NOVEMBER 2016 PART II

HIGH STAKES FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS:

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE AGE OF ESSA

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Foreword by Chester E. Finn, Jr.

THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE
ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

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Foreword

By Chester E. Finn, Jr.

Eleven weeks back, those of us at the Fordham Institute reported that current accountability systems in most states give primary and middle school educators scant reason to attend to the learning of high-achieving youngsters—which is to say, those systems generally fail to create incentives, rewards, or even transparency regarding the learning gains that schools are producing for students who have already crossed the proficiency threshold.

We coupled that bleak finding with a reminder that the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) creates a rare opportunity for state leaders to rethink their accountability systems and thereby set matters right.

Now we're back with a similar appraisal of state accountability regimes as they affect high schools. This one isn't quite as gloomy, as we find more states paying attention to high achievers in the upper grades—and the structure of high school is more amenable to such attention, given the scope it affords for acceleration of various kinds.

Not as gloomy, no, but not exactly rosy, as we can identify just four states that are doing it well today (Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas) and four more (Alabama, Idaho, Louisiana, and New York) that are clearly moving in the right direction based on their recently released plans for holding schools accountable under ESSA.

As we found in the earlier grades, most states' accountability systems for high schools lean heavily on proficiency rates—measuring the proportion of students who reach the proficient level on state tests. That's not a great metric for school quality in the first place, considering how closely it correlates to student demographics and prior achievement rather than illumining the school's true effectiveness as a learning engine. But it's doubly lacking with respect to high achievers, as it signals to schools that those kids—who were already proficient on the first day of the school year—"aren't your problem." Why sweat teaching them more when the school gets no credit for doing so? (Fortunately for the kids, many right-thinking educators do pay attention to their students' needs and opportunities, not just to state-level ratings and policy machinations.)

Accountability schemes for high schools have also focused heavily on boosting graduation rates. That's an important thing to do but, again, does little for high achievers, nearly all of whom were already on track to graduate. Along the way, we must also note, the push to raise graduation rates has fostered such dubious practices as ersatz "credit-recovery" options for those who didn't take or pass the requisite courses the first time around and who may therefore not get truly equivalent learning, even if they wind up with a diploma.

Nevertheless, we're pleased to report some positive developments. For example, we found twenty-two states giving (or planning to give) high schools some accountability points for helping students earn college credits before graduation via Advanced Placement (AP), dual enrollment, early college, and the International Baccalaureate (IB). Note that we only laud states that focus on the actual attainment of college credit during high school—for instance, rewarding schools where lots of kids pass AP tests (i.e., performance), not where they get a lot more kids simply to enroll in AP courses (i.e., access).

The impulse to get more students, especially poor and minority youngsters, into such advanced options is entirely commendable, but here, too, a worthy goal can have unintended side effects—in this case, by leading to the inclusion of students who aren't actually prepared to succeed in more challenging academic settings. It's not clear from the research literature that sitting in an advanced classroom but not succeeding in the course itself does a student much good. And one must also ask whether such an approach is good for the high-ability kids in those classrooms who truly are prepared to get the most from them. All too often, we sense, those who forfeit some of the benefit of such learning opportunities are themselves from disadvantaged backgrounds, as it is their schools—not the fancy high schools in posh suburbs—that tug hardest to open those classroom doors wider and push kids through them who may (through no fault of their own) not be up to the challenges within.

Again on the mostly positive side, we find thirty-two states that calculate—or intend to calculate—academic growth at the high school level using models that include high achievers. That does not, however, mean that they necessarily give sufficient emphasis to growth versus proficiency.

As is evident from the to-ing and fro-ing in the paragraphs above, the dark clouds we spotted on the high school horizon often have silver linings, just as the fluffy ones carry some threat of gloom. That's simply the state of school accountability in the U.S. today. So yes, we see a positive overall trend, as a number of states begin to upgrade their accountability systems in ways favorable to high achievers. But—as demonstrated by the blunt fact that we can only confer overall high marks on eight states at this time—there is a long way to go.

It's important for America's future that we persevere in that journey, because our track record at the high end of academic achievement at the high school level has been seriously disappointing for far too long. Whatever modest gains we wrought in the early grades in the NCLB era, as gauged by measures such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), twelfth-grade scores have been flatlining for decades, especially at what NAEP terms an advanced level. The same is true of SAT and ACT scores. As for international metrics such as PISA and TIMSS, we're being sorely outclassed by far too many other countries, both in the fraction of our young people who reach the upper ranks on those metrics and in the representation of lower-SES and minority youngsters (save for Asian Americans) among those who do make it.

Getting the accountability system right for high achievers will not, in and of itself, propel us into the top tier of high achievement on a global scale, but it's a key component of such propulsion.

Fortunately, states now have an opportunity to put America's schools on the right path. It will take leadership and courage, however, as naysayers will always insist that any attention given to high achievers is inherently elitist, if not classist or racist. These nattering nabobs of negativity are simply wrong. There are hundreds of thousands of American teenagers ready to work harder, reach higher, and go further, if only we give them the chance. Many are kids of color and come from poor families. They deserve our attention. State accountability systems can send strong signals about who matters. The right answer is everyone—including high achievers.

A word of caution for those who read this report alongside our earlier look at accountability for elementary and middle schools: the ratings we assign to states in the two reports aren't directly comparable because our metric has changed. And both reports arise from surveys of a changing landscape. ESSA is already triggering revisions in some state accountability systems, and the elapsed time between our two surveys has brought some changes. For example, in the eleven weeks since the first report, Idaho, Louisiana, and New York have released new accountability plans that dramatically impact their scores. We hope this new analysis helps to usher in many more such gains.

Acknowledgments

This report was made possible through the generous support of Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, and our sister organization, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. We are grateful to interns Daniel Cohen, Kirsten Hinck, Yalanda Lawson, and Andrew Scanlan for their research assistance, to Alyssa Schwenk for her role in disseminating the final product, to Clara Allen for keeping funders abreast of our progress, to Jonathan Lutton for designing our report as well as its graphic accompaniments, and to Pamela Tatz for copy editing. We also thank the many individuals who helped ensure that the information contained in this report was as timely and accurate as possible, including our local respondents and reviewers. We are particularly appreciative of the officials in state departments of education who took the time to review drafts and ensure that we were examining at the most current version of their accountability systems. Any errors are ours alone.

Executive Summary

In this report, we examine the extent to which states' current (or planned) accountability systems for high schools attend to the needs of high-achieving students and how these systems might be redesigned under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to better serve all students. (Part I of this report examined rating systems for elementary and middle schools.)

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA:

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.**

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.**

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.**

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.**

Based on these four design features, we rate states' current (or planned) accountability systems using the rubric below and the most recent publicly available information. (See Table ES-1.)

TABLE ES-1: RUBRIC FOR RATING HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

INDICATOR	RATING
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	Yes / No
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	Yes / No
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	Yes / No / NA*
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	Yes / No
Total number of stars possible	A maximum of 3 or 4 stars

** State doesn't calculate summative school ratings*

This rubric is the basis for two sets of ratings: one for the thirty-nine states (plus the District of Columbia) that calculate (or intend to calculate) summative school ratings and one for the eleven states that don't (or don't plan to) take this step. (See Tables ES-2 and ES-3.)

TABLE ES-2: RESULTS FOR STATES WITHOUT SUMMATIVE SCHOOL RATINGS

★★★	Idaho, New York, Ohio
★★☆	(None)
★☆☆	California, Kansas, New Jersey, Tennessee
☆☆☆	Maryland, Montana, North Dakota, South Carolina

TABLE ES-3: RESULTS FOR STATES WITH SUMMATIVE SCHOOL RATINGS

★★★★	Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas
★★★☆	Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico
★★☆☆	Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming
★☆☆☆	Arizona, District of Columbia, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, Wisconsin
☆☆☆☆	Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia

As these ratings suggest, most current (and planned) state accountability systems provide high schools with few incentives to focus on their high-achieving students. In fact, our analysis indicates that just five states with summative school ratings—**Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Texas**—and three that lack such ratings—**Idaho, New York, and Ohio**—have established (or have plans to create) truly praiseworthy systems.[1]

Our results also highlight the specific areas where states need to improve:

» Thirty-two states estimate academic growth at the high school level using a model that includes high achievers. Of the eighteen states that fail to do this, eleven don't estimate growth at the high school level and five don't estimate growth at any grade level. The others either fail to rate the schools' growth (Virginia) or use a growth-to-proficiency model that doesn't include high achievers (Oklahoma). Given that student growth is the best way to evaluate schools' impact on student achievement—and the best way to signal that all kids matter—this finding is extremely alarming.

» Only twenty-one states assign (or plan to assign) at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as they do to achievement when calculating summative high school ratings. Seven states assign some weight to "growth for all students" but not as much as they assign to achievement. And eleven states and the District of Columbia assign no

weight to this measure. (Eleven states don't calculate summative school ratings.) Again, given the importance of growth measures, this finding is very disappointing.

» Twenty-two states rate (or plan to rate) high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduation via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs. However, at least five of these states (Idaho, Louisiana, New Mexico, New York, and Texas) also rate schools on their participation in advanced coursework, which may create incentives for schools to enroll students who are unprepared for those classes. And two states (Hawaii and Illinois) rate (or plan to rate) schools solely on the number of students who participate in (or pass) advanced classes, which we believe is a mistake.

» Sixteen states and the District of Columbia rate (or plan to rate) high schools' achievement using an indicator that gives additional credit for students who achieve at an advanced level, such as a performance index.

Unfortunately, regarding this last point, it is unclear from the draft regulations published by the federal Department of Education if such indices will be allowed under ESSA, meaning those seventeen jurisdictions may be required to resume measuring academic achievement via proficiency rates alone. That's a shame, as research suggests that measuring school quality via proficiency rates is a deeply flawed approach that encourages principals and teachers to narrowly focus attention on students performing just above or below the proficiency line.[2]

For this reason, we have one major recommendation for the Department of Education:

ALLOW STATES TO RATE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT USING A PERFORMANCE INDEX.

