/then, yes/no, or pass/fail statements.

Table 2 below illustrates a simple decision rules system using this approach. A series of “yes” or “pass” statements for each indicator yields a summative classification of high performance. A combination of yes/no or pass/fail statements yields a school classification that reflects average or slightly above average school performance. A series of “no” or “fail” statements identifies a school for improvement. States can include any number of rules for each indicator.

TABLE 2
Sample school classification system using the decision rules design

Indicators	High-performing schools		Average-performing schools		Needs-improvement schools	
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Academic achievement	✓			✓		✓
Student growth	✓		✓			✓
English language proficiency	✓			✓		✓
Culture and climate	✓		✓			✓

Pros and cons of decision rules

Decision rules systems do not normalize or mathematically combine indicators, an attribute that may improve transparency and make it easier for parents to understand how a school is performing on each indicator. In addition, high performance on one indicator does not artificially raise the average or mask low performance on another indicator. Another significant benefit of this design is that states can create specific questions about subgroup performance for each indicator when schools fail to meet specific performance thresholds.

However, the series of decisions in more complicated systems can be difficult to follow, and it can be hard to understand how they result in a school classification. This is because decision rules designs can require a lengthy series of questions to derive the final classification, since a school's classification does not follow a narrow or straight path.

States should consider these benefits and drawbacks of the decision rules design when weighing this option against the performance index and matrix designs.

Recommendations

While each of these school classification models has unique challenges and advantages, careful development of any of them can offer meaningful information about school performance for school staff, policymakers, and families. As states choose among them and design final models, there are additional considerations that they should keep in mind to improve data quality and the ability of educators and parents to use these systems.

The following recommendations lay out key design principles that apply to each type of school classification system, in no particular order. Each of these has the potential to mitigate some of the cons discussed in each system design or to heighten the benefits.

Provide useful, actionable information to educators

School classification systems should do more than just rate, label, and sort schools. They should signal what is important and drive positive action by local leaders, parents, and teachers. When considering indicators for the system, the primary criterion should be whether low performance on the indicator will incentivize positive change that will benefit students. This positive change might include the continuous review of resources to meet student needs, enable educators to provide every student with high-quality instruction, and ensure that schools can create a safe and positive climate.

Provide districts and schools rich sets of additional data

School classification systems provide a limited snapshot of school quality and student success. Schools will always need additional information outside of a school's influence to inform systems of support, whether for continuous

improvement or to turn around low-performing schools. For example, stakeholders also need information about school context, including the amount or quality of resources a school receives.

While the Every Student Succeeds Act requires states to provide additional information to districts and schools, such as chronic absenteeism and discipline rates, additional information may still be needed at the local level. States should engage with their local stakeholders to identify what information educators need to support students.

Use multiple years of data

School classification systems should use multiple years of data to calculate performance on each indicator for the whole school and for individual subgroups. When indicators are measured consistently year over year, combining multiple years of data can smooth the effects of outlier performances in a single year. However, states should use caution when combining multiple years of data when the instrument used to measure the indicator has changed. For example, if states change their standards or the assessments used to measure the standards, results on those assessments may not be comparable.

Consider fluidity of design

States can create a hybrid system by combining components of each model system that fit their needs. For example, states could measure status and growth for each indicator in a school performance index. Or, states could assign a letter grade to each indicator and use decision rules to determine how a combination of letter grades identifies the lowest-performing schools. If states like some aspects of one design and some of another, they should be creative and use what they like and eliminate what they do not like from each design.

Conclusion

ESSA provides an exciting opportunity for states to experiment with measuring student and school performance and to provide valuable information to schools and parents. As part of the broader systems of accountability that states will develop, school classification systems are one way for states to communicate their values and signal to schools which measures should hold their attention.

This report is designed to provoke states' thinking as they create their systems. In doing so, states should not aim to just comply with ESSA. Rather, they should take advantage of the flexibility afforded by the law in order to develop classification systems that reflect their state vision for education and that meaningfully distinguish school performance in attaining that objective. In doing so, states can design new systems that ultimately capture their definitions and goals for student success.

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Endnotes

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- 2 *Improving America's Schools Act of 1994*, H. Rept. 6, 103 Cong., 2 sess. (1994), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OESE/archives/legislation/ESEA/brochure/iasa-bro.html>; *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Public Law 107-110, 107th Cong. 1st sess. (January 8, 2002), available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ110/html/PLAW-107publ110.htm>.
- 3 Marga Mikulecky and Kathy Christie, "Rating States, Grading Schools" (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 2014), available at <http://www.ecs.org/docs/rating-states,grading-schools.pdf>.
- 4 Anthony P. Carnevale, Tamara Jayasundera, and Artem Gulish, "America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots" (Washington: Georgetown University Center on Education and The Workforce, 2016), available at <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Americas-Divided-Recovery-web.pdf>.
- 5 *Every Student Succeeds Act*, Public Law 114-95, 114th Cong., 1st sess. (December 10, 2015), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177?q=%7B%22search%3A%5B%22every+student+succeeds+act%22%7D&resultIndex=1>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Samantha Batel, Scott Sargrad, and Laura Jimenez, "Innovation in Accountability: Designing Systems to Support School Quality and Student Success" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/reports/2016/12/08/294325/innovation-in-accountability/>.
- 8 34 C.F.R. § 200, 299 (2016), available at <https://ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaaccountstplans1129.pdf>. The authors would like to note that on January 30, 2017, Congress began the formal review process of the regulations, which could result in repeal. That review process was not complete at the time this report was published.
- 9 Under the law, states can determine how to define "meaningful differentiation."
- 10 *Every Student Succeeds Act*.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
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A New Vision for School Accountability

By Laura Jimenez and Scott Sargrad

March 2017

Center for American Progress



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Part of a Series on Implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act

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Introduction and summary

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, replaced the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, or NCLB, as the nation's major K-12 education law, continuing that law's focus on increasing the quality of public education. To fulfill this mission, ESSA requires states to measure, report on, and improve public school performance. Given the 14-year gap between ESSA and NCLB, the ways in which the old law measured and improved school quality were no longer useful in improving student outcomes.¹ States began requesting exemptions from the law's more punitive measures in 2011.²

NCLB relied heavily upon a pass/fail system to measure school performance based on targets for test scores and graduation rates. ESSA marks a significant shift away from NCLB in a number of areas but none more so than the requirements for how states must hold districts and schools accountable for improving student outcomes. In particular, there are three key shifts in the approach to accountability.

First, ESSA moves beyond NCLB's focus on test scores and graduation rates to a broader view of student and school success by requiring additional indicators and emphasizing the importance of a more holistic approach to accountability. Second, ESSA distributes responsibility for improvement among states, districts, and schools rather than focusing entirely on school-level actions directed by the state. And third, ESSA provides more flexibility at the local level for school improvement, requiring evidence-based strategies rather than the specific interventions of private tutoring and school choice that were mandatory for all struggling schools under the NCLB's school improvement grants program.³

The new law's vision for accountability recognizes that states need to build a systemic approach to prepare all students for college and careers—and they must do so quickly. While states are required by law to fully implement their accountability systems in the 2017-18 school year, even more urgently, workforce needs are changing rapidly.⁴ According to a recent study by the Center on Education and the Workforce, 99 percent of all jobs created since the market crash of 2008 require at least some postsecondary training.⁵ Most students can no longer compete in the

economy without advanced training beyond a high school education. Furthermore, while graduation rates on the whole are on the rise and more low-income students and students of color are attending college, their rates of high school and college completion lag behind national totals.⁶ If all children are to succeed in college and careers, then states must continue to tackle the persistent gaps in educational attainment for particular groups of students.

However, ESSA's approach is incomplete. Systems built solely for ESSA compliance inform states, districts, schools, and the public of what outcomes students met without explaining why they met them. As a result, states have been building toward more comprehensive accountability systems in recent years. In a 2014 report on next-generation accountability systems, the Center for American Progress reviewed how states were expanding their accountability systems to better support school and district improvement.⁷ The report identified five broad categories into which states are organizing their reforms and used those categories to formulate a new concept for accountability. The categories are:

- Measuring progress toward college and career readiness
- Diagnosing and responding to challenges via school-based quality improvement
- State systems of support and intervention
- Resource accountability
- Professional accountability

Building off of that review, this report describes a comprehensive approach to school accountability that encompasses each of these categories and goes beyond ESSA's vision to help states, districts, and schools understand what led to their results. The report reviews the ESSA accountability requirements; describes a broader vision for student and school success; details a system for process management that fosters systems-level accountability to help states understand how well they are progressing toward that broader vision; and provides considerations that states should keep in mind when building accountability systems.

The report's school accountability approach emphasizes two equally important goals for these new systems: 1) ensuring that accountability systems drive toward equal education opportunities by creating a system for identifying and acting on chronic low performance by particular groups of students and 2) ensuring that accountability systems are broadly framed in order to drive toward a comprehensive conception of student and school success and a culture of continuous improvement rather than just shame and punishment.

In order to achieve these goals, CAP proposes that states think holistically when choosing the data used to measure student, school, and district success, as well as consider carefully how data are used. We suggest that states build two connected components for their system. One component is an ESSA-required system that leads to actions to improve school quality, and the other component is a system that helps states understand what led to those outcomes.

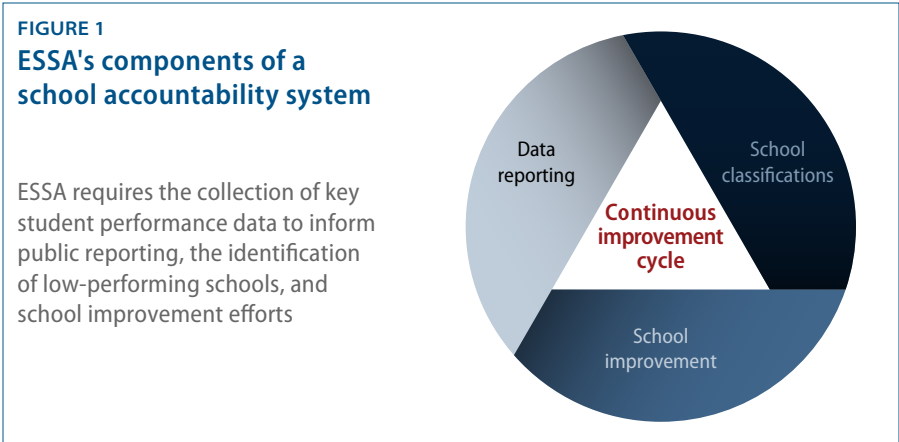
This approach follows CAP's belief—laid out in its 2014 report—that an ideal accountability system is meaningful for all schools when it embeds what ESSA requires within a broader system for driving improvements and supports. This includes a broad set of measures for student success; attention to district-level, not just school-level, accountability; development of systems for supporting schools and districts; improvements in how teachers are trained and supported; and accountability for how resources are allocated.

ESSA's requirements for school accountability systems

The Every Student Succeeds Act describes a continuous cycle of reporting student data, issuing school classifications, and using collected data to inform local interventions and supports. (see Figure 1)

As depicted in Figure 1, each of the activities that states undertake play a critical role in an accountability system. Furthermore, there are specific requirements for each of these activities within ESSA.

Student outcome data provides the bedrock for the entire system. ESSA requires that these data drive school classifications and school improvement efforts. In addition, these data provide transparency—or an honest accounting of how well students are doing. To serve each of these purposes, states will use a wider range of long- and short-term outcomes, as well as contextual data about the conditions of learning present in schools and districts, than was required by NCLB. What follows is a brief description of ESSA's requirements for what must be reported and how schools are to be classified and improved.



Data reporting

States must annually and publicly report on how well all of their public school students are performing on the following measures, as well as set goals for the first, second, and fourth indicators.

1. Academic achievement in reading and math for third grade through eighth grade and once in high school
2. High school graduation rate
3. Growth or another academic indicator for elementary and middle schools
4. English language proficiency for English learners only
5. At least one measure of school quality or student success

Additionally, states must collect and report on a new, more varied set of data than the five indicators listed above. These new data provide insights into levels of student engagement and the availability of resources that support broader student learning. These data include access to advanced coursework, exclusionary discipline rates, chronic absenteeism, professional qualifications of educators, per-pupil expenditures, and postsecondary enrollment rates.⁸

School classifications

States must use the five indicators listed above for the 2017-18 school year, and every three years thereafter, to identify a subset of their lowest-performing schools according to the performance goals that states set for the specific indicators listed above.

Collectively, there are five types of low-performing schools, including those receiving ESSA funds under Title I of the law as well as any public schools meeting the criteria listed below.⁹

Comprehensive support and improvement schools, identified once every three years

- **Lowest-performing:** Lowest-performing 5 percent of schools in the state participating in Title I
- **Low graduation rate:** Any public high school with graduation rates less than 67 percent

- Chronically low-performing subgroup: Any Title I school previously identified for targeted support and improvement that fails to meet the state’s exit criteria after implementing interventions

Targeted support and improvement

- Consistently underperforming subgroup: Any school with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups, identified annually
- Low-performing subgroup: Any school with one or more subgroups performing at or below the rate of all students in a school that is in the bottom 5 percent of schools statewide; any Title I schools so identified become “chronically low-performing schools” after failing to meet exit criteria¹⁰

School improvement

Identified schools must implement evidence-based interventions and supports until they meet state-set exit criteria, and districts must support these schools in selecting and implementing the interventions and supports that fit the schools’ identified needs. Districts with several identified schools must review resource allocation and address it in the schools’ improvement plans. States must also identify additional actions for schools that fail to meet state-set exit criteria.

Because ESSA’s school quality and improvement requirements are limited to the above measures, states should consider what a broader vision for school and student success looks like.

A broader vision for student and school success

College and career readiness is a central policy goal of the Every Student Succeeds Act and a running theme of the law, even though the legislation falls short of defining or even mentioning the term outright. To varying degrees, the requirements for key provisions of the law—including standards, assessments, accountability, school improvement, other student supports, and educator effectiveness—speak to the need to prepare students for advanced training after high school and specifically call for students to receive a “well-rounded education.”¹¹ As a result, the law acts as a broad framework for college and career readiness that states can further define through their implementation of the law. At the same time, states were working to define college and career readiness for several years prior to ESSA being passed.

Definitions of college and career readiness are formal and informal statements on what range of academic knowledge and cognitive and practical strategies states believe that their systems of education should provide to students so that they are successful in college, the workforce, and society. Formal definitions have been codified in various ways, whether through state laws, regulations, or other major policy documents. Informal definitions are not codified specifically but are recorded in documents such as applications for federal funding.