Such an allowance is both consistent with ESSA and in the best interests of students. Rather than once again encouraging schools to focus on "bubble kids" as they did under NCLB, the department's final regulations should allow—or, better yet, encourage—performance metrics that account for the achievement of all students.

Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model. One of the most important improvements they can make is to ensure that their accountability systems encourage schools to pay attention to all students.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems put in place before it), but it had a pernicious flaw. Namely, it created strong incentives for schools to focus all their energy on helping low-performing students achieve proficiency and graduate from high school, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. Doing so is important for a variety of reasons. First, it's a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. But just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

ESSA maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school, as well as the mandate that states adopt accountability systems that lead to ratings for schools. Such systems must include four types of indicators: academic achievement (which can include student growth); high school graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Each of the first three academic indicators must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, count "much more" than the fourth.

Here we examine whether each state's high school accountability system prioritizes high achievers. We do not examine the quality of states' standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance. (See "Important Issues Beyond the Scope of This Analysis.")

Our analysis also illustrates how states can seize the opportunity under ESSA to redesign their high school accountability systems and make high achievers a bigger priority in determining school ratings.

This last point is especially important because many state accountability systems are currently in flux due to recent changes allowed by Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waivers, the coming changes driven by ESSA implementation, and the ongoing transition to new, tougher assessments linked to new, tougher standards. States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change.

Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that does right by high achievers—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Important Issues beyond the Scope of This Analysis

In addition to browsing through this report, we encourage readers to spend time with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's annual fifty-state report card on closing the excellence gap, which paints a comprehensive picture of the variety of state policies that can support high-achieving students. After all, the four design features examined here do not encompass everything that states could be doing to encourage schools to serve their high-achieving students well, nor does our analysis capture all of the critical elements of a state accountability system as they pertain to high achievers. Most notably, we do not consider the content standards and tests that states have adopted, both of which are worth some discussion.

The foundation of any well-designed accountability system is a set of clear, demanding academic standards such as the Common Core State Standards for English and math, which are still in place in more than forty states (despite the political backlash against them). As readers likely know, the Fordham Institute has been a staunch defender of these standards, which we've found to be stronger—in substance, in rigor, and in clarity—than what three-quarters of the states had in place before their adoption and on par with the rest. Yet we've also warned that they should not be used as an excuse to eliminate services for the nation's academic superstars. (See our white paper, written by Jonathan Plucker, *Common Core and America's High-Achieving Students*.) Though the Common Core standards aim higher than most of the expectations that came before them, they still don't aim high enough for the country's top students. No standards could. Consequently, we've excluded an evaluation of state content standards from this analysis.

The quality of state assessments matters enormously too, and here we wish we could collect data, especially about the capacity of state tests to accurately measure the performance and growth of students who are well above grade level (that is, whether the assessments contain enough cognitively difficult questions to capture growth at the high end). Unfortunately, a provision of NCLB requiring that all students take the "same tests" was interpreted by both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations as requiring "on-grade-level" testing, effectively prohibiting states from building tests that were accurate for students well above (or below) grade level.

Though the intent of that decision was pure—it prevents states from setting lower expectations for and administering easier tests to low-performing kids—it has curtailed the use of computer-adaptive testing and other strategies for accurately measuring performance at the top of the achievement distribution. Consequently, even the new Smarter Balanced assessments, which are computer adaptive, have been unable to precisely measure the achievement of students well above grade level.

Thankfully, ESSA eliminates this federal hurdle by giving explicit congressional approval to truly adaptive testing (both above and below grade level) as long as students are tested on grade-level items as well.

Methods

In our view, states should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA:

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

SCORING

Based on the four design features listed above, we rated the school accountability systems in the fifty states and the District of Columbia using the rubric shown below and the most recent publicly available information. (See Table 1 and "Data Collection"). In particular, we reviewed report cards for high schools, as well as state documents explaining the nitty-gritty of how school ratings are (or will be) calculated.

TABLE 1: RUBRIC FOR RATING STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

INDICATOR	RATING
1. Does the state rate schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	Yes / No
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	Yes / No
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	Yes / No / NA*
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	Yes / No
Total number of stars possible	A maximum of 3 or 4 stars

** State doesn't calculate summative school ratings*

DATA COLLECTION

The data in this report reflect information that was publicly available as of October 5, 2016.[3] To collect this information, we scanned state department of education websites for accountability-related documents (such as guides to school rating systems) and inspected school report cards to see what information states reported. For the sake of transparency, we include screenshots of some these documents in the exhibits of the state profiles. To ensure that the information was as up-to-date as possible, we gave state officials the opportunity to review their state's profile before publication (though not every state responded).

The task of evaluating state accountability systems is complicated by the fact that so many of them are in flux. Consequently, throughout this report we take the following approach: When a state has publicly committed to changes that satisfy the requirements of one of our indicators, we acknowledge that fact by giving it credit for those changes. However, when a state's intent is ambiguous or unclear, we do not give credit. Thus, because the process of revising a state's accountability system is often a lengthy and iterative one, our scores sometimes reflect a mix of states' current and intended systems.

Results

Our analysis suggests that most current (or planned) state accountability systems provide high schools with few incentives to focus on their high-achieving students. However, there is a great deal of variation between states.

For a more nuanced view, it is helpful to distinguish between states that produce summative ratings of school quality and those that do not. As mentioned in previous sections, states could earn a maximum of either three or four stars depending on whether they combined the indicators by which schools are judged into single grades or ratings. Thus, the thirty-nine states (plus the District of Columbia) that assign such ratings for high schools could earn a maximum of four stars, while the eleven states that don't assign them could earn a maximum of three.

We present the results for both groups of states below, as well as the results for each individual indicator.

States without Summative School Ratings (Maximum of Three Stars)

As shown in Table 2, the states that lack summative school ratings do little to encourage high schools to focus on their high achievers, with three exceptions: Ohio, which is the only state whose extant accountability system earns three out of three stars, and Idaho and New York, whose planned systems also earn full marks.

TABLE 2: RESULTS FOR STATES WITHOUT SUMMATIVE SCHOOL RATINGS

★★★	Idaho, New York, Ohio
★★☆	(None)
★☆☆	California, Kansas, New Jersey, Tennessee
☆☆☆	Maryland, Montana, North Dakota, South Carolina

We view Ohio's high school accountability system as the best in the country for high achievers: it gives schools additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level and rates both their growth (using a model that includes the progress of all students) and their success in helping students earn college credit (via AP, IB, or dual enrollment) before graduating. The systems Idaho and New York have proposed will also do these things.

Less impressive are the four states in this group that earn only one of three possible stars—California, Kansas, New Jersey, and Tennessee—which do little to incentivize schools to focus on their brightest students. And even worse are the four states that earn zero stars—Maryland, Montana, North Dakota, and South Carolina—which do virtually nothing to encourage schools on this front. None of these states reward high schools where students achieve at an advanced level or earn college credit before graduating, and none rate (or report) growth at the high school level.

States with Summative School Ratings (Maximum of Four Stars)

As shown in Table 3, of the thirty-nine states (plus the District of Columbia) that assign summative school ratings, five (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Texas) earn the maximum of four stars and might be considered leaders when it comes to encouraging high schools to focus on their high achievers. All of these states use (or plan to use) growth models that include high achievers at the high school level and make "growth for all students" count for at least as much as achievement when calculating summative high school ratings. Furthermore, all five states give high schools additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level and rate their success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.

TABLE 3: RESULTS FOR STATES WITH SUMMATIVE SCHOOL RATINGS

★★★★	Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas
★★★☆	Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico
★★☆☆	Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming
★☆☆☆	Arizona, District of Columbia, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, Wisconsin
☆☆☆☆	Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia

Like the states that earn four stars, the nine states that earn three stars out of four include high-achieving students in their growth model and assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as they do to achievement. However, three states in this group don't rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating, and four don't give additional credit for students who achieve at an advanced level on state tests.

Twelve states earn two stars out of four, meaning they do little to encourage a focus on high achievers. Most of these states include high-achieving students in their growth model and assign at least as much weight to growth as achievement. However, only six rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating, and just two (Connecticut and Missouri) give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.

Similarly, seven states (plus the District of Columbia) earn one star out of four, meaning they do very little to encourage a focus on high-achieving students. Of these states, only Oklahoma currently rewards schools that help students earn college credit before graduating. And only Nebraska, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level on state tests. The other three states in this group—Arizona, North Carolina, and Utah—include high achievers in their growth model but inexplicably assign less weight to "growth for all students" than they do to proficiency rates.

Finally, six states earn zero stars—Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Vermont, and Virginia—meaning that they discourage high schools from focusing on their brightest students (usually because they rely heavily on proficiency rates with no additional credit for advanced achievement).

In short, although high school accountability systems do a somewhat better job of drawing attention to high achievers than their elementary and middle school counterparts, there is still much room for improvement. Despite ample opportunity to do so over the past few years, most states have largely failed to move beyond the flawed approach to accountability embodied in No Child Left Behind, which placed undue emphasis on proficiency (and graduation) at the expense of students who will easily exceed those minimal standards.