In its review of both formal and informal state definitions of college and career readiness, a 2014 report by the College and Career Readiness and Success Center notes that state definitions mention the following, to varying degree and frequency:¹²

- Mastery of core academic content knowledge, including math, reading, writing, science, social studies, and history
- Attainment of skills related to critical thinking and problem-solving
- Skills related to social emotional learning, collaboration, and communication
- Civic and community engagement skills

Regardless of their formality, definitions of college and career readiness can be important drivers of state-level policy. By providing a common understanding of the term, they can promote coherence among the policies and strategies that

relate to K-12 education but that reside outside its explicit scope. These policy areas may include but are not limited to a state’s health and development, social services, early learning, higher education, and workforce systems.

Furthermore, definitions help these state-level systems determine the most appropriate ways to measure college and career readiness from their own unique perspectives and authority. For example, there are important benchmarks within parent-child interactions in children’s early years that affect their lifelong ability to learn. A 1995 study from the University of Kansas showed that higher-income children were exposed to 30 million more words than children from low-income homes. The study also showed later deficits in learning associated with this gap.¹³ Given this reality, vocabulary attainment in the early years might be an important measure to collect for both health and early learning systems.

State definitions of college and career readiness can also promote coherence within the K-12 education system, specifically as states develop plans and strategies to implement ESSA. The most obvious example of this is through states’ adoption and implementation of academic standards and assessments that align with the knowledge and skills students need to enter credit-bearing coursework in college. To be sure, state adoption of college- and career-readiness standards—such as the Common Core State Standards, as well as their aligned, high-quality assessments—meet this requirement.¹⁴

Furthermore, states can also address college and career readiness in how they measure and classify school performance. For example, there might be age- or grade-band specific benchmarks that schools and districts should pay attention to, such as vocabulary attainment, and states can collect and report this information. States may not wish to use the entire range of knowledge, skills, and experiences related to college and career readiness in the measures they use to classify school performance, but much of this information can be useful to inform local educational practice within districts, schools, and classrooms.

At the same time, states are already using a number of college- and career-readiness indicators in their school classification systems. Most of these apply to high schools, making the case for learning more about which earlier college- and career-readiness benchmarks are important to track for a student’s earlier education and development. For more information on what college- and career-readiness indicators states are currently using to classify school performance, see CAP’s “Making the Grade” report.¹⁵

Moving beyond ESSA's requirements

To create an accountability system that explains not just what outcomes were reached but what decisions led to those outcomes, states should consider measuring the effectiveness of coordination among and between each level of the system: states, districts, and schools.

Designing and measuring effective coordination and interaction between states and districts

Clearly distinguishing who is responsible for ensuring that students are college and career ready; what they are responsible for; and how they are responsible helps each level of the system—states, districts, and schools—use their limited resources to reach a commonly understood goal for student and school success. Likewise, states can support more effective interaction within and between each level of the system when they know who does what in order to ensure effective leveraging of the tools and resources that the state provides.

Any highly functioning system continually audits its resources and reassesses how to allocate them to meet its goals. The same is true for systems of education.

Defining inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes

States, districts, and schools have their own unique resources to contribute to education, which this report refers to as inputs, or the resources that provide a basis for public education. The terms inputs and resources are used synonymously in this report. Inputs include standards, curricula, and course schedules.

Each level of the system has its own process for using these resources, or its own method and timeline for using the inputs.

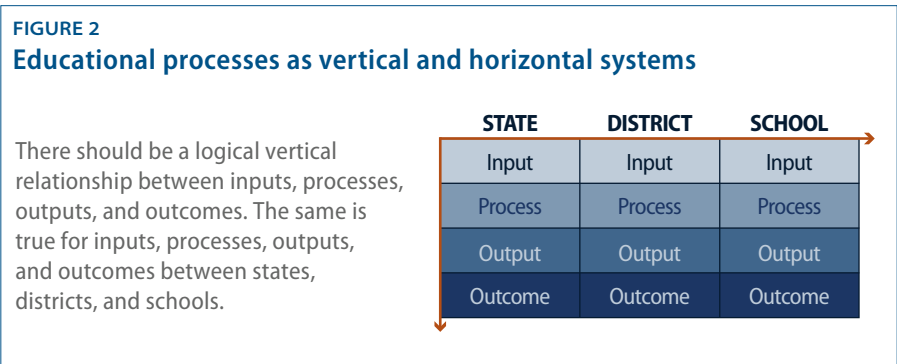
A process includes a state's system for building district capacity to improve school performance.

Outputs are the short-term results, such as student growth rates, and outcomes are the long-term benefits that a public education should deliver, such as proficiency and graduation rates.¹⁶

Outputs and short-term benefits are also used synonymously in this report.

One desired outcome of K-12 education is college and career readiness for all students. However, states’ short-term goals—or outputs—for college and career readiness should differ by school and context. Some schools may need more aggressive targets for student growth or for improving how safe and nurtured students feel on campus—commonly referred to as a school’s climate—than other schools. On the other hand, the baseline expectations for long-term outcomes should be the same for all schools. This means that over time, all schools should be expected to meet the same long-term targets for proficiency and graduation.

In designing systems of healthy interaction within and between states, districts, and schools, the critical questions states must ask are: What are the reasonable, short-term outcomes that states, districts, and schools can expect? How are these measured and by whom and how often are the results reviewed? States’ answers to these questions should inform their development of the metrics, benchmarks, and processes foundational to their accountability systems.



As Figure 2 shows, there should be a direct relationship among inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes within state, district, and school systems, as well as between each of them. For example, a state’s academic standards ought to determine the type of curriculum—inputs—and teacher training—processes—that districts provide. Table 1 below shows how states can organize a system of inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes. This organization is meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

States have been working toward building comprehensive, next-generation accountability systems that are made up of multiple components, including:

- Measuring progress toward college and career readiness
- Diagnosing and responding to challenges via school-based quality improvement
- State systems of support and intervention
- Resource accountability
- Professional accountability

Understanding how all of these components fit together within a system of inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes can bring greater clarity to how to operationalize these systems cohesively.

The matrix detailed in Table 1 below shows how such a system can be organized. Note that the list included in Table 1 is not comprehensive enough to represent the entire scope of state work within accountability, but it is a start. States may wish to list additional items on this list that further capture the breadth of their work.

The inputs below are important foundational components of the public education system. It is essential that states effectively manage these inputs internally and deliver them successfully to districts. To do so, states must have the capacity to build and maintain high-quality inputs and effective processes in each of the categories of accountability. A first step toward building this capacity should include an assessment of the current status of inputs and processes, measured against the goal of college and career readiness. For example, states may wish to review the extent to which course curricula reinforce the state's college- and career-readiness standards or conduct a similar review with respect to the state's educator standards and licensure requirements. The goal of this review would be to measure the extent to which a state's inputs and processes will result in the attainment of college and career readiness for all students. The following sections detail how each level of the system can have the greatest effect on student outcomes.

TABLE 1
Multilevel accountability system matrix

Organizational structure for systems-level accountability

	State	District	School
Definition	What should students know and be able to do to be ready for college and career success? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academic content</i> • <i>Knowledge of postsecondary pathways</i> • <i>The range of skills critical to student success in postsecondary pathways, including socialemotional learning</i> 		
Inputs	Academic and technical standards and assessments	District and school personnel Course catalogue and curriculum	Culture and climate standards, benchmarks, or other indicators
	Educator standards and licensure requirements	Extracurricular and enrichment offerings	Courses
	Data system	Summative, formative, and performance-based assessments	Instructional time or school schedules
	Reporting system	Partnerships or memorandums of understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local employers</i> • <i>Local institutes of higher education</i> 	
	Funding system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Federal</i> • <i>State</i> • <i>Distribution policies</i> Operating policies		
Process	District capacity building system for school improvement	School capacity building system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Educator and personnel recruitment, placement, onboarding, support, and advancement</i> • <i>Academic and enrichment course instructional practice</i> • <i>Assessment and data literacy</i> • <i>Professional development on instructional and climate practices</i> 	Management of practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Instruction</i> • <i>Schedule management</i> • <i>Culture and climate</i>
	Data collection, reporting schedule, and protocol		
	Distribute and monitor financial resources	Distribution of federal, state, and local funds to schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Personnel</i> • <i>Building maintenance</i> • <i>Transportation</i> • <i>Instructional materials</i> School improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School year scheduling</i> • <i>Enrichment and extracurricular scheduling</i> • <i>Technology infrastructure and equipment</i> 	
Outputs	Academic growth	Enrollment rates in advanced coursework—for example, Advanced Placement	Student awareness of, access to and preparation for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advanced coursework</i> • <i>Extracurricular activities</i>
	Growth toward English language proficiency	Student engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participation rates in extracurricular activities</i> 	Student attendance and suspension rates Student engagement and school climate
Outcome	Academic proficiency	Academic proficiency	Academic proficiency
	English language proficiency	Attainment of “well-rounded” education	Attainment of “well-rounded” education
	Graduation rate or student growth School quality or student progress—for example, school climate		

Sources: David T. Conley, *College and Career Ready: Helping All Students Succeed Beyond High School* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010); Kathryn Balestreri and others “The College and Career Readiness and Success Organizer” (Washington: American Institutes for Research College & Career Readiness & Success Center, 2014), available at http://www.ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/College%20and%20Career%20Readiness%20and%20Success%20Organizer%20Brief_FINAL.pdf; *Every Student Succeeds Act*, Public Law 114-95, 114th Cong., 1st sess. (December 10, 2015), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf>.

State actions

State governments are far removed from classrooms. Still, state-level processes can and do affect student outcomes. For example, academic standards are a key state-level input that has a major impact at the local level. A critical component of the academic standards adoption life cycle, which includes the development, review, and adoption of academic standards, is also the implementation of those standards. To be effective in teaching students to meet the adopted standards, teachers must receive information about what technical and instructional shifts are necessary to ensure student achievement. While teacher preparation and professional development are not generally thought of as accountability indicators, students are not likely to achieve the standards if teachers and leaders are not adequately prepared to teach them. Therefore, measures of teacher practice can be an important set of metrics for states to collect and review continuously.

In addition to these state-specific functions, states must identify and respond to low capacity and performance at the district level. While it is important that states pay attention to all district practices for teaching and learning, ESSA speaks to some very specific district-level capacities that states must monitor. In particular, these include the capacity of districts to implement evidence-based reforms in schools identified as low performing, as well as their capacity to monitor the distribution of resources when districts have a preponderance of these schools within their districts.

District actions

In many ways, district-level processes can have the greatest impact on student outputs and outcomes. For example, among all in-school factors, research has shown teachers to have the greatest impact on student achievement.¹⁷ Additionally, low-income students and students of color are disproportionately taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.¹⁸ Districts, not states, control hiring, placement, and professional development processes. Therefore, accountability systems should measure district-level outputs such as equitable distribution of effective teachers and mastery of instructional practice.

In addition, since decisions about the distribution of resources to schools occurs primarily, though not entirely, at the district level, accountability systems should include measures of district-level resource distribution and how well-aligned resources are to student needs.

Districts must also monitor school-level capacity to carry out school functions. Although this monitoring should be broad in scope when capturing matters of teaching and learning, districts must pay special attention to schools identified as low performing to ensure that they carry out implementation of school improvement efforts effectively. Additionally, districts may also want to closely monitor schools not identified for improvement but whose performance indicates that the school is struggling. Paying sufficient attention to schools that are doing well overall is another important function of districts and part of the system of continuous improvement. Understanding the strategies for continuous improvement of schools not identified for improvement is a less understood topic; as a result, CAP is considering developing a resource that describes state and district approaches to supporting these schools.

School actions

Many of the conditions governing school decision-making are beyond the control of school teachers and leaders. However, there are critical areas in which principals and teachers have significant authority to make important changes that positively affect students. For example, there is significant evidence demonstrating that both lowering the rate of expulsion among students of color and establishing a culture of high expectations signaling that all children can and should excel often lead to higher student achievement and graduation rates.¹⁹

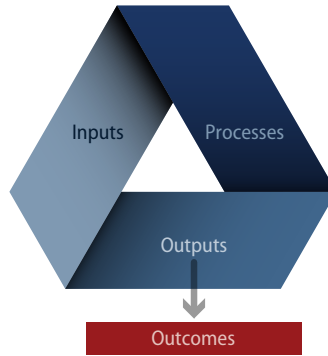
Unlike districts or states, schools are best positioned to establish a positive, inclusive, safe, and nurturing culture and climate. How well school leaders assess personnel and student needs around safety, inclusivity, and high expectations is an important set of metrics to include in an accountability system.

Figure 3 shows a flow chart of inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes in an accountability system. If both inputs and the processes through which they are used are high quality, states can expect to see positive student outcomes. Without high-quality inputs and processes, any positive short- and long-term outcomes will happen sporadically and in spite of the accountability system—not because of it.

FIGURE 3

Flow chart for inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes

In practice, high-quality inputs and processes lead to good short- and long-term student outcomes



Including specific metrics that assess the inputs and outputs of state, district, and school actions is critical to understanding the reasons for short- and long-term outcomes. The next section explores how that information should be collected and reported to ensure that each level's actions are coordinated.

Considerations in designing a comprehensive system of school accountability

As states consider how to design their processes, they should keep the following considerations in mind.

Anchor the system with goals and expectations

College and career readiness is one desired outcome of the K-12 education system. Defining college and career readiness with a level of specificity makes it easier to identify which inputs and processes at the state, district, and school levels contribute to achieving this goal. The state should also consider articulating additional goals for the system, such as preparing graduates to be effective participants in our democratic government.

In addition, an explicit and agreed-upon definition of college and career readiness is a powerful tool to create cohesion not just within the K-12 education system but also between the other systems that support long-term student success. For example, a state definition of college and career readiness also makes it easier for the state K-12 system to engage with the labor and higher education systems to create a more efficient network of college and career pathways.

In addition to student outcomes, there may be other critical goals for a school accountability system to achieve, such as fair and effective distribution of inputs. States could also set goals for the delivery and distribution of resources to districts and schools.

Clearly stating the goals for the system and aligning accountability metrics to those goals creates an important north star for which all actors within the system should aim.

Use data to monitor the health of the system

Tracking inputs and processes can provide states with essential contextual information. This information can give states critical intelligence that can help them anticipate or diagnose problems and facilitate problem-solving.

States may wish to understand how well-aligned inputs are to student needs and how inputs are used by districts and schools to address student needs. This type of data can also be critical to collect and review at the district and school levels.

However, in order for educators and policymakers to be candid about how well a system of inputs and processes is working, states ought to think carefully about what, if any, stakes are attached to the results. How that information is acted upon should foster a spirit of continuous improvement.

Define what quality inputs and processes look like

Low-quality inputs will likely result in low-quality outcomes. Therefore, states ought to spend time defining what high-quality inputs look like. For example, states may define a high-quality data system as one that tracks K-12, postsecondary, and workforce outcomes for all students.