RESULTS FOR INDIVIDUAL INDICATORS

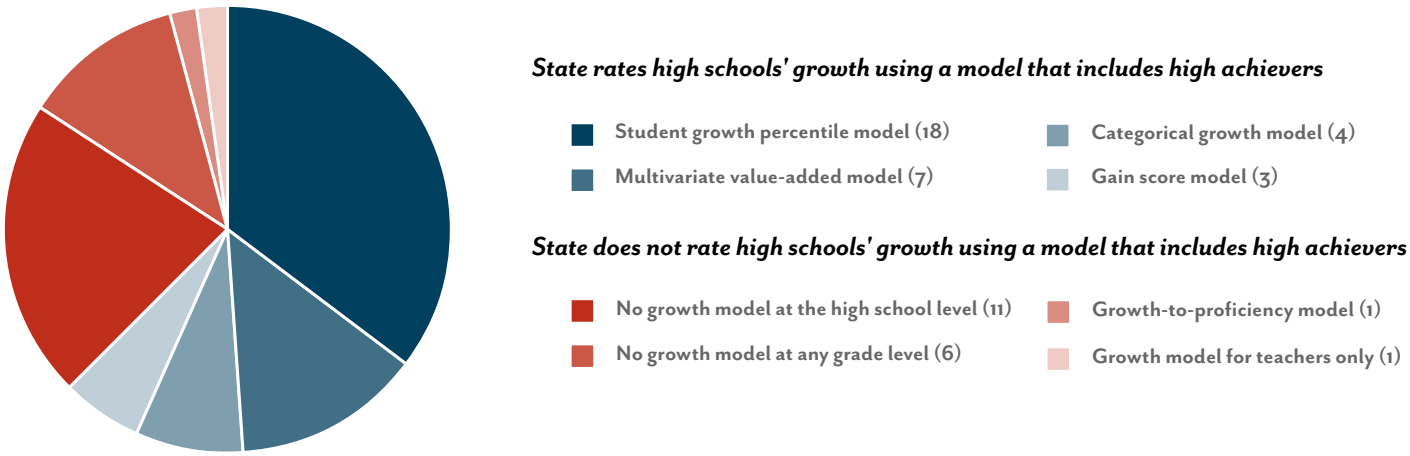
Disaggregating our results by indicator largely confirms our central finding that most state accountability systems do little to encourage high schools to focus on their high achievers, though our analysis does identify a few bright spots.

Most states rate high schools' growth using a model that includes high-achieving students

Encouragingly, thirty-two states now rate (or plan to rate) student growth at the high school level using a model that includes high achievers, meaning they reward growth beyond the threshold for proficiency. (See Table 4, page 19.) That number represents real progress from a few years ago, when such an approach was considered unlawful under NCLB. Of the states in this group, eighteen use a student growth percentile model, seven use a multivariate value-added model, four use a categorical-growth model, and three use a gain-score model.[4]

Of the eighteen states (plus the District of Columbia) that don't rate high schools' growth using a model that includes high achievers, eleven rate elementary and middle schools' growth but have yet to develop a growth model for high schools, and five (plus the District of Columbia) have yet to develop a growth model for any grade. (See Figure 1.) Oklahoma is the only state that rates high schools' growth using a growth-to-proficiency model, which does nothing to encourage schools to pay attention to students who are already proficient. Meanwhile, Virginia has developed a growth model but, as far as we can tell, doesn't use it to rate schools' growth.[5]

FIGURE 1: MOST STATES RATE HIGH SCHOOLS' GROWTH USING A MODEL THAT INCLUDES HIGH ACHIEVERS



Most states don't give schools additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level

Sixteen states and the District of Columbia rate (or plan to rate) high schools' achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level. (See Table 4, page 19.) In most of these cases, states have created an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting them to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting them to an advanced level (or something along those lines).[6] Unfortunately, it's unclear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether states will be allowed to use such indices as one of their academic indicators (see sidebar). Obviously, we believe that they should be allowed to do so—and that the statute provides plenty of room for such an interpretation.[7]

Most states don't assign as much weight to "growth for all students" as they do to achievement

Just twenty-one states assign as much weight to "growth for all students" as they do to achievement (in English language arts and math), and eleven states (plus the District of Columbia) assign no weight to this measure. (See Figure 2.)

Some states base a significant proportion of their summative school ratings on growth but base some or all of their growth ratings on growth for low-performing students or other subgroups, as opposed to "growth for all students."

Similarly, some states assign significant weight to other growth measures (such as growth to proficiency) that exclude progress for high achievers and thus do not count as "growth for all students." For example, Oklahoma bases 50 percent of high schools' grades on growth-to-proficiency measures.

Recommendation for the U.S. Department of Education

As state officials repeatedly reminded us during the drafting of this report, state accountability systems must abide by Uncle Sam's requirements. Thus, the degree to which states can improve these systems in the coming years depends greatly on how the U.S. Department of Education views its role under the new law.

In light of these circumstances, we have one major recommendation for the Department of Education:

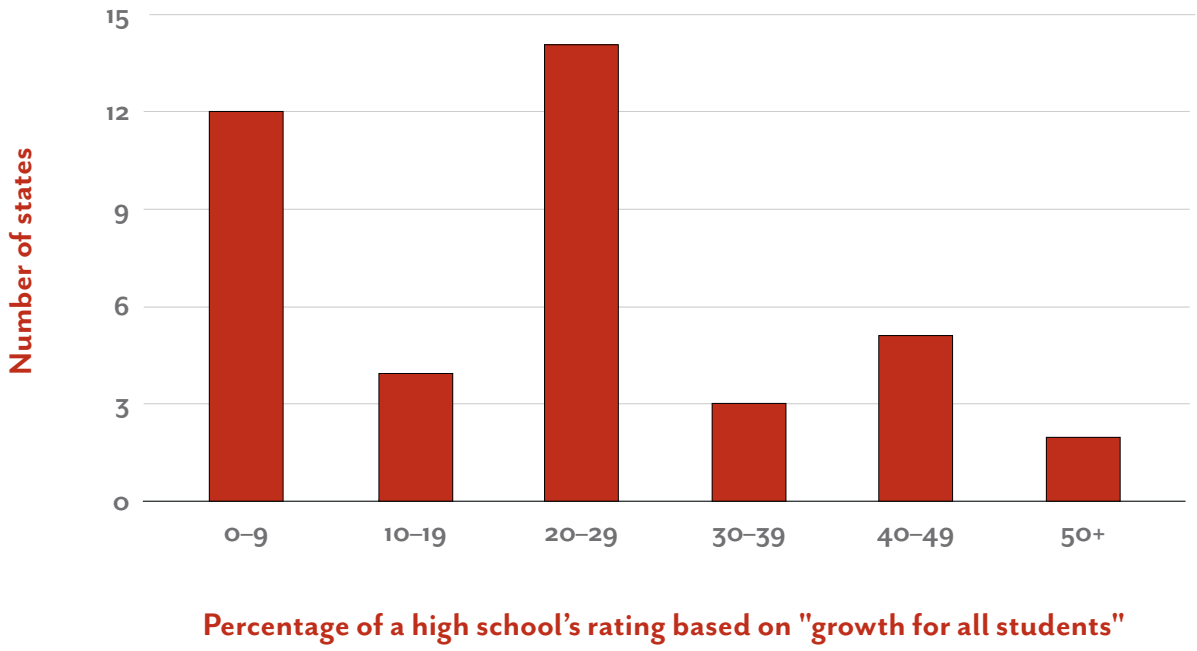
Allow states to rate achievement using a performance index.

ESSA requires the use of an academic-achievement indicator that "measures proficiency on the statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics." But there are multiple ways to interpret this. Unfortunately, the department's proposed regulations seem to expect states to use proficiency rates to measure school performance. This is a mistake that will encourage schools to focus on "bubble kids"—those just above or below the proficiency cutoff—exactly as they did under NCLB.

Instead, the department's final regulations should allow or even encourage performance metrics that account for the achievement of all students, using practices such as proficiency indices or average scale scores. Such a regulation would be consistent with ESSA and would encourage schools to focus on all kids—as they should.

Though no doubt well intentioned, both of these approaches give schools an incentive to ignore their high-achieving students, especially in high-poverty settings where many kids are below grade level. Why not use a growth model that includes all students instead? And why not weight all students' growth equally, or at least make "growth for all students" count for more of a school's summative rating?

FIGURE 2: STATES ASSIGN LITTLE WEIGHT TO "GROWTH FOR ALL STUDENTS" AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL



Most states don't rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating

Twenty-two states rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduation via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs. (See Table 4.) However, five of these states (Idaho, Louisiana, New Mexico, New York, and Texas) also rate schools on students' participation in advanced coursework—which, if not done carefully, may create incentives for schools to enroll students who are unprepared for those classes. And Hawaii and Illinois rate (or plan to rate) schools solely on the number of students who participate in (or pass) advanced classes, which we believe is a mistake.

Rating schools based on the number of students who participate in advanced courses gives them a dangerous incentive to enroll unprepared students in these courses, so it is far better to rate schools based on the number of students who succeed in these courses. For AP, the easiest way to do this is to reward schools where students score a three or higher on the exam. For IB, schools should earn points for students who score a four or higher. For dual enrollment, states might set external quality standards (for example, by giving points only for students whose dual-enrollment credits are accepted by the state's four-year universities). Admittedly, we are more comfortable with states granting credit for students passing AP or IB tests than for students earning dual-enrollment credit, as the latter rarely comes with external quality controls.