Likewise, low-quality processes will likely lead to low-quality outcomes. It may be useful for states to describe the elements, listed below, of a high-quality process according to the literature on general process design:²⁰

- **Consistency:** States communicate to districts and school exactly what to expect in a timely manner.
- **Quality:** Inputs and processes meet the needs of districts and schools.
- **Efficiency:** Processes aim to minimize cost.
- **Effectiveness:** Processes satisfy the goal of college and career readiness for all students.²¹

Developing this level of clarity ought to be a collaborative effort among states, districts, and schools, as the latter two can provide critical local, contextual information not readily available to states about the types of inputs and processes that meet local needs. When inputs or processes fail to meet standards of high quality, states, districts, and schools can course correct.

Each of these considerations applies equally to the horizontal and vertical relationships between the inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes.

Another factor critical in the design of an accountability system is how state-level indicators identify schools most needing support, as well as drive behavior at the district and school levels.

Considerations for indicators that classify school performance

Regular measurement and reporting keeps schools and districts focused on what actions to take to improve performance. As described in the overview of the Every Student Succeeds Act, classifying school performance carries specific and enhanced consequences for schools identified as low performing. These schools must implement evidence-based interventions and must exit low-performing status within state-set timelines. Given this reality, states should take special care when selecting indicators that they will use to classify schools. ESSA requires indicators to be valid—or measure what they purport to measure; reliable—measure a specific result consistently over time; and comparable—measure the same element of performance across different schools.²²

When selecting indicators to classify schools into categories, states should also examine three additional characteristics for each indicator: differentiation between schools, relationship to key student outcomes, and ability to drive behavior. Based on these characteristics, states can then determine the most appropriate way to use them in the system—for example, in classification of schools, public reporting, or needs assessment and improvement planning—as well as the appropriate level—state, district, or school—at which to use them.

States could consider indicators that do not meet these three characteristics or that are otherwise not technically valid, reliable, and comparable across schools for other purposes in their accountability system but should not use them to classify schools.

Meaningful differentiation of school quality and performance

Generally, indicators used to classify schools for intervention purposes should distinguish performance between schools. Meaningful differentiation helps states prioritize which schools need the most support in improving and helps parents understand how their children’s school measures up to others.²³

As a result, states should analyze whether similar types of indicators differentiate more effectively than others. For example, if schools cluster around a value or range of values on a particular indicator, this indicator may not provide useful information to distinguish school performance. Meaningful differentiation would likely show performance across a range of values, showing performance at the bottom, middle, and top of the performance spectrum.

Historically, indicators including academic proficiency rates and graduation rates have widely varying performance from school to school, while indicators such as attendance rates typically have the same performance across all schools. In contrast, looking at chronic absenteeism would likely identify outliers in terms of performance. Also, while states are required to measure academic proficiency indicators—which are static, point-in-time indicators within their school classification systems—there may be an opportunity to measure specific aspects of proficiency data, such as growth or scale scores, which are further described below.²⁴ That is, ESSA may provide states an opportunity to use differentiation within an indicator, as well as differentiation between schools.

While differentiating between school performance is important, indicators that do not differentiate well might still be useful for school classification if they send critical signals about what is important and what schools should focus on. For example, nearly every school has high attendance rates, so this indicator does not differentiate among school performance. However, states may still be interested in attendance data and may wish to measure rates of chronic absenteeism, or the number of students who miss 10 or more days of school in a year. Schools would perform well on this measure if they reduce rates of chronic absenteeism, and states could focus their attention on schools not reducing these rates.

The use and importance of scale scores in reporting standardized test results

There are three different ways to report scores on standardized tests. The first is through a raw score, which is a sum total of points based on correct answers. The second is through a percentage-correct score. The third is a scale score. Scale scores transform raw scores into a different set of values and are necessary because states often develop different editions of the same standardized test. Different test editions help prevent cheating but can make comparing scores challenging. Scaled scores ensure that scores on different editions of the same test mean the same thing and can be compared.²⁵

For indicators used to inform decision-making at the district or school level, and not used to classify schools at the state level, differentiation of schools is less important. What matters more to districts and schools is that teachers and school leaders can act on the data.

Actionable data may not meet the technical standards required by ESSA but are useful in informing practice. Examples of this type of data include measures of social and emotional learning, or SEL, which are the skills and abilities that provide a foundation for lifelong learning and development. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning describes five core competencies that make up SEL. These are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.²⁶ While there are existing assessments that measure aspects of SEL for particular groups of students, none of these assessments' purpose is to hold schools accountable for students' SEL.²⁷ Nonetheless, providing local educators with insights into how well students are developing their SEL can be useful to inform instructional practice.

Relationship to key student outcome measures

The flexibility to include nonacademic indicators, such as chronic absenteeism in school classification systems, provides an opportunity for states to identify indicators that provide unique and useful information about a school's performance and key student outcomes. For example, states should include indicators that have a strong correlation with particular outcomes—including proficiency or graduation rates—but including too many of these can be redundant. On the other hand, another indicator might be so weakly correlated that it may have little or no relationship to critical student outcomes. As a result, states would not want schools to focus on this indicator. Ideally, indicators used for classification purposes would have a moderate to strong relationship with key student outcome measures, particularly long-term outcome measures such as college completion rates.

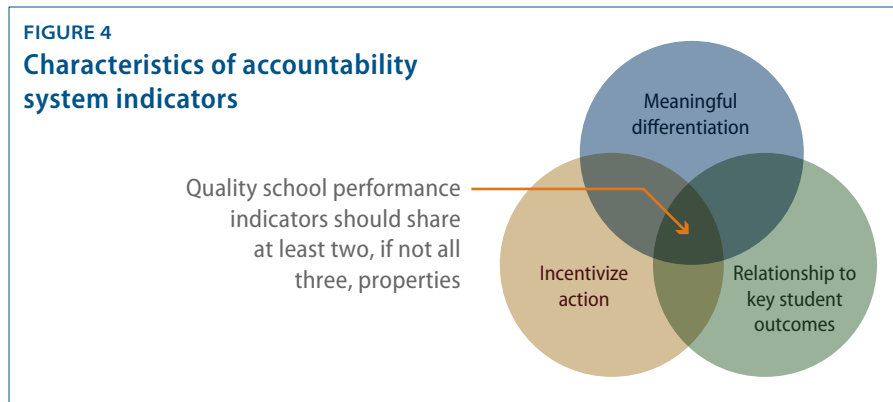
However, some indicators have weaker relationships with long-term outcomes but still provide useful information at the district and school levels that local educators can act upon. Indicators are particularly actionable when they can inform real-time decision-making for district or school resource allocation or another aspect of educational practice. Growth data that comes from assessments administered during the school year, for example, can help educators adjust their instructional practice throughout the year.

Indicators that drive behavior

Indicators used to classify schools should drive the kind of behavior that states want to see at the district and school levels. That is, these indicators should support schools in taking actions focused on the advancement of a state's goals.

An indicator may not have strong relationships with student outcomes or provide meaningful differentiation between school performance but still provide value in a school classification system, particularly if that indicator signals what a state values and drives behavior that states want to see at the district and school levels. For example, parent engagement, as measured by survey responses, may not be correlated with student outcomes or differentiate among school performance but is an activity that the state wishes that schools would emphasize.

In this case, it will be important for a state to describe and be transparent about what value the indicator represents in cases where that is unclear and what action districts and schools should take based on school performance on that indicator.



Some indicators may not have all three characteristics shown in Figure 4, above. To maximize the value that they provide to policymakers, administrators, and educators, however, indicators used to classify school performance would ideally share all three. As a result, when making decisions about what indicators to use for school classification, states should analyze the extent to which possible indicators have one or more of these characteristics.

Conclusion

Accountability systems should drive continuous improvement toward making college and career readiness a reality for all students. To do so, states must build accountability systems that exceed ESSA's requirements and focus on coherence within the entire system—from schools to districts to state educational agencies. CAP's accountability framework calls for states to continuously monitor resources provided to districts and schools and ensure that they have the capacity to use them effectively. As a result, states will set goals and monitor progress against key functions such as training and support of teachers, as well as the distribution of financial and material resources. Finally, states should think through their mechanisms to support districts to use all of these resources effectively, while districts should pay attention to building school capacity.

About the authors

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Our Mission

The Center for American Progress is an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country.

Our Values

As progressives, we believe America should be a land of boundless opportunity, where people can climb the ladder of economic mobility. We believe we owe it to future generations to protect the planet and promote peace and shared global prosperity.

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We develop new policy ideas, challenge the media to cover the issues that truly matter, and shape the national debate. With policy teams in major issue areas, American Progress can think creatively at the cross-section of traditional boundaries to develop ideas for policymakers that lead to real change. By employing an extensive communications and outreach effort that we adapt to a rapidly changing media landscape, we move our ideas aggressively in the national policy debate.





School Accountability:
*Reforming education starting with
A, B, C, D and F school letter grades*

Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at 9:00 am

**Maryland State Board of Education
Office of the State Board, 200 West Baltimore Street, 7th Floor,
Baltimore, MD 21201**



Mission: To build an American education system that equips every child to achieve his or her God-given potential.

Vision: An education system that maximizes every student's potential for learning and prepares all students for success in the 21st century.

Guiding Principles:

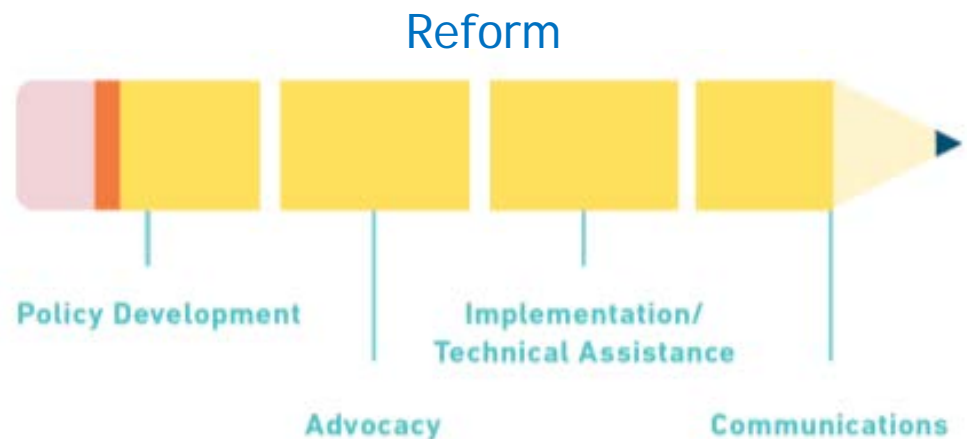
- All children can learn.
- All children should learn at least a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time.
- All children will achieve when education is organized around the singular goal of student success.



- Launched by former Florida Governor Jeb Bush in 2008
- 501(c)(3) organization
- Hands-on, how-to policy and advocacy organization that designs and promotes sound education policy
- Centered on student achievement, accountability and customized choices for America's families

Our Services

- Policy Development
- Advocacy
- Model legislation
- Policy Implementation
- Technical assistance
- Public outreach and awareness





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A-F School Grades



English/ Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science
Proficiency 53%	Proficiency 46%	Proficiency 60%	Proficiency 45%
Progress (all students) 66%	Progress (all students) 54%	<p>Is this a good school?</p> <p>How would you communicate the performance of this school?</p>	
Progress (lowest 25%) 61%	Progress (lowest 25%) 50%		

Cal Ripken Elementary School Grade



English/ Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science
Proficiency 53%	Proficiency 46%	Proficiency 60%	Proficiency 45%
Progress (all students) 66%	Progress (all students) 54%	<p>800 Points Total Each component has 100 possible points The percent equals the points earned</p> <p>435 points earned / 800 points possible</p> <p>54% = B</p>	
Progress (lowest 25%) 61%	Progress (lowest 25%) 50%		

Grading Scale: 62-100% = A, 54-61% = B, 41-53% = C, 32-40% = D, 0-31% = F



- Easy to understand
- Empowers parents to make better choices for their children
- Promotes Excellence versus Complacency
- Increases media, public attention and community support
- Draws in users to explore the data

Student achievement data, research, and public opinion support A-F school grading.



Under federal law, all 50 states are required to adopt a school accountability system.

From our perspective, the systems serve two main functions:

- To define and measure what matters.
- To communicate results to parents and the public.



A-F school grading systems accomplish both functions.

A-F summative grades and dashboards/report cards are complementary tools.

School Accountability and Public Reporting



Standards

Assessments

Goals and
School Designation

Reporting /
Dashboards

Supports and
Interventions

School Accountability

- State determined goals
- Proficiency
- Growth
- Graduation rates
- English language proficiency
- College and career ready
- Lowest performing 25% students

Chamberlain High School

Grades Served: 9-12 | District: Hillsborough | Principal: Celeste Liccio | Phone: (813) 975-7677

Website: www.chamberlain.mysdhc.org | Address: 9401 N. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33614

2015-16 School Grade: D

Chamberlain High School's overall performance is higher than 3% of high schools in the state.

Talk to your principal and teachers to find out how they plan to improve student performance and what you can do to help.

Report Cards / Dashboards

Required Under ESSA

- Accountability system details
- Disaggregated results
- Disaggregated assessment participation rates
- The state's minimum N
- Civil Rights Data Collection
- Educator qualifications
- State, local and federal per-pupil expenditures
- NAEP results
- Disaggregated grad rates/college enrollment

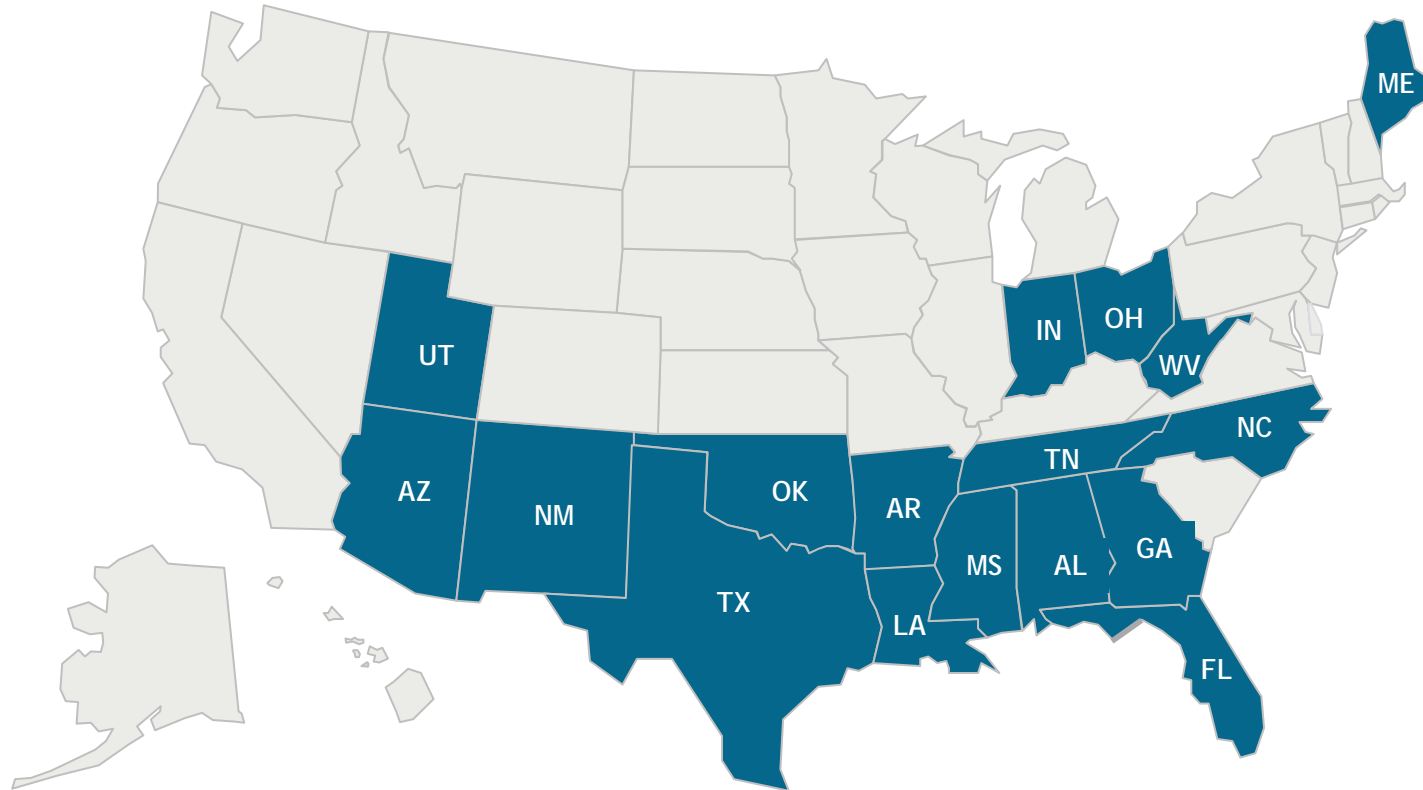
Optional

- Attendance
- Expulsion/Suspension
- School Climate
- Parent/Teacher Survey
- Social & Emotional Supports

School Accountability



All states are required to have a school accountability system, but not many are transparent and built only on student learning outcomes.



17 States Have Adopted A-F School Grading



The **eight states** with multiple years of A-F implementation are making faster improvements on NAEP 4th and 8th grade reading and math than the Nation as a whole.



For example, since implementing A-F, **Florida has outpaced the Nation in Grade 4 Reading by 13 points.**

Over this time period the Nation increased 8.5 points **while Florida improved 21.5 points.**



It is also important to note that the 'outpacing' is underestimated because the improving A-F states cannot be backed out of the Nation.

A-F Fundamental Principles



A-F school grades provide transparent, objective, and easily understood data to parents, educators and the public to spur improvement among all schools.

1

Use clear and transparent descriptors of A, B, C, D, and F

2

Include only objective, concise student learning outcome measures

3

Measure college and career readiness in high school

4

Balance measures of student performance and progress

5

Calculate student progress toward grade level and advanced achievement

6

Focus attention on the progress of the lowest performing students in each school, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status

7

Report results in a timely manner as close to the end of the school year as possible

8

Communicate clearly to parents

9

Establish rigorous criteria, with automatic increases, in order to earn A, B, C, D or F grades



1

Use clear and transparent descriptors of A, B, C, D, and F

Fully Accredited
Provisionally Accredited
Accredited with Warning
Accreditation Denied
Conditionally Accredited-New
Conditionally Accredited-
Reconstituted

Red
Orange
Yellow
Lime Green
Dark Green



Florida School Classifications

1995

Florida began
"grading" schools
High Performing
Performing
Low Performing
Critically Low Performing

1998

Moved to
Performance
Levels
I, II, III, IV, V

1999

Adopted
Letter
Grades
A, B, C, D, F

2015

Florida has
raised the
rigor of A-F
eight times
since 1999



The use of the clear and transparent descriptors of A, B, C, D, and F

- Using clear and transparent A, B, C, D, and F descriptors ensure that everyone understands what they mean.
- We understand them because education was shaped by these letters. People know that a B is good, but an A is best. And, F is failure.
- A-F descriptors are easily consumable by the general public and draw a high heightened amount of interest.
- With so many people engaged and informed, the education of our students garners the increased focus and attention it deserves.

Grading Schools Promotes Accountability and Improvement: Evidence from NYC, 2013-15



Marcus A. Winters. Education: Pre K-12. Urban Policy EducationNYC. May 24, 2016.

During 2007-13, NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg evaluated schools using A-F; Bill de Blasio became the new mayor on January 1, 2014, and his administration has moved sharply away from the information-collection and accountability metrics. Winters' paper explores the effects of the Bloomberg era's school letter grades on NYC's lowest-performing schools; it also estimates the effect of removing these grades after the first year of the new de Blasio accountability system.

- The decision to stop reporting summary letter grades removed an instrument that had led to positive changes at NYC's lowest-performing schools.
- A positive, meaningful F-grade impact was detected in the final year (2013) of the original policy, six years after it was first adopted.
- Schools that would have earned an F in fall 2014—the first year of the de Blasio system—showed no improvement relative to schools that would have earned higher grades.



By Cecilia Elena Rouse, Jane Hannaway, Dan Goldhaber and David Figlio
American Economic Journal: Economic Policy Vol. 5, No. 2 (May 2013),
pp. 251-281 [American Economic Association](#)

“While numerous studies have found that school accountability boosts test scores, it is uncertain whether estimated test score gains reflect genuine improvements or merely ‘gaming’ behaviors. This paper brings to bear new evidence from a unique five-year, three round survey conducted of a census of elementary schools in Florida that is lined with detailed administrative data on student performance.

We show that schools facing accountability pressure changed their instructional practices in meaningful ways, and that these responses can explain a portion of the test score gains associated with the Florida school accountability system.”

Public Opinion Favors A-F Grading Schools



May 2014 National Survey Conducted by McLaughlin & Associates

- 84% support assigning schools a letter grade regarding how well they educate students.

2013 Public Opinion Strategies of likely Tennessee voters

- 77% Favor an A-F grading scale for each school so parents can more easily identify where the good schools are instead of the current rating system.

2015 Georgia statewide poll Conducted by McLaughlin & Associates

- 80% favor an A -F school grading policy, while just 14% oppose. Support for this policy is broad across key sub-groups.



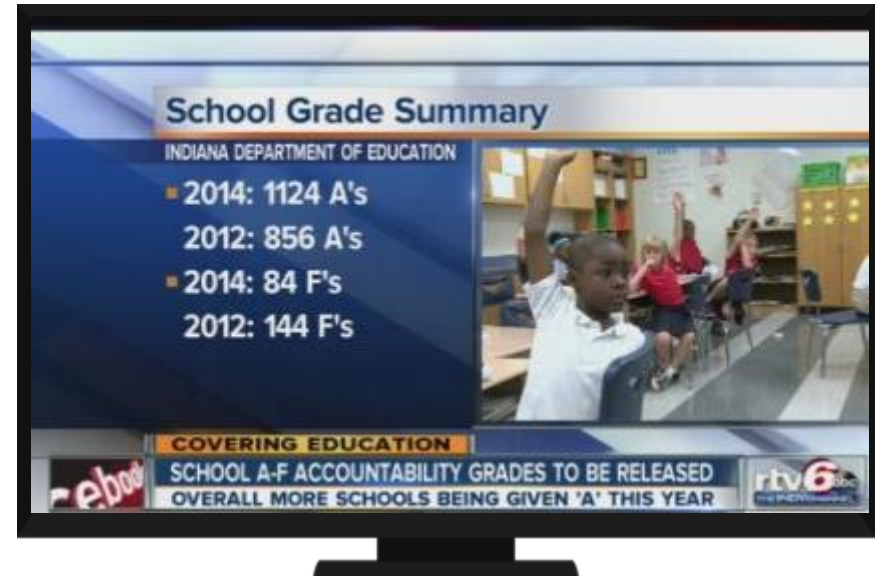
Impact of A-F

Increased Transparency

- A, B, C, D, F vs. . . .
- Reward, Celebration, Celebration Eligible, Continuous Improvement, Focus, Priority

Improved Student Achievement*

- Schools facing accountability under A-F change their instructional policies and practices in meaningful ways.
- Evidence supports that improvement in student achievement and test scores in low-performing schools are because of the pressure to improve.



Increased Parent Involvement

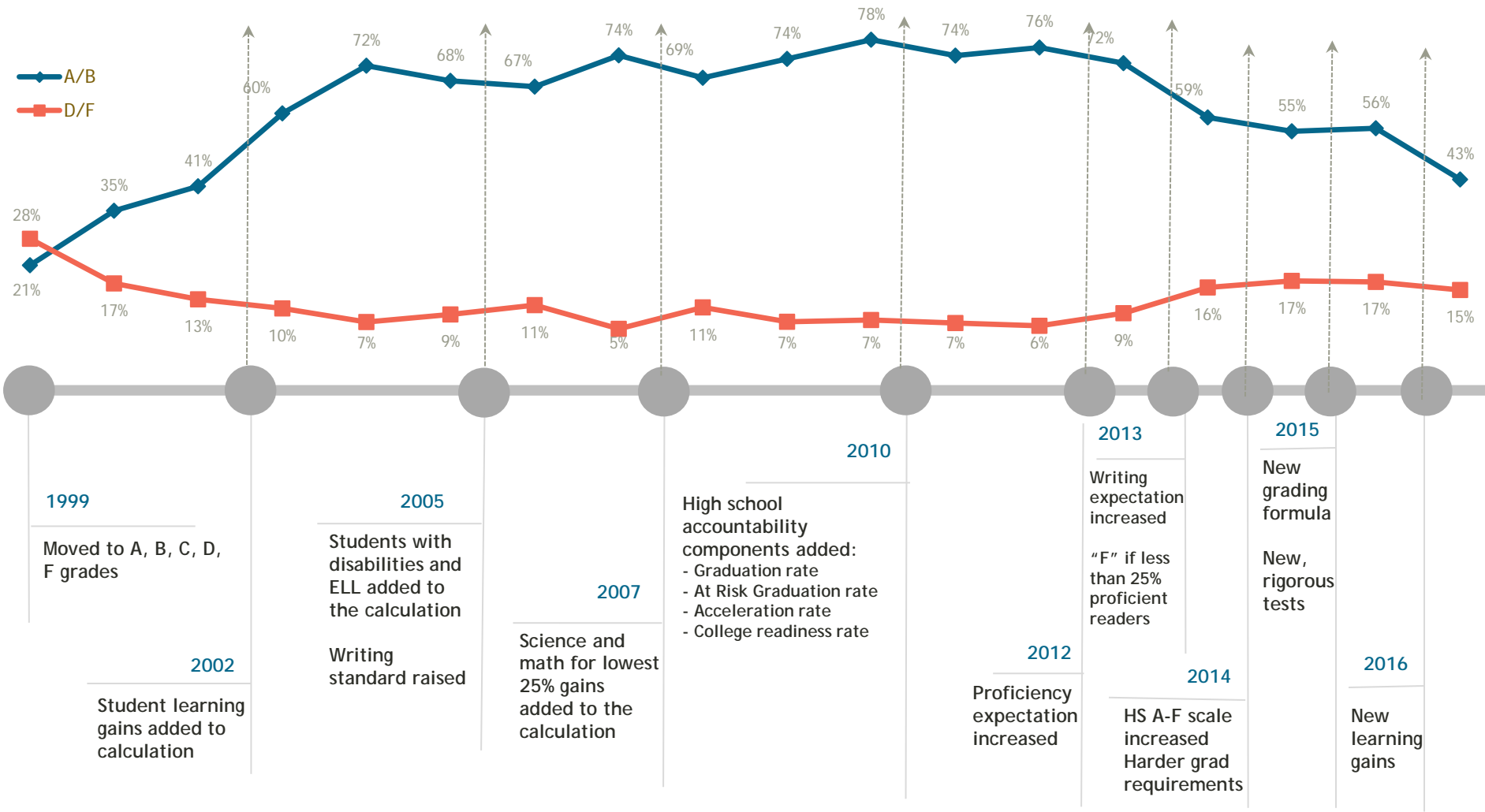
- In Oklahoma, first year of issuing grades, 25,000 more hits on the A-F website than number of students in Oklahoma schools.

Command Focus on Learning

- Leon County (Tallahassee, FL) School board dedicated entire meeting on how to be the first district in the state with no "C" schools.

**National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research*

Florida A-F Increased in Rigor and Improved Student Achievement Dramatically Since 1999



1999
Moved to A, B, C, D, F grades

2002
Student learning gains added to calculation

2005
Students with disabilities and ELL added to the calculation

Writing standard raised

2007
Science and math for lowest 25% gains added to the calculation

2010
High school accountability components added:
- Graduation rate
- At Risk Graduation rate
- Acceleration rate
- College readiness rate

2012
Proficiency expectation increased

2013
Writing expectation increased

"F" if less than 25% proficient readers

2014
HS A-F scale increased
Harder grad requirements

2015
New grading formula

New, rigorous tests

2016
New learning gains



8

Communicate clearly to parents

- Parents need access to school grades and the underlying data for the underlying measures.
- Information should be easy to navigate and explained in simple language and graphics, including on the state website.
- Schools and districts should be required to notify parents of the school's grade and provide information to parents who cannot access the site.

Federal law requires a school report card to be issued.

Know Your School Project



Informed Parents. Better Schools.



[ABOUT](#)

[FIND YOUR SCHOOL](#)

[STATE SUMMARY](#)

[VIEW MY SCHOOLS \(0\)](#) ▼

Informed Parents. Better Schools.
Do you know how your child's school is performing? Search below to find out!

Find Your School

School Name ▼ Search by School Name 🔍



Chamberlain High School

[ADD TO MY SCHOOLS LIST](#)

Grades Served 9-12	District Hillsborough	Principal Celeste Liccio	Phone (813) 975-7677
Website www.chamberlain.mysdhc.org	Address 9401 N. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33614		

SCHOOL GRADES

STUDENT PERFORMANCE DETAILS

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

2015-16 School Grade

D

A B C **D** F

Chamberlain High School's overall performance is higher than 3% of high schools in the state.

Talk to your principal and teachers to find out how they plan to improve student performance and what you can do to help.



Understanding School Grades

School grades provide a clear way for the state of Florida to measure school performance.

HOW ARE SCHOOL GRADES CALCULATED?