TABLE 4: SUMMATIVE RATINGS FOR EACH STATE BY INDICATOR

STATE	GIVE EXTRA CREDIT FOR ADVANCED ACHIEVEMENT	INCLUDE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN GROWTH MODEL	MAKE "GROWTH FOR ALL STUDENTS" COUNT AT LEAST AS MUCH AS ACHIEVEMENT	RATE SCHOOLS' SUCCESS IN HELPING STUDENTS EARN COLLEGE CREDIT	RATING
Alabama	★	★	★	★	★★★★
Alaska	☆	★	★	☆	★★☆☆
Arizona	☆	★	☆	☆	★☆☆☆
Arkansas	★	★	★	☆	★★★☆
California	☆	☆	NA	★	★☆☆
Colorado	★	★	★	☆	★★★☆
Connecticut	★	☆	☆	★	★★☆☆
Delaware	☆	★	★	★	★★★☆
District of Columbia	★	☆	☆	☆	★☆☆☆
Florida	☆	★	★	★	★★★☆
Georgia	★	★	★	★	★★★★
Hawaii	☆	★	★	☆	★★☆☆
Idaho	★	★	NA	★	★★★
Illinois	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆☆☆☆
Indiana	☆	★	★	★	★★★☆
Iowa	☆	★	★	☆	★★☆☆
Kansas	☆	★	NA	☆	★☆☆
Kentucky	★	★	★	☆	★★★☆
Louisiana	★	★	★	★	★★★★
Maine	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆☆☆☆
Maryland	☆	☆	NA	☆	☆☆☆
Massachusetts	★	★	★	☆	★★★☆
Michigan	☆	★	★	☆	★★☆☆
Minnesota	☆	★	★	☆	★★☆☆
Mississippi	☆	★	★	★	★★★☆
Missouri	★	☆	☆	★	★★☆☆
Montana	☆	☆	NA	☆	☆☆☆
Nebraska	★	☆	☆	☆	★☆☆☆
Nevada	☆	★	☆	★	★★☆☆
New Hampshire	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆☆☆☆

STATE	GIVE EXTRA CREDIT FOR ADVANCED ACHIEVEMENT	INCLUDE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN GROWTH MODEL	MAKE "GROWTH FOR ALL STUDENTS" COUNT AT LEAST AS MUCH AS ACHIEVEMENT	RATE SCHOOLS' SUCCESS IN HELPING STUDENTS EARN COLLEGE CREDIT	RATING
New Jersey	☆	☆	NA	★	★☆☆
New Mexico	☆	★	★	★	★★★☆
New York	★	★	NA	★	★★★
North Carolina	☆	★	☆	☆	★☆☆☆
North Dakota	☆	☆	NA	☆	☆☆☆
Ohio	★	★	NA	★	★★★
Oklahoma	☆	☆	☆	★	★☆☆☆
Oregon	☆	★	★	☆	★★☆☆
Pennsylvania	★	★	★	★	★★★★
Rhode Island	☆	☆	☆	★	★☆☆☆
South Carolina	☆	☆	NA	☆	☆☆☆
South Dakota	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆☆☆☆
Tennessee	☆	★	NA	☆	★☆☆
Texas	★	★	★	★	★★★★
Utah	☆	★	☆	☆	★☆☆☆
Vermont	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆☆☆☆
Virginia	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆☆☆☆
Washington	☆	★	☆	★	★★☆☆
West Virginia	☆	★	☆	★	★★☆☆
Wisconsin	★	☆	☆	☆	★☆☆☆
Wyoming	☆	★	★	☆	★★☆☆

Closing Thoughts

Since the advent of ESEA waivers, and certainly now under ESSA, states have had greater power to fix the flaws inherent in NCLB and signal to schools that all students—including high achievers—matter.

Admirably, most states have taken advantage of their additional flexibility to adopt robust growth models. But inexplicably, most have failed to put these growth models at the center of their school accountability systems. As a result, they have maintained one of NCLB's biggest problems—a focus on getting kids to proficiency and to graduation.

States now have a chance to do better. Although there may be a temptation for officials to simply tweak the systems that were developed under federal waivers, that would be an enormous mistake and a lost opportunity. Instead, almost every state in the land could dramatically upgrade its high school accountability system by putting more emphasis on student growth, giving schools additional credit for getting kids to advanced levels of achievement, and giving high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.

High-achieving students—especially those growing up in poverty—need all the attention they can get. They were an afterthought when NCLB was crafted fifteen years ago. Let's not make the same mistake again.

Endnotes

1. New York's rating is based on "high level concepts" documents released by the State Education Department on October 18, 2016. According to the NYSED website, feedback on these concepts will be gathered during the remainder of 2016 and into 2017. That feedback "will inform the draft ESSA plan to be presented to the Board of Regents for approval. After the Board approves the plan, the Department will submit the plan to the Governor for review and the U.S. Department for Education for approval in 2017." See here for more: http://www.nysed.gov/news/2016/state-education-department-proposes-high-level-concepts-draft-every-student-succeeds-act. (Note that New York would not have rated as highly had we rated its existing system.)

2. For better ways the Department of Education could address this issue, see Morgan Polikoff et al., "A letter to the U.S. Department of Education (updated July 14)," MorganPolikoff.com (July 12, 2016), https://morganpolikoff.com/2016/07/12/a-letter-to-the-u-s-department-of-education/.

3. One exception to this rule is New York, which released its "high level concepts" for ESSA accountability on October 18. Because this document significantly impacted New York's overall rating, we felt it was only right to update our data to reflect the information it contained.

4. Our definitions are taken from "A Practitioner's Guide to Growth Models," Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013, http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2013GrowthModels.pdf.

5. Virginia calculates value added for teachers but not schools. The District of Columbia also fails to rate schools' growth, though its primary charter school authorizer (the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, which oversees 45 percent of the city's schools) does so as part of its accountability system.

6. One exception is Nebraska, which takes an average of students' raw test scores (thus rewarding improvement across the achievement distribution).

7. See, for example, Morgan Polikoff et al., "A letter to the U.S. Department of Education (updated July 14)."

Index of Profiles

Alabama

Alabama's planned high school accountability system is one of the best in the country for high achievers. Other states should take heed.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, t Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Alabama's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Alabama's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

How States Can Prioritize High Achievers in Their High School Accountability Systems

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

Does Alabama's High School Accountability System Prioritize High Achievers?

INDICATOR	*RATINGS*	*NOTES*
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Alabama will give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Alabama is moving to a student growth percentile model.[2]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, "growth for all students" will count for 30 percent of summative school ratings, while achievement will count for 20 percent. (See Exhibit B.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Alabama will rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit C.)

EXHIBIT A[3]

Indicator Descriptors

Student Achievement

- **Determined based on the percentage of proficient students in the areas of reading and math utilizing assessments in tested grades**
- **50% of points will be calculated from Reading**
- **50% of points will be calculated from Math**
- **The chart below shows the weights that will be applied to calculate the indicator points earned.**

Achievement Level	Weight
Level I	0 points
Level II	0.5 points
Level III	1.0 point
Level IV	1.25 points

Accountability Information Subject to Change

EXHIBIT B[4]

Alabama State Department of Education
Report Card
2015-2016

Final Grade
December 2017

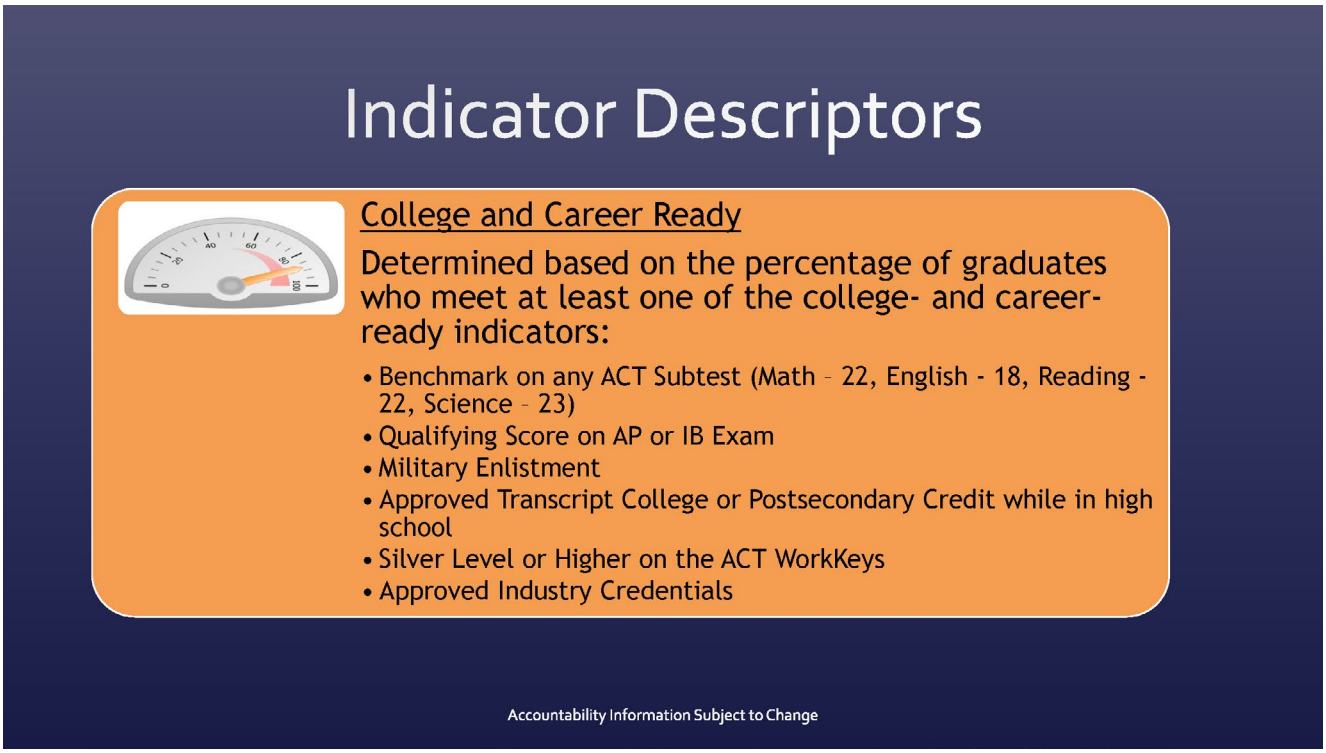
ABC High School
District: ABC
Grade(s): 9-12