Sunshine Elementary School

Subject Area	Points Earned/Points Possible
Achievement	
English Language Arts	70/100
Mathematics	72/100
Science	80/100
Learning Gains	
English Language Arts	60/100
Mathematics	63/100
Learning Gains of Lowest Performing Students	
English Language Arts	40/100
Mathematics	46/100
	431/700

62% = A

School Comparison



 [VIEW FULL REPORT CARD](#)

High School
Doral Performing Arts & Entertainment Academy

Current year school grade	A
Current year percent of school points	82%
ELA Achievement	91%
Math Achievement	91%
ELA Learning Gains	60%
Math Learning Gains	73%
ELA Learning Gains Lowest 25%	67%
Math Learning Gains Lowest 25%	76%
Science Achievement	90%
Social Studies Achievement	96%
Graduation Rate	N/A
High School Acceleration	N/A
Middle School Acceleration	N/A

 [VIEW FULL REPORT CARD](#)

Middle School
Doral Academy Charter Middle School

Current year school grade	A
Current year percent of school points	72%
ELA Achievement	82%
Math Achievement	82%
ELA Learning Gains	62%
Math Learning Gains	74%
ELA Learning Gains Lowest 25%	61%
Math Learning Gains Lowest 25%	74%
Science Achievement	95%
Social Studies Achievement	91%
Graduation Rate	N/A
High School Acceleration	N/A
Middle School Acceleration	55%

 [VIEW FULL REPORT CARD](#)

Middle School
Archimedean Middle Conservatory

Current year school grade	A
Current year percent of school points	86%
ELA Achievement	95%
Math Achievement	89%
ELA Learning Gains	63%
Math Learning Gains	69%
ELA Learning Gains Lowest 25%	70%
Math Learning Gains Lowest 25%	72%
Science Achievement	89%
Social Studies Achievement	96%
Graduation Rate	N/A
High School Acceleration	N/A
Middle School Acceleration	92%



Talk to friends, neighbors, community members:

- Do they know and understand the current school rating system?
- Do they support a more transparent accountability system that reports school performance in an easy-to-understand way? A-F?
- Do they know the math and reading performance of their local school?
- Would they be more likely to get involved with their school if they had a better understanding of how the school was performing?
- Do they support rewarding schools for improvement?




Thank You!

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Join ExcelinEd to learn more about the education reform in America.

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Florida A-F School Grades Impact

FLORIDA FORMULA FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



MEASUREMENT MATTERS

A-F School Grades
K-3 Reading
Effective Teachers



FUNDING DRIVES BEHAVIOR

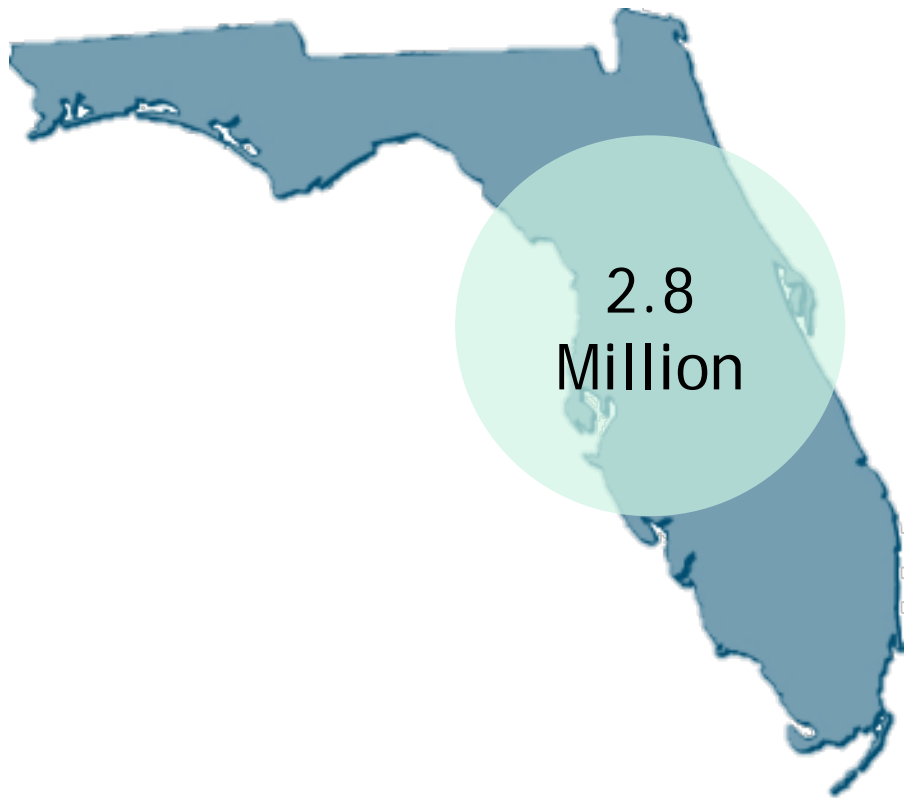
Reward for Results
Incentives for College and Career Pathways



CHOICE WORKS

School Choice
Education Savings Accounts
Vouchers, Tax Credit Scholarships
Blended/Virtual Learning

Florida Student Population



58% LIVING IN OR NEAR POVERTY

61% NON-WHITE
Majority Minority
State

More than quarter of a million students are English learners with more than 300 different Native languages.



Florida Pre-Reform

Florida Turnaround

Graduation Rates	Eight years of consecutive decline	>	At an all-time high and continue to rise
Dropout Rates	Continue to rise	>	Rates continue to decrease
NAEP	Ranked among the bottom performing states on NAEP	>	Above the national average in 4 th grade reading and math
Achievement Gaps	Wide gaps in every demographic comparison	>	Gaps continue to narrow for all demographic comparisons

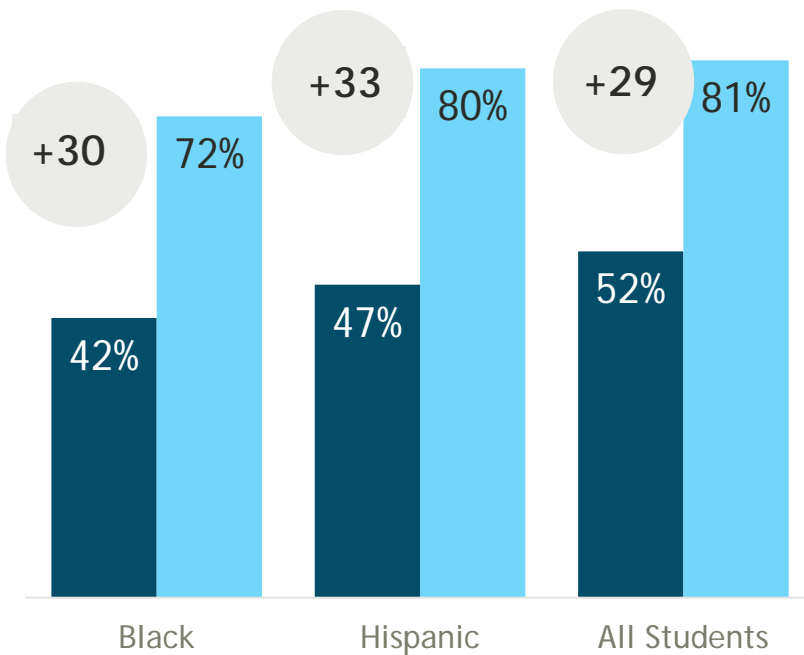
When Florida Raises the Bar, Our Students Rise to the Challenge



Since 1997, Florida officials have raised the bar for high school graduation several times. Opponents have said students, especially minority students, will drop out. **The opposite has been true.**

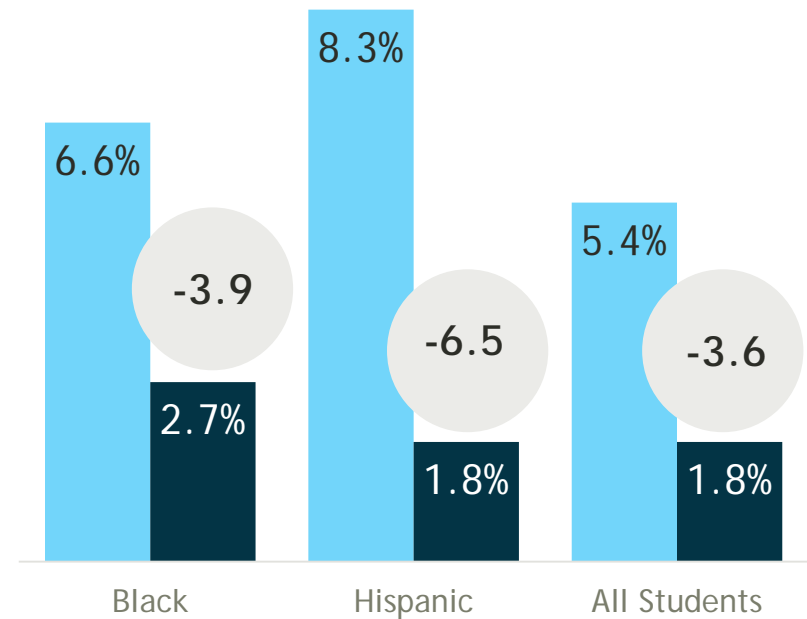
Graduation Rate

■ 1998-99 ■ 2015-16



Dropout Rate

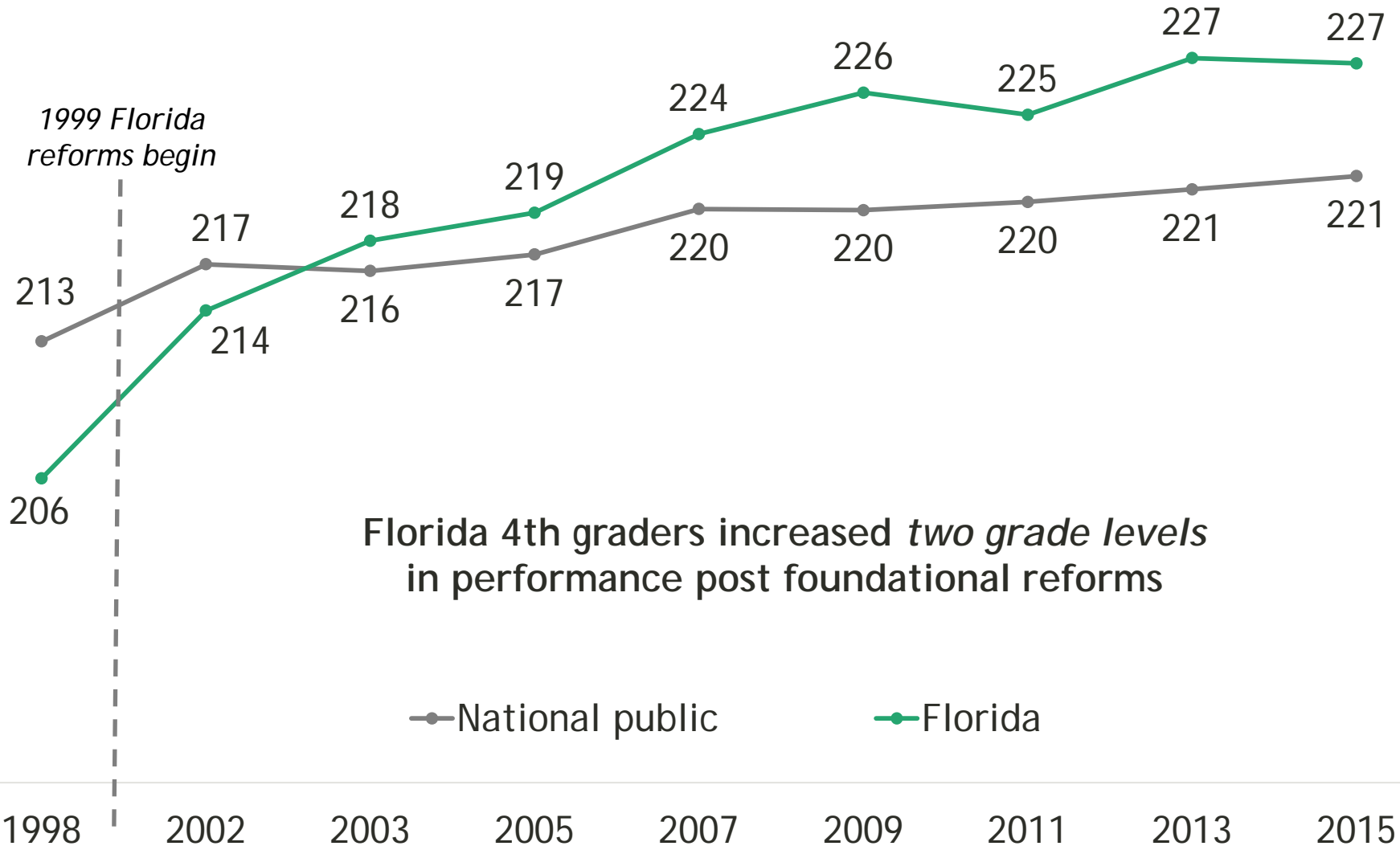
■ 1998-99 ■ 2014-15





NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

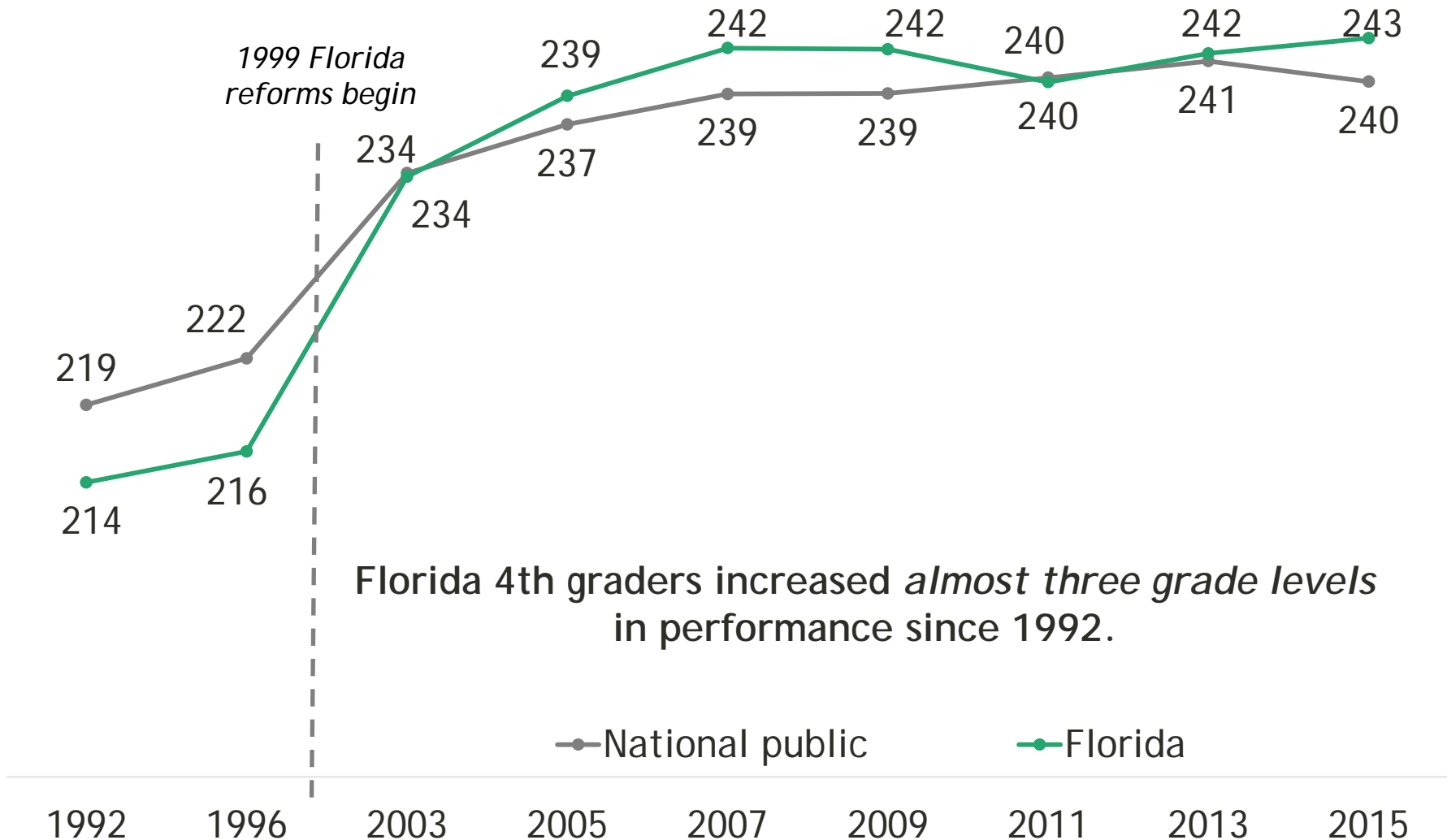
Average NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores, 1998-2015





NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

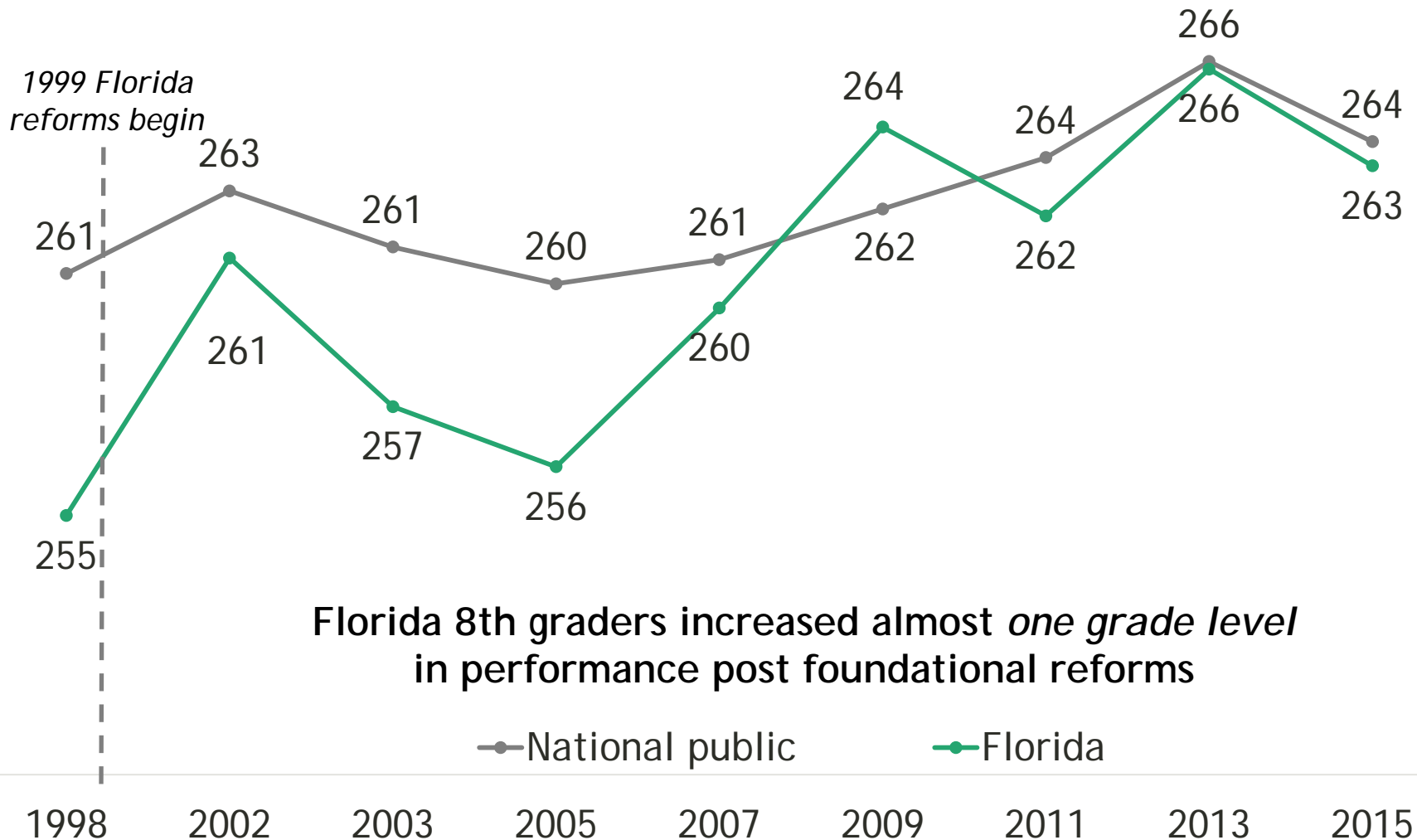
Average NAEP 4th Grade Math Scores, 1992-2015





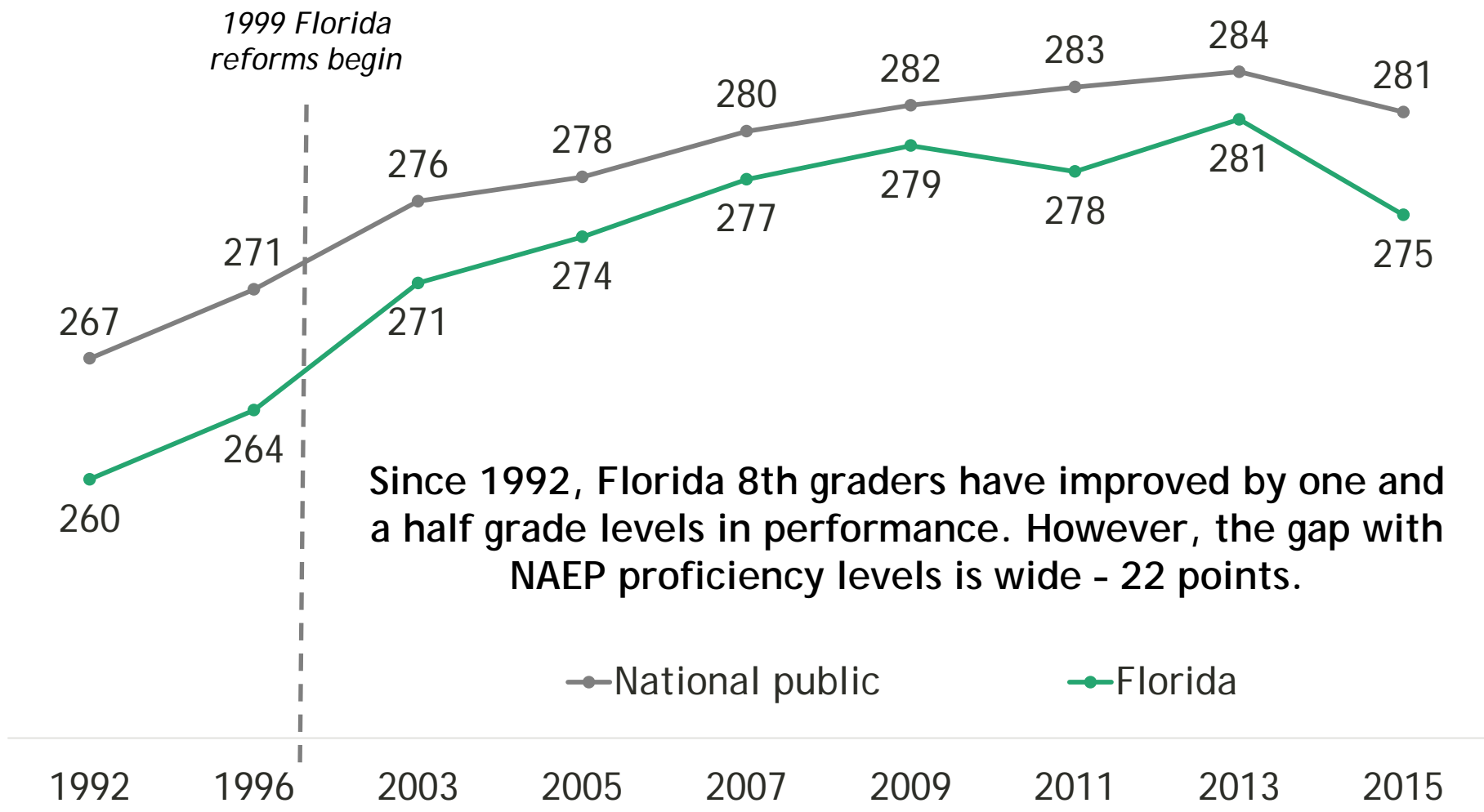
NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

Average NAEP 8th Grade Reading Scores, 1992-2015





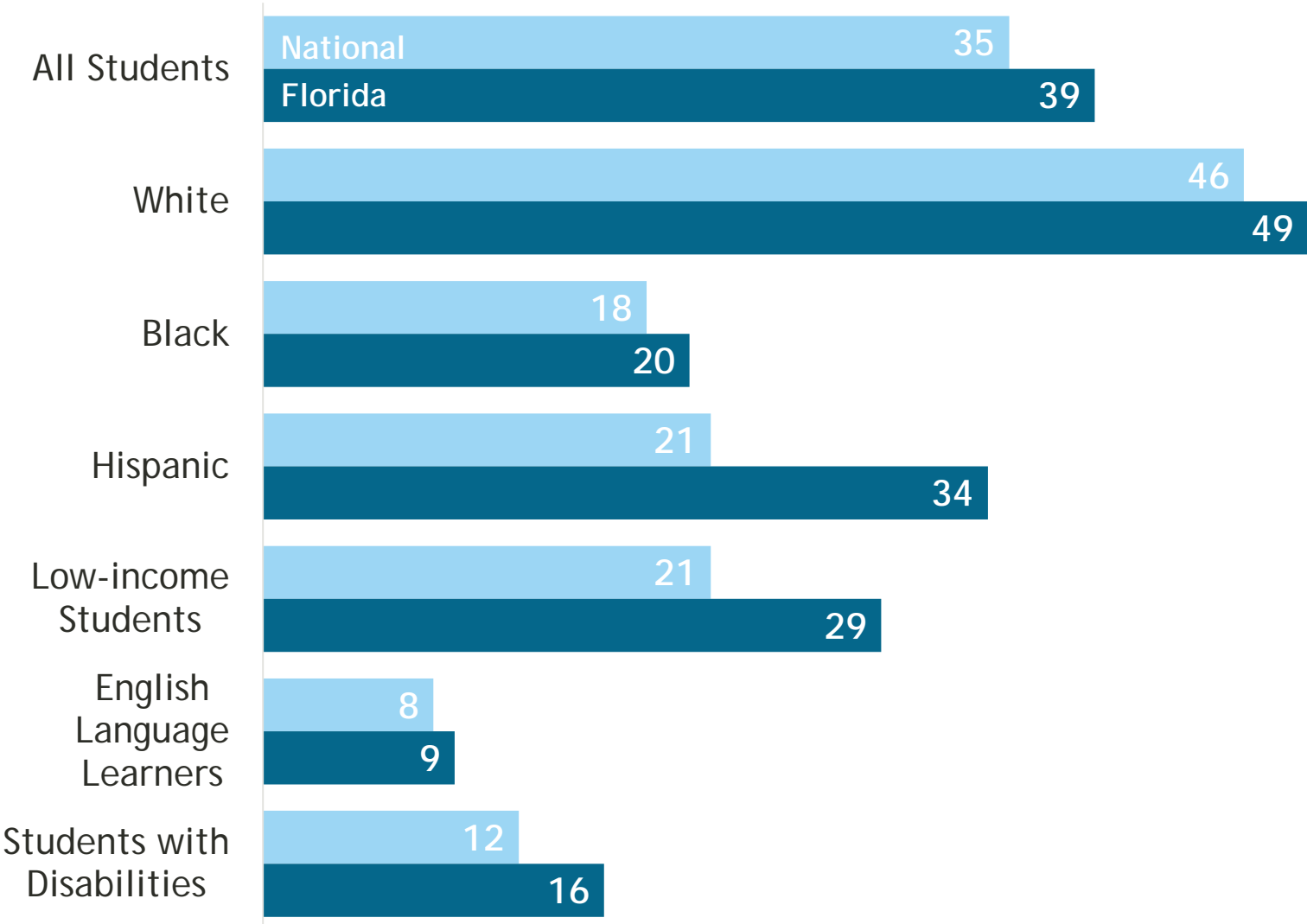
Average NAEP 8th Grade Math Scores, 1992-2015



Since 1992, Florida 8th graders have improved by one and a half grade levels in performance. However, the gap with NAEP proficiency levels is wide - 22 points.



Florida and National Students Scoring “Proficient or Above” on 2015 NAEP Grade 4 Reading, by subgroup.

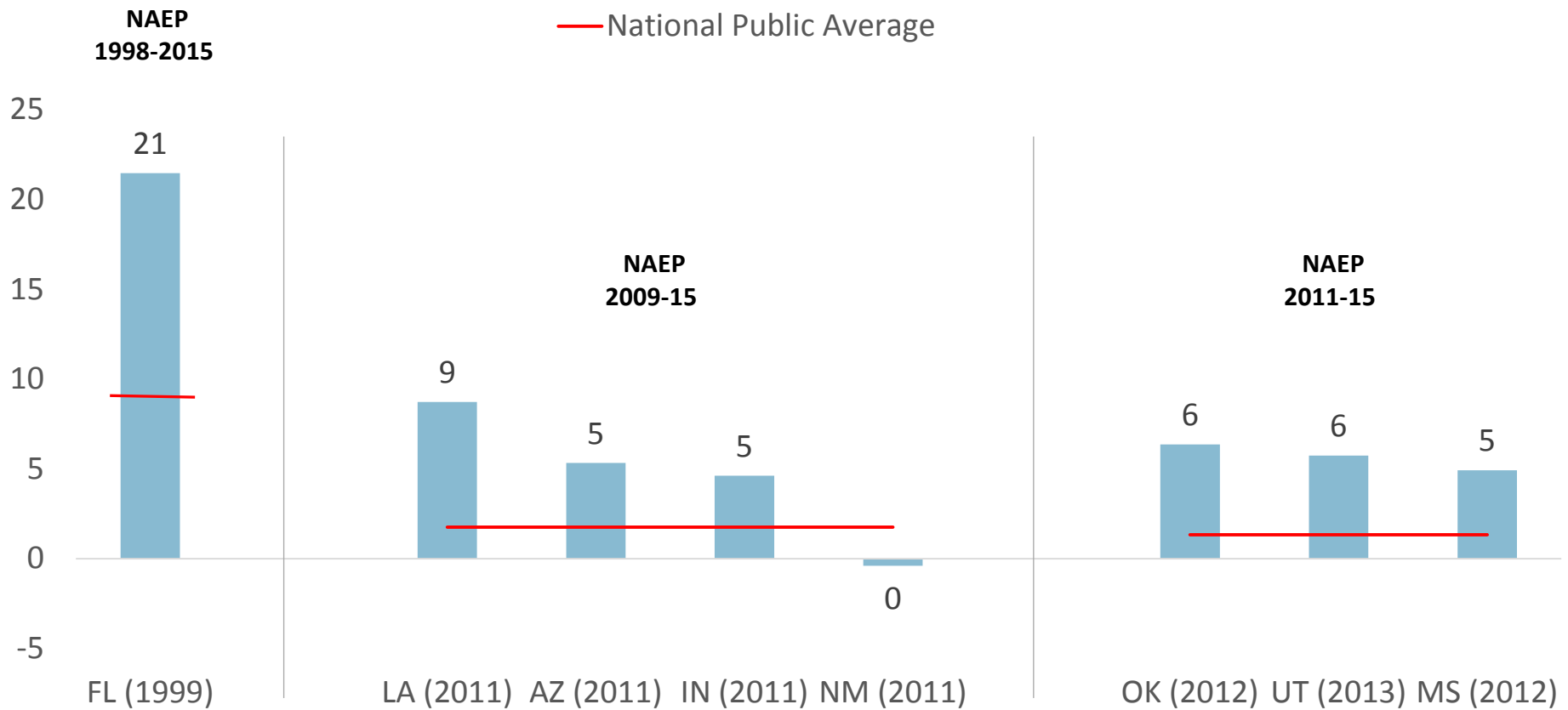


A-F Accountability - 4th Grade Reading



4th graders in states with A-F accountability systems made greater improvements in reading than the national average following implementation of A-F.

Scale Score Point Change Following A-F Implementation



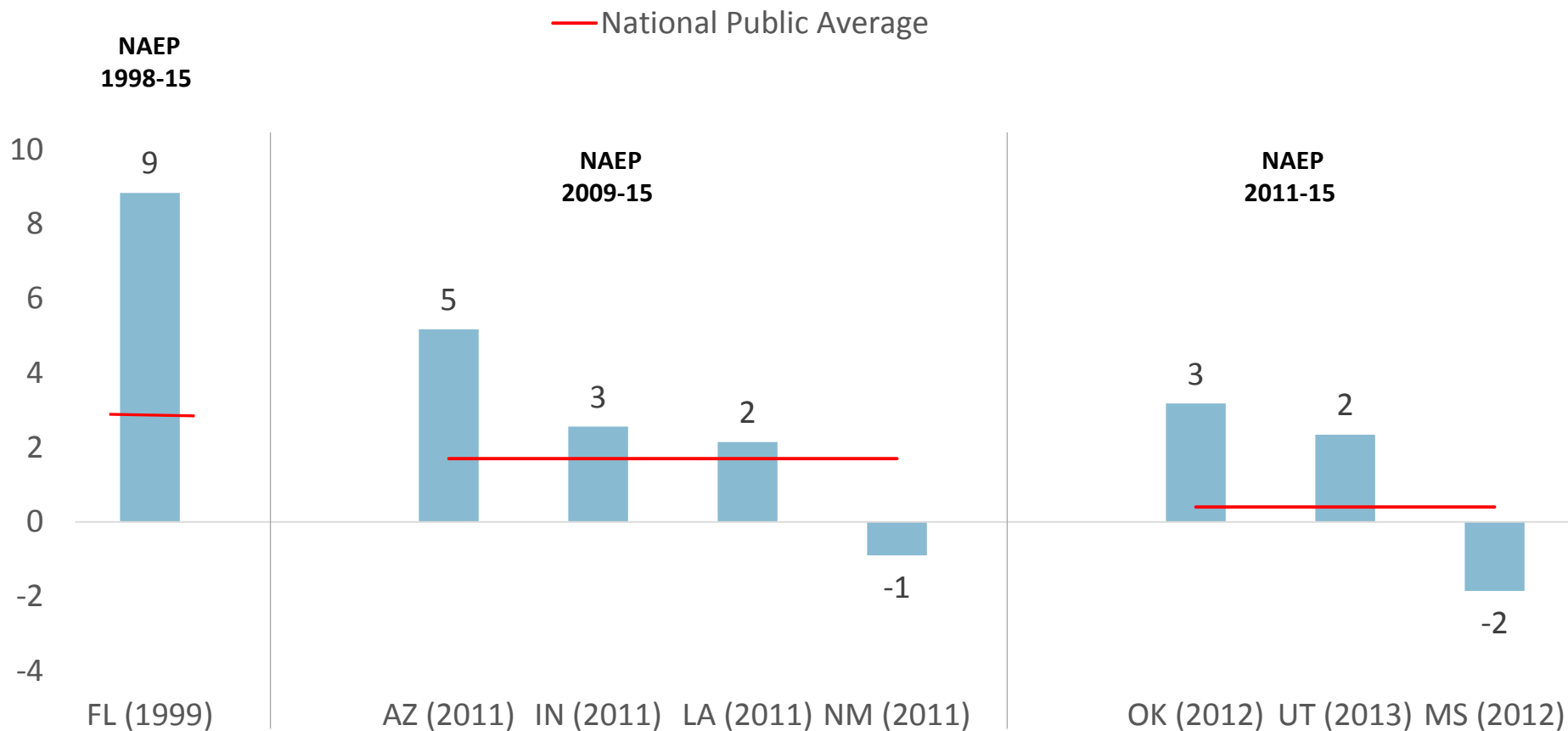
Years in () represents first year schools were graded.

A-F Accountability - 8th Grade Reading



8th graders in states with A-F accountability systems made greater improvements in reading than the national average following implementation of A-F.

Scale Score Point Change Following A-F Implementation



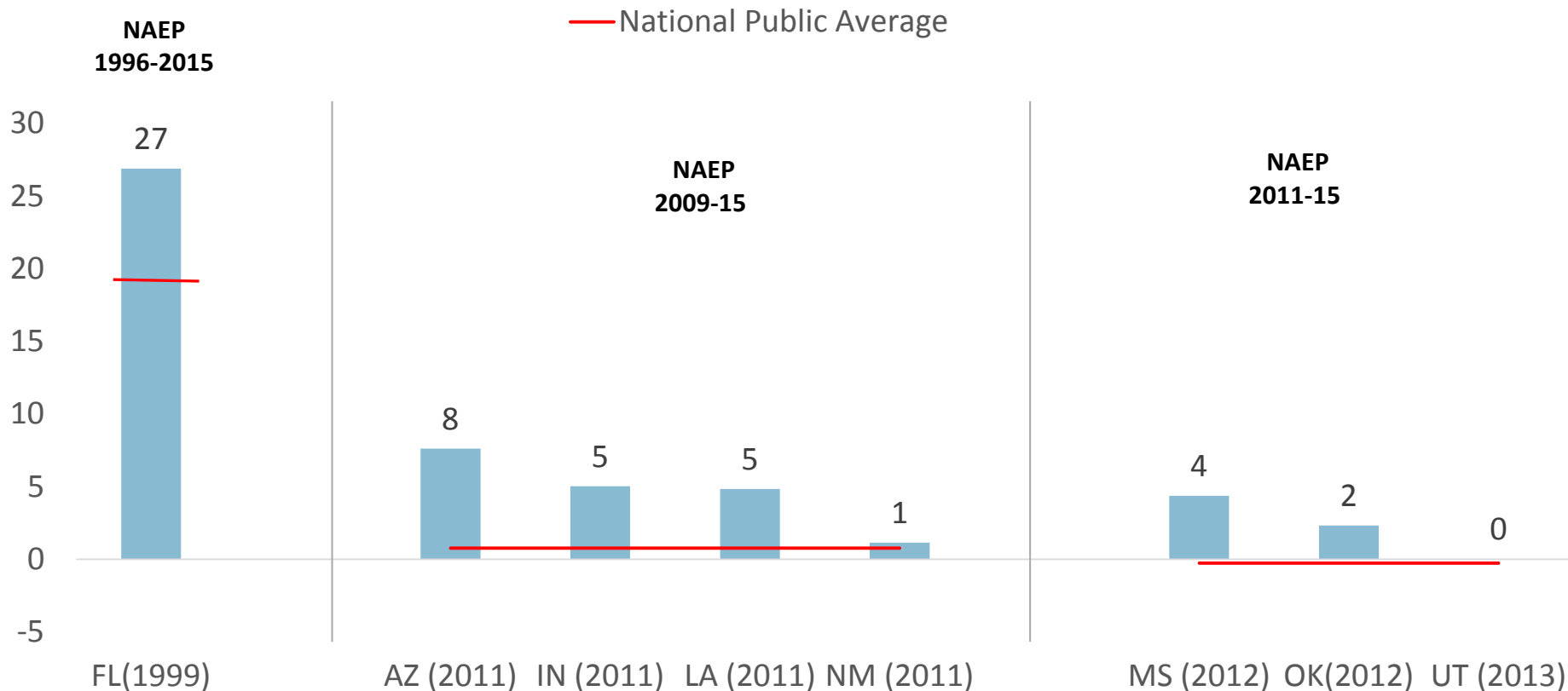
Years in () represents first year schools were graded.

A-F Accountability – 4th Grade Math



4th graders in states with A-F accountability systems made greater improvements in math than the national average following implementation of A-F.

Scale Score Point Change Following A-F Implementation



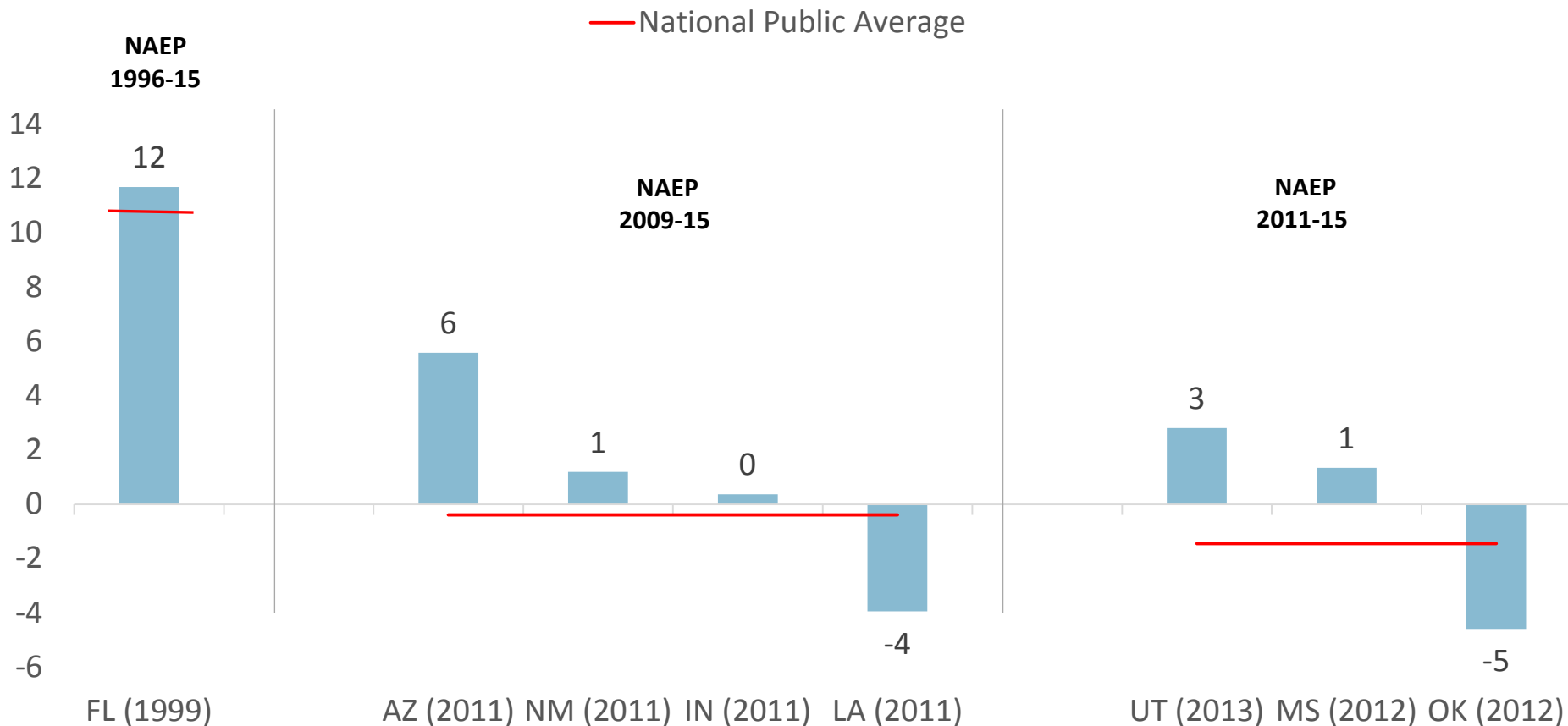
Years in () represents first year schools were graded

A-F Accountability - 8th Grade Math



8th graders in states with A-F accountability systems made greater improvements in math than the national average following implementation of A-F.