State
District
School

INDICATORS	Indicator Description	Grade	Points	Percent of Score
Achievement				
Learning Gains	**Reading** - Determined based on individual students who demonstrate improvement in reading from one year to the next using multiple years of data.	December 2017		30%
	Math - Determined based on individual students who demonstrate improvement in mathematics from one year to the next using multiple years of data.			
Student Achievement	**Reading** - Determined based on the percentage of proficient students in the area of reading utilizing assessments in tested grades.	December 2016		20%
	Math - Determined based on the percentage of proficient students in the area of mathematics utilizing assessments in tested grades.			
Graduation Rate	Determined based on the percentage of high school students who graduate within 4 or 5 years of first entering the 9th grade.	December 2016		20%
College- & Career-Ready	Determined based on the percentage of graduating seniors who meet at least one of the college- and career-ready indicators.	December 2017		20%
Other Indicators				
Alabama PLAN 2020 Program Reviews	Determined based on a review of programs not measured by standardized tests.	December 2017		5%
Local Indicators	Determined based on one indicator tied to student outcomes.	December 2016		5%
Bonus				Possible Points
Attendance	Determined based on the 9th month average daily attendance report for the entire year.	December 2017		5
			Total Points	100

Previous Year Score	Current Year Score	Grade Scale	To Be Determined
100	100		

EXHIBIT C[5]


Indicator Descriptors
College and Career Ready
Determined based on the percentage of graduates who meet at least one of the college- and career-ready indicators:
• Benchmark on any ACT Subtest (Math – 22, English - 18, Reading - 22, Science – 23)
• Qualifying Score on AP or IB Exam
• Military Enlistment
• Approved Transcript College or Postsecondary Credit while in high school
• Silver Level or Higher on the ACT WorkKeys
• Approved Industry Credentials
Accountability Information Subject to Change

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 25–30, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. Understanding Growth and ACT Aspire Reports, Alabama Department of Education, accessed October 1, 2016, http://www.alsde.edu/sec/sa/Pages/relatedinformation-all.aspx?tab=Related%20Documents&AssessmentName=ACT%20Aspire.

3. "Alabama's A-F Report Cards: Update on ESSA Accountability," Alabama State Department of Education, page 13, accessed July 19, 2016, http://www.alsde.edu/sec/acct/Resources%20Tabbed/AASB%202016%20-%20%20A-F%20Report%20Card.pdf.

4. "Alabama State Board of Education Accountability," Alabama State Board of Education, page 19, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.alsde.edu/sites/boe/Attachments/September%208%20-%20Board%20Presentation%20Accountability.pdf#search=report%20card%20draft.

5. "Alabama's A-F Report Cards: Update on ESSA Accountability," page 17.

Alaska

Alaska's accountability system encourages high schools to focus on the academic growth of all students, including high achievers. Rewarding schools where students earn college credit via AP, IB, or dual enrollment programs would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Alaska's system for rating high school performance during the 2013–14 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Alaska's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

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DOES ALASKA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Alaska does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	Alaska uses a categorical growth model.[3] A categorical growth model compares the performance categories that students fall into from one year to the next.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	☆	"Growth for all students" counts for between 24 percent and 40 percent of summative high school ratings, while achievement counts for just 20 percent.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Alaska does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

Printed 9/3/2014

ASPI Rating: ***

ALASKA SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDEX (ASPI): 2013-2014

School Grade Span 9 - 12

School District Anchorage School District **School** Bartlett High School

Participation Rate Grades 3-10	Number Tested	Number Enrolled	Participation Rate	Met Participation Rate		Points
	811	821	98.78%	Yes		None, acts as a trigger to achievement denominator.

K-8 Performance

Academic Achievement	Reading			Writing			Math			Points	Weighting	ASPI Points
	Cnt Proficient	Cnt Tested *	Pct Proficient	Cnt Proficient	Cnt Tested *	Pct Proficient	Cnt Proficient	Cnt Tested *	Pct Proficient			
	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	0.00

School Progress	Growth All	Growth-AK Nat	Growth-Econ Dis	Growth-w/Disabs	Growth-LEP			
(Subgroup must have >5 students to be considered)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0.00
Attendance Rate	N/A					N/A	0	0.00
						Total K-8 Points	0.00	0.00

9-12 Performance

Academic Achievement	Reading			Writing			Math			Points	Weighting	ASPI Points
	Cnt Proficient	Cnt Tested *	Pct Proficient	Cnt Proficient	Cnt Tested *	Pct Proficient	Cnt Proficient	Cnt Tested *	Pct Proficient			
	549	795	69.06%	521	791	65.87%	380	798	47.62%	60.82	0.2	12.16

School Progress	Growth All	Growth -AK Nat	Growth-Econ Dis	Growth-w/Disabs	Growth-LEP			
(Subgroup must have >5 students to be considered)	90.21	85.58	88.20	76.80	85.72	87.76	0.4	35.10
Attendance Rate	90.04%					80.00	0.1	8.00

Graduation Rate	4 Year	Cohorts - 4 Yr	5 Year	Cohorts - 5 Yr				
	70.81%	2014	77.75%	2014		50.00	0.2	10.00
College Career Readiness	71.54					71.54	0.08	5.72
WorkKeys Participation	76.84%					0.00	0.02	0.00
					Total 9-12 Points		1.00	70.99

^ - Results are suppressed to protect individual confidentiality.

* - All eligible students are counted when Participation Rate is not met.

N/A - Results do not meet minimum reporting thresholds or no students of the reported grade level were served.

Per 4 AAC 06.835(b), this designation becomes final unless a review is requested within 30 days from receipt.

K-8 Enrollment Count:	0	K-8 Enrollment Ratio:	0.00
9-12 Enrollment Count:	1,483	9-12 Enrollment Ratio:	1.00

ASPI Score	70.99

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 31–35, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI) Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Worksheet Explanation" Alaska Department of Education, page 5, accessed July 14, 2016, https://eed.alaska.gov/akaccountability/aspi/ASPI_Worksheet_CompleteExplanation.pdf.

3. Ibid., 6–7.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 2–3.

6. "Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI): 2013-14," Alaska Department of Education, page 9, accessed July 12, 2016, https://education.alaska.gov/aspi/2014/districts/Anchorage_Schools.pdf.

Arizona

Arizona includes high-achieving students in its growth model but does little else to encourage high schools to pay attention to them.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Arizona's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Arizona's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES ARIZONA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Arizona does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Arizona uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, achievement counts for 44 percent of summative school ratings, while "growth for all students" counts for 25 percent. (See Exhibits A and B.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Arizona does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[4]

EXHIBIT A[5]

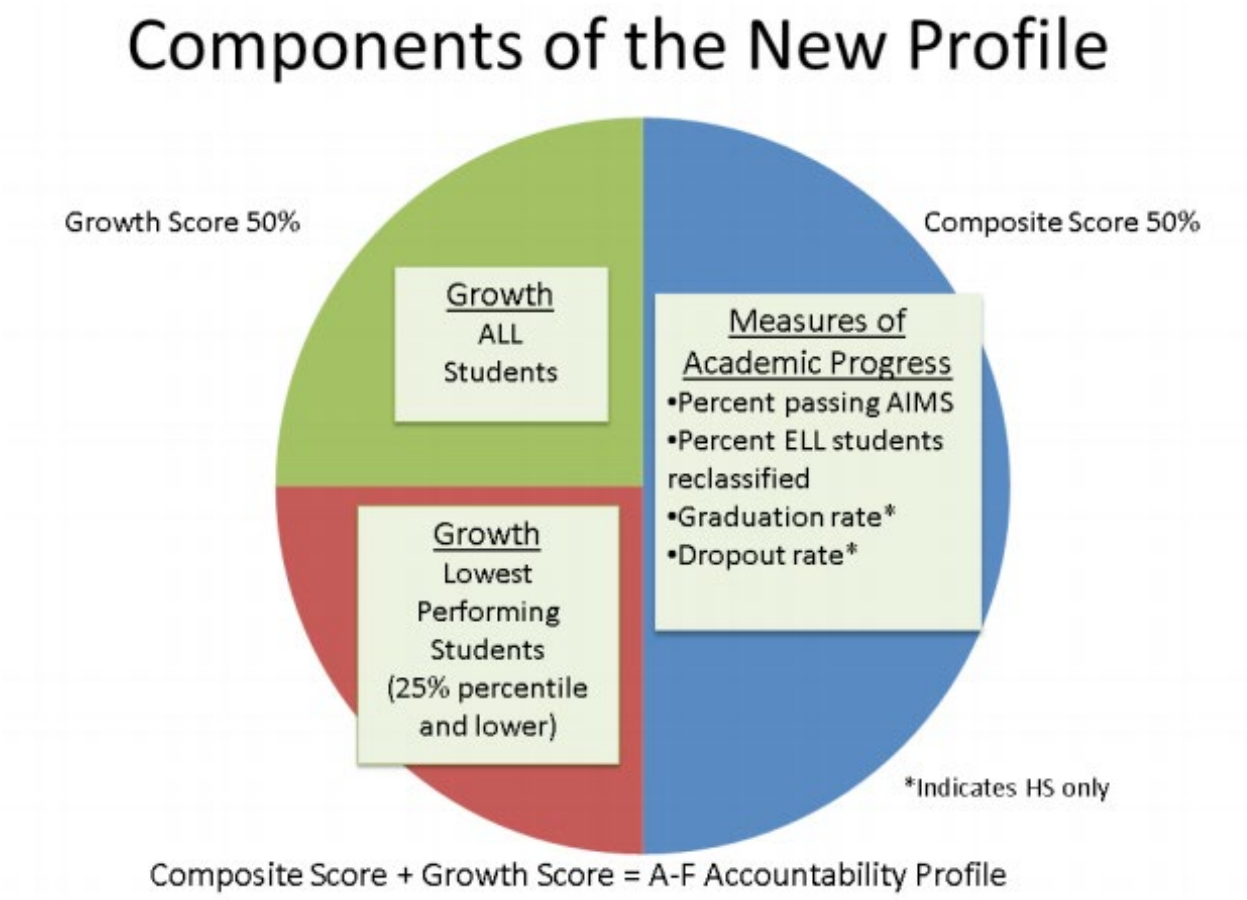

EXHIBIT B[6]

Table 6. Components of the composite score

Component	Points Possible	Applicable Grades	Description
AIMS & AIMS A proficiency	0 – 100	3-8, 10-12	Percentage of students who Meet or Exceed standards
ELL Additional Points	0 or 3	K-12	23% of FAY ELL students reclassified proficient
FFB Rate Reduction Additional Points	0 or 3	Grade 3 Reading, Grade 8 Math	Reduction of annual falls far below rate
Dropout Rate Reduction Additional Points	0 or 3	9-12	Average annual reduction of dropout rate
Graduation Rate Additional Points	0 or 3	12	Average annual increase of 5-year graduation rate

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 36–40, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2013 A-F Letter Grade Accountability System Technical Manual," Arizona Department of Education, page 19, accessed July 12, 2016, http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/files/2013/11/2013-a-f-technical-manual.pdf.