Scale Score Point Change Following A-F Implementation

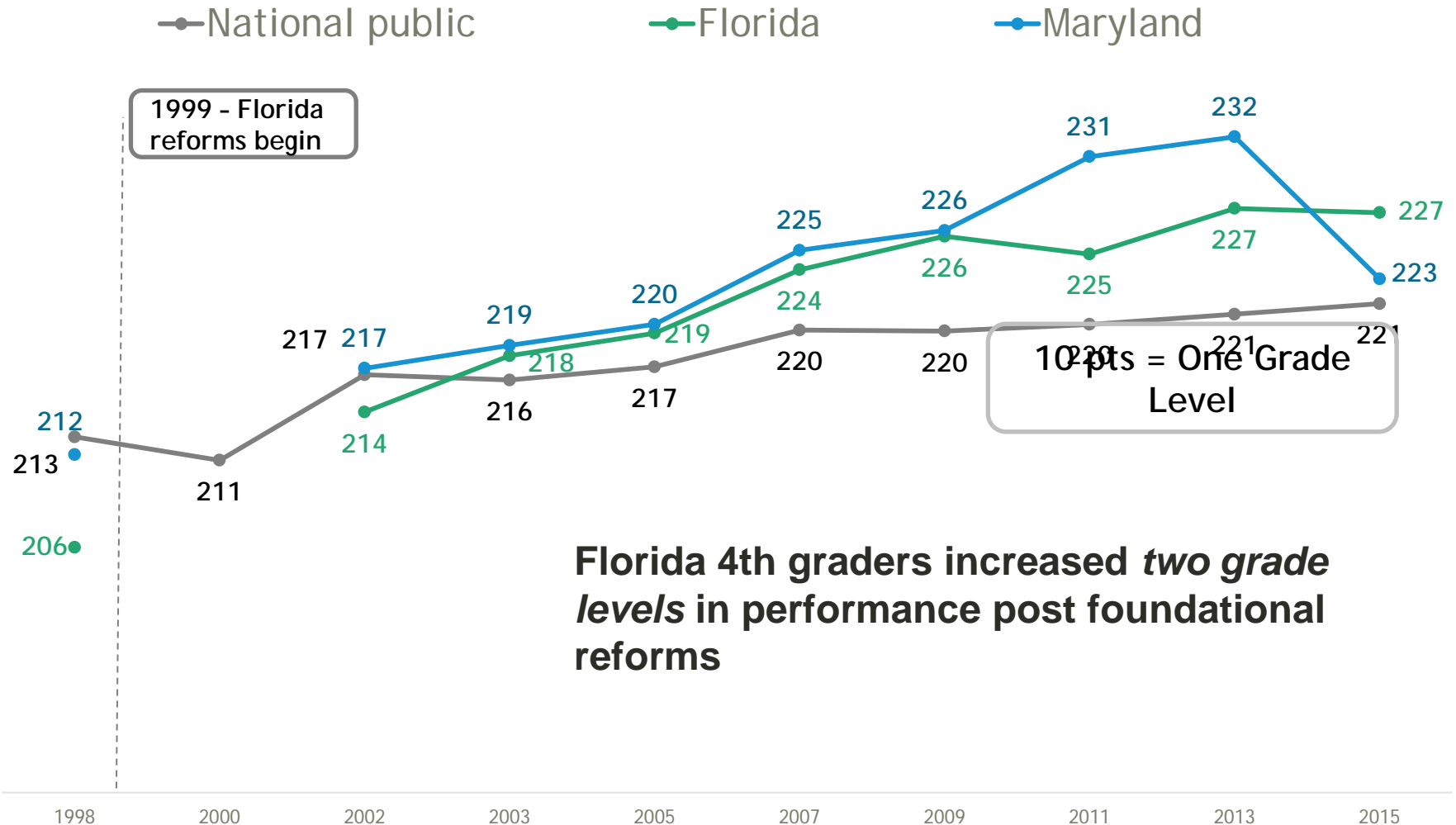


Years in () represents first year schools were graded.



NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

Average NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores, 1998-2015

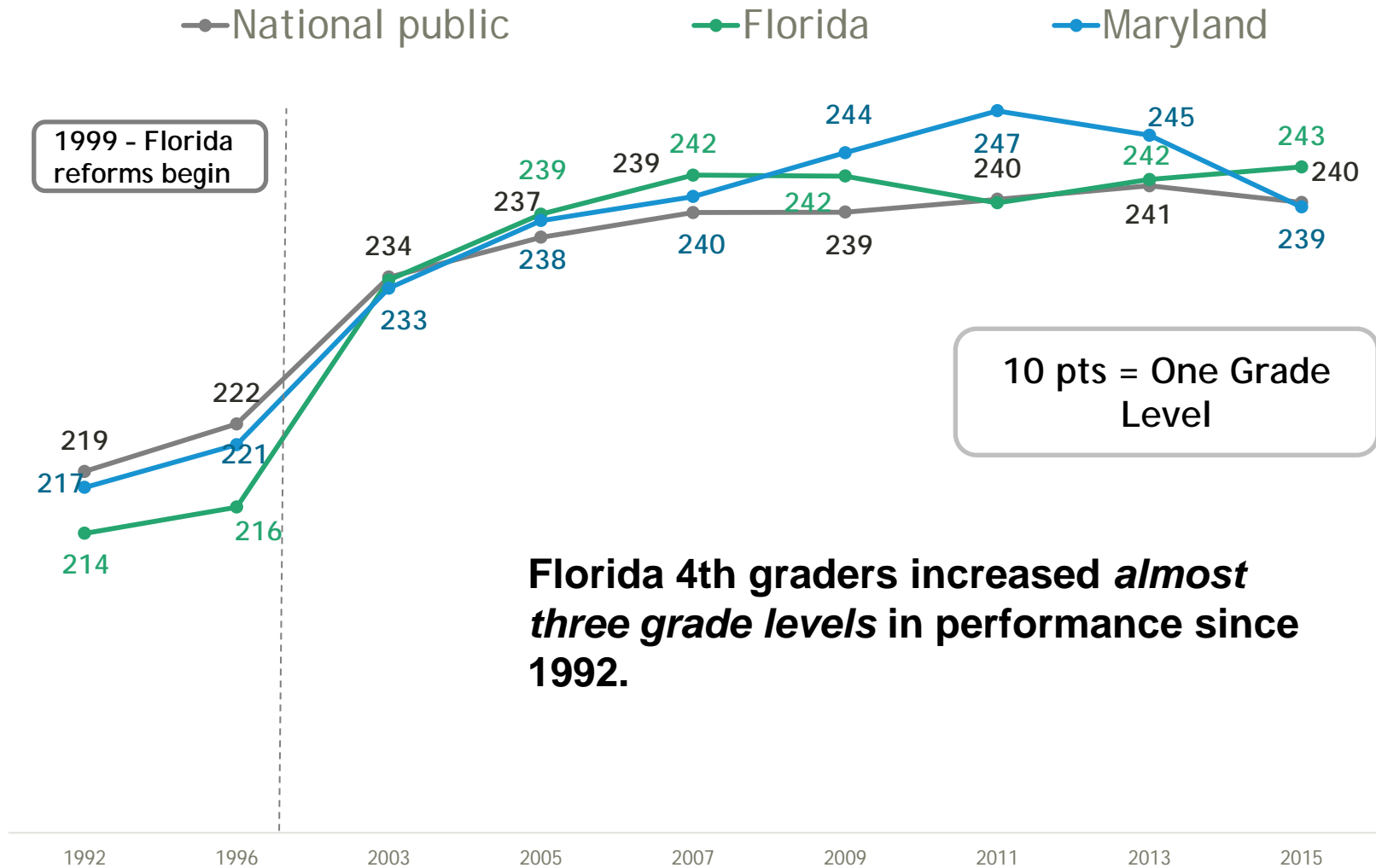


Florida 4th graders increased *two grade levels* in performance post foundational reforms



NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

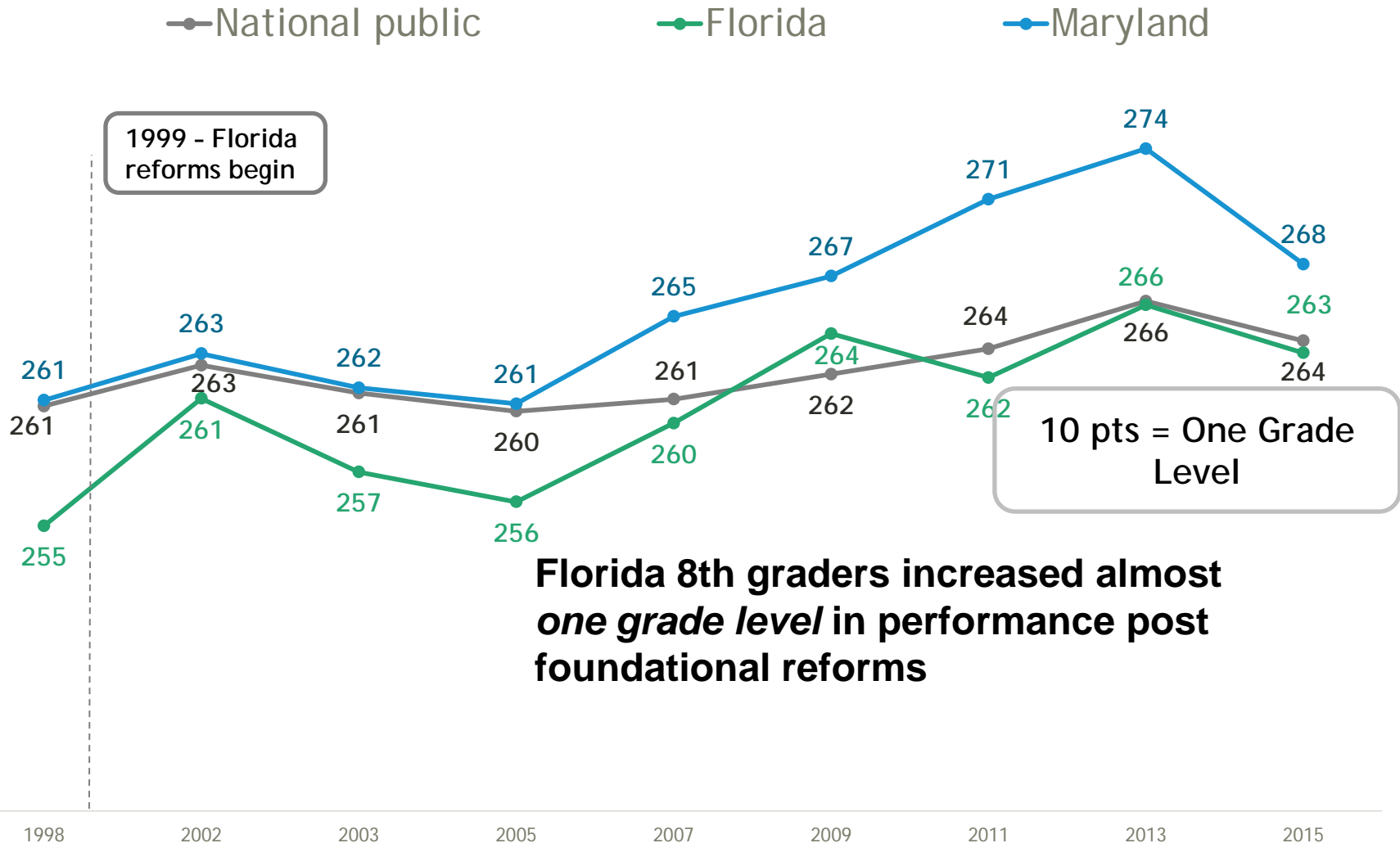
Average NAEP 4th Grade Math Scores, 1992-2015





NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

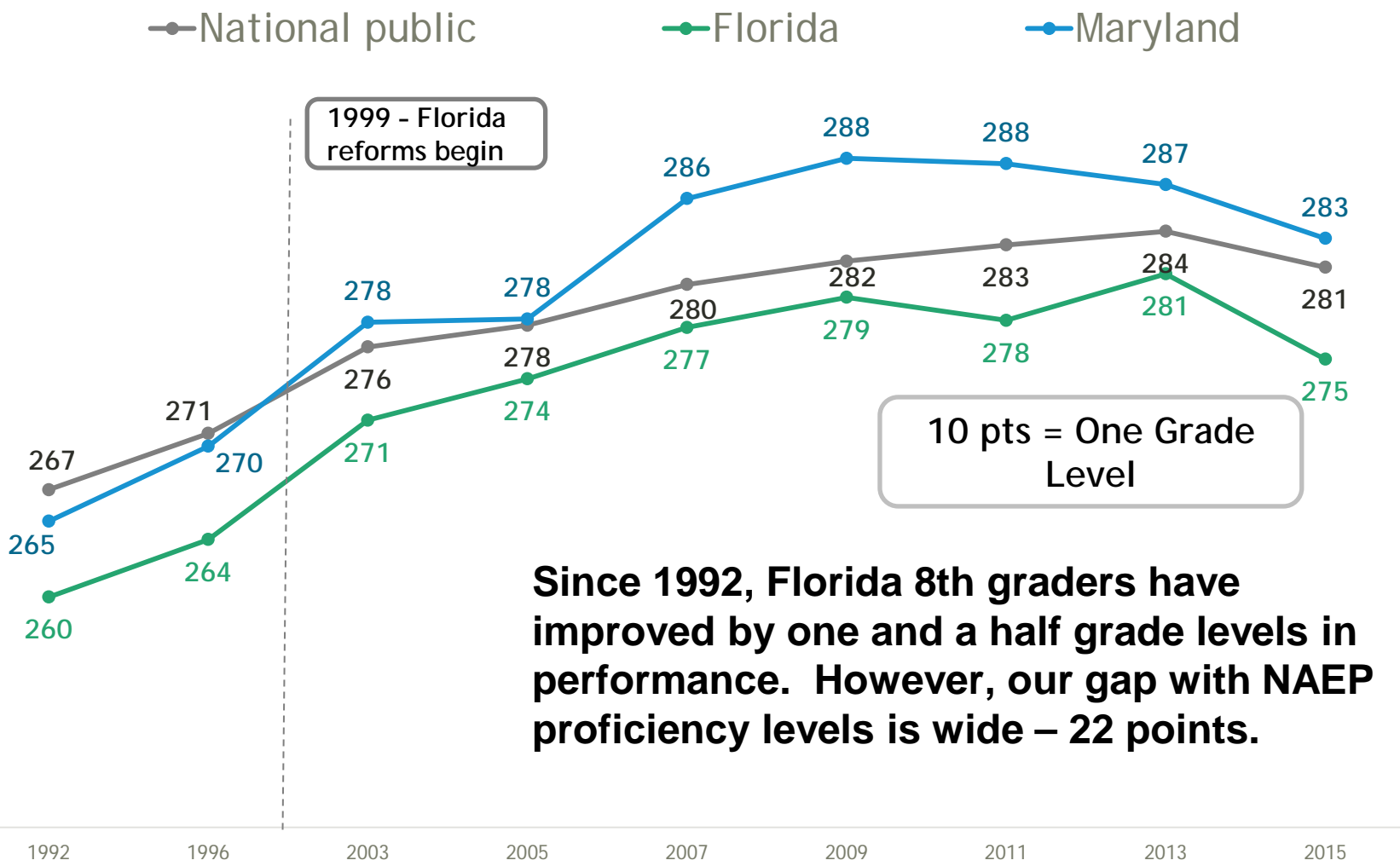
Average NAEP 8th Grade Reading Scores, 1992-2015



NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress



Average NAEP 8th Grade Math Scores, 1992-2015



Since 1992, Florida 8th graders have improved by one and a half grade levels in performance. However, our gap with NAEP proficiency levels is wide – 22 points.

NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress



NAEP Reading Grade 4