3. Ibid., 14–18.

4. Ibid., 19.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

Arkansas

THREE STARS OUT OF FOUR

Several features of Arkansas's accountability system encourage high schools to focus on their high achievers. Rewarding schools where students earn college credit via AP, IB, or dual enrollment programs would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Arkansas's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Arkansas's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES ARKANSAS'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Arkansas gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Arkansas uses a multivariate value-added model.[3] A multivariate value-added model estimates a school's contribution to students' academic growth by comparing their actual growth to their expected growth based on prior achievement and other factors.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, both "growth for all students" and achievement count for 33 percent of summative school ratings.[4]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Arkansas reports some of these data, but the number of students who earn college credit before graduating plays no role in determining summative high school ratings.[5] (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[6]

College Credit Accumulation Rate	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-2015		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
All Students	N/A	N/A	N/A	81.6 %	81.6 %	79.7 %	---	---	---
African American	N/A	N/A	N/A	92.0 %	92.0 %	69.9 %	---	---	---
Hispanic	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.0 %	0.0 %	79.0 %	---	---	---
Caucasian	N/A	N/A	N/A	82.8 %	82.8 %	82.4 %	---	---	---

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 41–45, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Public School Rating System on Annual Report Cards (Emergency Rule)," page 2, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/rules/Current/2016/A-F_Emergency_020916_with_Effective_Date.pdf.

3. Ibid., 3–4.

4. Ibid., 6–7.

5. Ibid., 2.

6. "Academics Plus High: School Report Card 2014-2015," Arkansas Department of Education, accessed August 24, 2016, https://adesrc.arkansas.gov/ReportCard/View?lea=6040703&schoolYear=2015.

California

California's new accountability system will rate high schools based on the number of students who earn college credit before graduation. However, its emphasis on proficiency rates gives schools an incentive to ignore their high achievers.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine California's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined California's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	California's new achievement indicator does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	California has yet to develop a growth model, though it is exploring the possibility of using a gain score or multivariate value-added model.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	California will not calculate summative school ratings under its new accountability system.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	California will rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

Proposed Design Features for Top-Level Summary Data Display.

	LEA/SCHOOL INFO HERE (could include basic demographic info)							
Navigation pane, with tabs pointing to sub-pages with detailed reports, model practices and resources.	**LCFF Priority**	**Indicators**	**All Student Performance**			**Equity Report[1]**		**Narrative**
			Status	**Change**		Red~	Orange^	
	4	ELA Assessment (K-8)	High	Improved Significantly	#	1, 5~	2^	(Optional for State Indicators)
		Math Assessment (K-8)	High	Improved	+	2,3~	6^	
4=Pupil Achievement 5=Pupil Engagement 6=School Climate 7=Course Access 8=Other pupil outcomes 1=Basic Resources 2=Standards Implementation 3=Parental Involvement	4	English Learner Proficiency	Intermediate	Maintained	-	N/A (indicator applies only to English Learners)		
	5	Graduation Rate (9-12)	Low	Improved	-	1~	None	
	5	Chronic Absenteeism (K-8)	Very Low	Maintained	~	1, 4, 8, 9~	7, 10, 12^	
	6	Suspension Rate & Local Climate Survey	Low	Maintained	^	6,9~	10^	
	7, 8	College & Career Readiness (9-12)	High	Improved Significantly	#	None	1^	
	1	Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)	Met		+	N/A		(Summarize Self-Assessment Results)
	2	Implementation of Academic Standards	Not Met for One Year		^	N/A		
	3	Parent Engagement	Met		+	N/A		

Note: The following symbols correspond to the Performance Category noted in parentheses for All Student Performance and within the Equity Report: # (Blue); + (Green); - (Yellow); ^ (Orange); ~ (Red).

[1] The Equity Report identifies any student subgroup, with valid n-size, that is in the Red or Orange level of performance on the indicator. Users can generate more detailed reports showing performance for all student subgroups. The Equity Report would include the specific student subgroups listed in Education Code 52052: Socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils; English learners; Foster youth; Pupils with disabilities; Homeless youth; and racial/ethnic student subgroups currently reflected in standard reporting (American Indian/Native Alaskan; Asian; Black/African-American; Filipino; Hispanic/Latino; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; Two or more races; and White). This mock-up identifies student subgroups by number for illustrative purposes only.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 46–50, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "The Academic Indicator," California Department of Education, pages 8–9, 14–17, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cp/documents/cpagjun16item02slides3.pdf.

3. "Developing a New State Accountability System: Update of Possible Student-Growth Models to Communicate Smarter Balanced Results," California Department of Education, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-dsib-amard-jun16item01.doc.

4. "The California Model Overview," California Department of Education, page 47, accessed July 27, 2016, https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2993450-CaliforniaModelpresentation.html.

5. "College and Career Indicator," California Department of Education, pages 8–9, accessed July 27, 2016, http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cp/documents/cpagjun16item02slides2revised.pdf.

6. "Accountability and Continuous Improvement," California Department of Education, page 5, accessed October 14, 2016, https://www.csba.org/~/~/media/CSBA/Files/TrainingAndEvents/LeadershipInstitute/Presentation_SBE-DaveSapp_7-15-16.ashx.

Colorado

Colorado's high school accountability system emphasizes the growth and achievement of all students. Rewarding schools where students earn college credit via AP, IB, or dual enrollment programs would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Colorado's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Colorado's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES COLORADO'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	Colorado will base its new academic achievement indicator on a school's average scale score, thereby rewarding advanced achievement. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Colorado will use a student growth percentile model. (See Exhibit A.) A student growth percentile model will compare students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, "growth for all students" will count for 40 percent of summative school ratings, while achievement will count for 30 percent. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	Colorado will not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[2]

Scoring Guide for 2016 District/School Performance Frameworks

Performance Indicator	*Measure/Metric*	*Rating*	*Point Value*		
Academic Achievement	*The district or school's mean scale score was (2016 baseline): see table below for actual values*		All Students	Each Disaggregated Group	
	• at or above the 85th percentile of all schools in 2016	Exceeds	8	1.00	
	• below the 85th percentile but at or above the 50th percentile	Meets	6	0.75	
	• below the 50th percentile but at or above the 15th percentile	Approaching	4	0.50	
	• below the 15th percentile of all schools in 2016	Does Not Meet	2	0.25	
	Students Previously Identified for a READ Plan (bonus point)				
	• Mean scale score at or above 725 (CMAS PARCC Level 3 cut)			1 bonus point	
Academic Growth	*Median Growth Percentile was:*		All Students	Disaggregated Group	English Language Proficiency
	• at or above 65	Exceeds	8	1.00	4
	• below 65 but at or above 50	Meets	6	0.75	3
	• below 50 but at or above 35	Approaching	4	0.50	2
	• below 35	Does Not Meet	2	0.25	1
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	*Dropout Rate: The district or school dropout rate was (of all schools in 2015):*				
	• at or below 0.5%	Exceeds	4		
	• at or below 2.0% but above 0.5%	Meets	3		
	• at or below 5.0% but above 2.0%	Approaching	2		
	• above 5.0%	Does Not Meet	1		
	Average Colorado ACT Composite score was (using 2010 cut-scores):				
	• at or above 22.0	Exceeds	4		
	• at or above 20.0 but below 22.0	Meets	3		
	• at or above 17.0 but below 20.0	Approaching	2		
	• below 17.0	Does Not Meet	1		
	Matriculation Rate (of all schools in 2015):				
	• at or above the 85th percentile (73.1%)	Exceeds	2.0		
	• below the 85th percentile (73.1%) but at or above the 50th	Meets	1.5		
	• below the 50th percentile (59.3%) but at or above the 15th	Approaching	1.0		
	• below the 15th percentile (41.1%)	Does Not Meet	0.5		
	Graduation Rate and Disaggregated Graduation Rate (Best of 4-, 5-, 6-, or 7-year):		All Students	Each Disaggregated Group	
	• at or above 95.0%	Exceeds	4	1.00	
	• at or above 85.0% but below 95.0%	Meets	3	0.75	
	• at or above 75.0% but below 85.0%	Approaching	2	0.50	
	• below 75.0%	Does Not Meet	1	0.25	

Academic Achievement: Mean Scale Score by Percentile Cut-Points

The Academic Achievement Indicator reflects achievement as measured by the mean scale score on Colorado's standardized assessments. The presented targets for the achievement indicators have been established utilizing 2016 school baseline CMAS Science, CMAS PARCC and DLM data.

Mean Scale Score by Percentile Cut-Points - 1-year (2016 school baseline)

Percentile	English Language Arts				Mathematics				Science			
	Elem	Middle	High	All	Elem	Middle	High	All	Elem	Middle	High	All
15th percentile	722.3	724.1	724.6	723.1	719.1	716.5	717.3	718.2	531.9	527.7	564.4	538.7
50th percentile	739.5	740.1	739.6	739.6	734.3	731.2	729.8	732.9	601.7	591.4	609.2	600.2
85th percentile	755.9	757.3	753.3	754.9	751.9	746.2	746.0	749.3	655.9	643.3	651.3	652.7

Cut-Points for Each Performance Indicator

	Cut-Point: The district or school earned... of the points eligible.	
Achievement; Growth; Postsecondary Readiness	• at or above 87.5%	Exceeds
	• at or above 62.5% - below 87.5%	Meets
	• at or above 37.5% - below 62.5%	Approaching
	• below 37.5%	Does Not Meet

Total Possible Points by Indicator

Indicator	Total Possible Points per EMH Level	Elementary/Middle	High/District
Achievement	36 total points (8 for each subject for all students and 4 for each subject by disaggregated groups)	40%	30%
Growth	28 total points (8 for each subject for all students and 4 for each subject by disaggregated groups) and 4 for English language proficiency	60%	40%
Postsecondary Readiness	18 total points (4 for each sub-indicator except 8 for graduation, and 2 for matriculation)	not applicable	30%

Cut-Points for Plan/Category Type Assignment

	District	*School*	*Plan Type/Category Type*
Total Framework Points	%	not applicable	Accredited w/Distinction (District only)
	%	%	Accredited (District) or Performance Plan (School)
	%	%	Accredited w/Improvement Plan (District) or Improvement Plan (School)
	%		Accr. w/Priority Improvement Plan (District) or Priority Improvement (School)
	%	%	Accredited w/Turnaround Plan(District) or Turnaround Plan (School)

Version and Corresponding Data Utilized in Framework

Version & Included Data	Version A	Default one year calculations reported by individual EMH levels
	Version B	One year achievement and growth calculations combined across EMH levels with one year PWR calculations
	Version C	One year achievement and growth calculations reported by individual EMH levels with three year PWR calculations
	Version D	One year achievement and growth calculations combined across EMH levels with three year PWR calculations

September 30, 2016

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 51–55,(District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Scoring Guide for 2016 District/School Performance Frameworks," Colorado Department of Education, accessed October 11, 2016, http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/2016_framework_scoring_guide.

Connecticut

Connecticut's high school accountability system rewards several forms of advanced achievement. Developing a growth measure for high schools would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Connecticut's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Connecticut's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

How States Can Prioritize High Achievers in Their High School Accountability Systems

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES CONNECTICUT'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Connecticut gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Connecticut does not rate schools' growth at the high school level. (See Exhibit A.)
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Achievement counts for 48 percent of summative high school ratings, while "growth for all students" receives no weight. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Connecticut rates high schools' success in earning college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment programs. (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[3]

Schools to Earn Points on New Indicators

Points listed below available in years 2 and 3

	Elementary	Middle	High	Middle/ High
Indicator 1: Academic Achievement – ELA, Math and Science (All Students, High Needs Subgroup)	300	300	600	300
Indicator 2: Academic Growth – ELA and Math (All Students, High Needs Subgroup)	400	400	*n/a*	400
Indicator 4: Attendance / Chronic Absence (All Students, High Needs Subgroup)	100	100	100	100
Indicators 5 and 6: Preparation for College and Career Readiness (Courses/Exams)	*n/a*	*n/a*	100	100
Indicator 7: Graduation - On Track in 9th Grade	*n/a*	50	50	50
Indicators 8 and 9: Graduation: (4-year All Students, 6-year High Needs Subgroup)	*n/a*	*n/a*	200	200
Indicator 10: Postsecondary Entrance	*n/a*	*n/a*	100	100
Indicator 11: Physical Fitness	50	50	50	50
Indicator 12: Arts Access	*n/a*	*n/a*	50	50
Total Possible Points	**850**	**900**	**1250**	**1350**

CSDE

Note: Indicator 3 is the participation rate.

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EXHIBIT B[4]

Indicator 6: Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness - Exams

Indicator	Max Points – All Years
Percentage of students in grades 11 & 12 achieving CCR benchmark on *at least one* of the following: Smarter Balanced 11th ***or*** SAT ***or*** ACT ***or*** AP ***or*** IB	50

- Percentage of 11th and 12th graders who meet the following benchmark scores on at least one exam:
  - Smarter Balanced – Level 3 or higher on both ELA and math; or
  - SAT – composite score of 1550 or higher; or
  - ACT – meeting benchmark on 3 of 4 exams; or
  - AP – 3 or higher on an AP exam; or
  - IB – 4 or higher on an IB exam.
- Ultimate target is 75%. Points will be prorated based on the percentage of the ultimate target achieved.

Data Source: June PSIS (to establish 11th and 12th graders), SAT/AP from College Board, ACT from ACT, Inc., IB from International Baccalaureate Organization

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 56–61, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement,"page 45, accessed September 5, 2016, http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/evalresearch/using_accountability_results_to_guide_improvement_20160228.pdf.

3. "Connecticut State Board of Education ESEA Flexibility Renewal Connecticut's 'Next Generation' Accountability System: March 2016," page 5, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/evalresearch/next_generation_accountability_system_march_2016.pdf.

4. Ibid., 19.

Delaware

Several features of Delaware's accountability system give high schools an incentive to focus on their high-achieving students. Rewarding schools that help students achieve at an advanced level on state tests would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Delaware's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Delaware's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES DELAWARE'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Delaware does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2] (See Exhibits A and B.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Delaware uses a gain score model.[3] A gain score model measures the absolute improvemvent in students' achievement (in points) using a common scale.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, "growth for all students" counts for 45 percent of summative school ratings, while achievement counts for 25 percent.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	Delaware high schools earn points for students who score a three or higher on AP exams, or a four or higher on IB exams.[5] (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[6]

Delaware Department of Education

Delaware School Success Framework

Appoquinimink High School

Address
1080 Bunker Hill Road, Middletown, DE 19709

Phone
(302) 449-3840

Website
www.apposchooldistrict.com/

District
Appoquinimink School District

Principal
Keisha Brinkley

Grades Served
9-11

Demographics

Total Enrollment	1552
American Indian/ Native American	0.3%
African American	25.8%
Asian	4.3%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.2%
Hispanic	5.2%
White	63.1%
Multiracial	1.2%
Combined Student Groups (Student Gap Group)	39.5%
Low Income	10.1%
Students with Disabilities	8.9%
English Language Learners	0.5%

Post-Secondary Outcomes

The percent of students who complete education and career training beyond high school. Students who do so have a greater likelihood of future employment with higher wages.

School Narrative

AHS is extremely proud of the growth and performance of the academic, athletic, and extracurricular programs in the school's brief history. We have earned recognition in the arts, sports and numerous co-curricular organizations. Twice, we have been selected by the College Board for the National AP Honor Roll (2012, 2014), and in 2015 we were named the number one high school in the state by U.S. News & World Report. Athletically, AHS boasts many successes as it competes in the Blue Hen Conference, Flight A. We are the home of the 2015 Baseball State Champions. Many extracurricular programs offer opportunities to excel beyond the classroom. The music department offers students opportunities to participate in Symphonic Band, Orchestra, and an award-winning Marching Band, or one of the concert choirs. The JROTC participates in training and service activities. Students can participate and compete in one of many vocational student organizations such as BPA, DECA, FFA, FCCLA, and TSA.

School Overall Performance

Academic Achievement

25% of Overall Performance

Students that are proficient have a greater likelihood of entry and success in education and career training beyond high school.

Academic Growth

45% of Overall Performance

Schools with strong growth demonstrate a greater ability to improve student learning over time.

On Track to Graduation

20% of Overall Performance

Students who are on-track are more likely to complete high school on time, as well as succeed in education and training beyond high school.

College & Career Preparation

10% of Overall Performance

Students that demonstrate early success increase their likelihood of entry and success in education and career training beyond high school.

Legend: What do the stars mean?

School Environment

The 5Essentials Survey allows students and staff in grades 4-12 to share their perspectives on the essential conditions for learning.

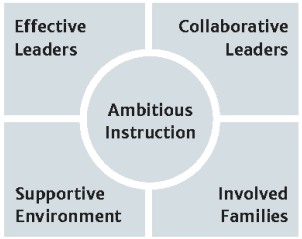
Effective Leaders: The principal works with teachers to implement a clear and strategic vision for school success.

Collaborative Teachers: The staff is committed to the school, receives strong professional development, and works together to improve the school.

Involved Families: The entire school staff builds strong relationships with families and communities to support learning.

Supportive Environment: The school is safe and orderly. Teachers have high expectations for students. Students are supported by their teachers and peers.

Ambitious Instruction: Classes are academically demanding and engage students by emphasizing the application of knowledge.



Legend

- Very Strong
- Strong
- Neutral
- Weak
- Very Weak
- Not Available This Year

Response Rates

Student	N/A	**Teacher**	N/A

EXHIBIT B[7]

Appoquinimink High School Delaware School Success Framework

Academic Performance

Proficiency in English Language Arts
Percent of students who are on grade level in English Language Arts

School	46.8%
District	61.2%
State	50.4%
National	46.6%

Proficiency in Mathematics
Percent of students who are on grade level in Mathematics

School	35.9%
District	47.7%
State	36.0%
National	36.4%

Proficiency in Science
Percent of students who are on grade level in Science

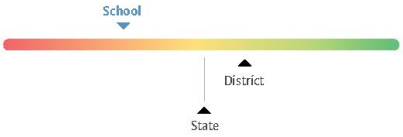
School	46.9%
District	64.7%
State	41.6%

Proficiency in Social Studies
Percent of students who are on grade level in Social Studies

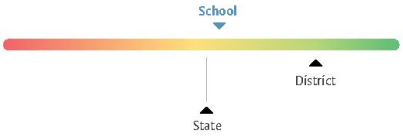
School	54.2%
District	70.7%
State	46.1%

Academic Growth

Growth in English Language Arts
The relative academic progress that students are demonstrating in English Language Arts



Growth in Mathematics
The relative academic progress that students are demonstrating in Mathematics



On Track to Graduation

On Track in 9th Grade
Percent of 9th graders earning the credits necessary to be on-track to graduate from high school in four years

School	99.8%
District	98.0%
State	89.9%

Four-Year Graduation Rate (Class of 2014)
Percent of students who graduate from high school within the traditional four-year time frame

School	95.3%
District	94.7%
State	84.4%

Five-Year Graduation Rate (Class of 2013)
Percent of students who graduate from high school within five years

School	91.8%
District	88.3%
State	81.1%

Six-Year Graduation Rate (Class of 2012)
Percent of students who graduate from high school within six years

School	94.0%
District	92.6%
State	81.3%

College & Career Preparation

College & Career Preparation
Percent of students who have demonstrated preparation for education and career training after high school through Smarter Balanced, AP, IB coursework, SAT, Career and Technical Education Pathway (technical skills attainment), and dual enrollment

School	76.5%
District	80.1%
State	69.4%

For More Information

Visit *www.dssf.doe.k12.de.us* to see online frameworks for all schools and districts in Delaware.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 61–66, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Delaware School Success Framework Reference Guide," Delaware Department of Education, page 6, accessed July 11, 2016, http://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib09/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/404/Delaware%20School%20Success%20Framework%20Reference%20Document-Updated12.15-1.26.pdf.

3. "Delaware School Accountability Growth Model FAQs," Delaware Department of Education, pages 1–4, accessed July 12, 2016, http://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib09/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/309/Delaware%20School%20Accountability%20Growth%20Model%20FAQ%2010142015.pdf.

4. "Delaware School Success Framework Reference Guide," page 6.

5. Ibid., 18–19.

6. "Delaware School Success Framework," Delaware Department of Education, Appoquinimink High School, accessed July 12, 2016, http://dssf.doe.k12.de.us/pdf/24_Appoquinimink_High_School_2015.pdf.

7. Ibid.

District of Columbia

Although D.C.'s charter school authorizer uses growth to evaluate its high schools, its state education agency's accountability system is based on proficiency rates, giving all high schools—but especially those run by the traditional school district—a strong incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine the Distrcit of Columbia's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined the District of Columbia's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers

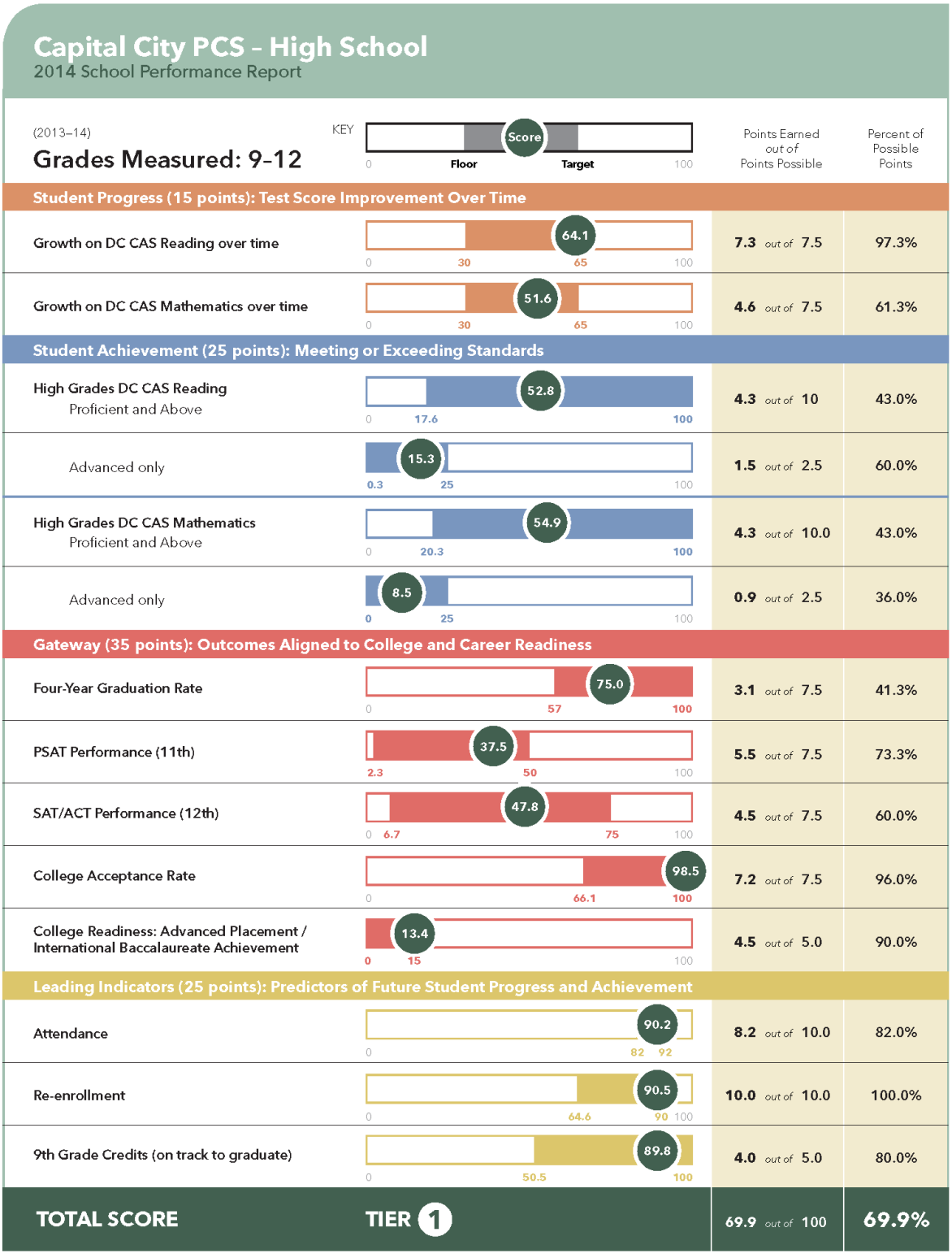
(States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		D.C. gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		The D.C. Public Charter School Board uses a student growth percentile model to rate charter schools' growth. However, the state education agency's current accountability system—used for both public charter schools and the District of Columbia Public Schools—doesn't include student growth as a factor.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Growth plays no part in determining summative ratings in the state education agency's current system, though it accounts for 25 percent of the Board's summative high school ratings.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Although the D.C. Public Charter School Board rates schools based on their AP/IB performance, these measures play no part in determining the summative school ratings in the state education agency's system.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]



Capital City PCS – High School
2014 School Performance Report

(2013–14)
Grades Measured: 9–12

KEY: Score; Floor; Target; 0; 100

		Points Earned out of Points Possible	Percent of Possible Points
Student Progress (15 points): Test Score Improvement Over Time			
Growth on DC CAS Reading over time	64.1 (0, 30, 65, 100)	7.3 out of 7.5	97.3%
Growth on DC CAS Mathematics over time	51.6 (0, 30, 65, 100)	4.6 out of 7.5	61.3%
Student Achievement (25 points): Meeting or Exceeding Standards			
High Grades DC CAS Reading Proficient and Above	52.8 (0, 17.6, 100)	4.3 out of 10	43.0%
Advanced only	15.3 (0.3, 25, 100)	1.5 out of 2.5	60.0%
High Grades DC CAS Mathematics Proficient and Above	54.9 (0, 20.3, 100)	4.3 out of 10.0	43.0%
Advanced only	8.5 (0, 25, 100)	0.9 out of 2.5	36.0%
Gateway (35 points): Outcomes Aligned to College and Career Readiness			
Four-Year Graduation Rate	75.0 (0, 57, 100)	3.1 out of 7.5	41.3%
PSAT Performance (11th)	37.5 (2.3, 50, 100)	5.5 out of 7.5	73.3%
SAT/ACT Performance (12th)	47.8 (0, 6.7, 75, 100)	4.5 out of 7.5	60.0%
College Acceptance Rate	98.5 (0, 66.1, 100)	7.2 out of 7.5	96.0%
College Readiness: Advanced Placement / International Baccalaureate Achievement	13.4 (0, 15, 100)	4.5 out of 5.0	90.0%
Leading Indicators (25 points): Predictors of Future Student Progress and Achievement			
Attendance	90.2 (0, 82, 92)	8.2 out of 10.0	82.0%
Re-enrollment	90.5 (0, 64.6, 90, 100)	10.0 out of 10.0	100.0%
9th Grade Credits (on track to graduate)	89.8 (0, 50.5, 100)	4.0 out of 5.0	80.0%
TOTAL SCORE	**TIER 1**	69.9 out of 100	69.9%

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 67–71, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Accountability Index Calculation and Status Determination," District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, accessed July 29, 2016, http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/Student%20Level%20Index%20Data%20Final_0.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. "2014 School Performance Report: Capital City PCS – High School," District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, accessed October 10, 2016, http://dashboard.dcpcsb.org/detailed/13.

Florida

THREE STARS OUT OF FOUR

Florida's accountability system rewards high schools that help students earn college credit before graduating. Giving additional credit to schools where students achieve at an advanced level on state tests would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

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Here we examine Florida's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

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DOES FLORIDA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Florida does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Florida uses a categorical growth model.[3] A categorical growth model compares the performance-level categories students fall into from one year to the next.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		"Growth for all students" and achievement (in ELA and math) each count for 20 percent of summative school ratings. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Florida rates high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment programs.[4] (See Exhibits A and B.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION fldoe.org

2015-16 Guide to Calculating School and District Grades

Overview

School grades provide an easily understandable metric to measure the performance of a school. Parents and the general public can use the school grade and its associated components to understand how well each school is serving its students. The school grades calculation was revised substantially for the 2014-15 school year to implement statutory changes made by the 2014 Legislature and incorporate the new Florida Standards Assessments (FSA). The 2015-16 school grades model uses the new school grades model adopted for 2014-15 and includes the new learning gains components for the first time.

The purpose of this technical guide is to provide a description of the procedures used to determine school grades for the 2015-16 school year as set forth in Rule 6A-1.09981, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), and Section 1008.34, Florida Statutes (F.S.). This guide does not replace or supersede the rule or statute and is intended to provide the reader with an explanation of the methodology for establishing grades as set forth in rule and statute.

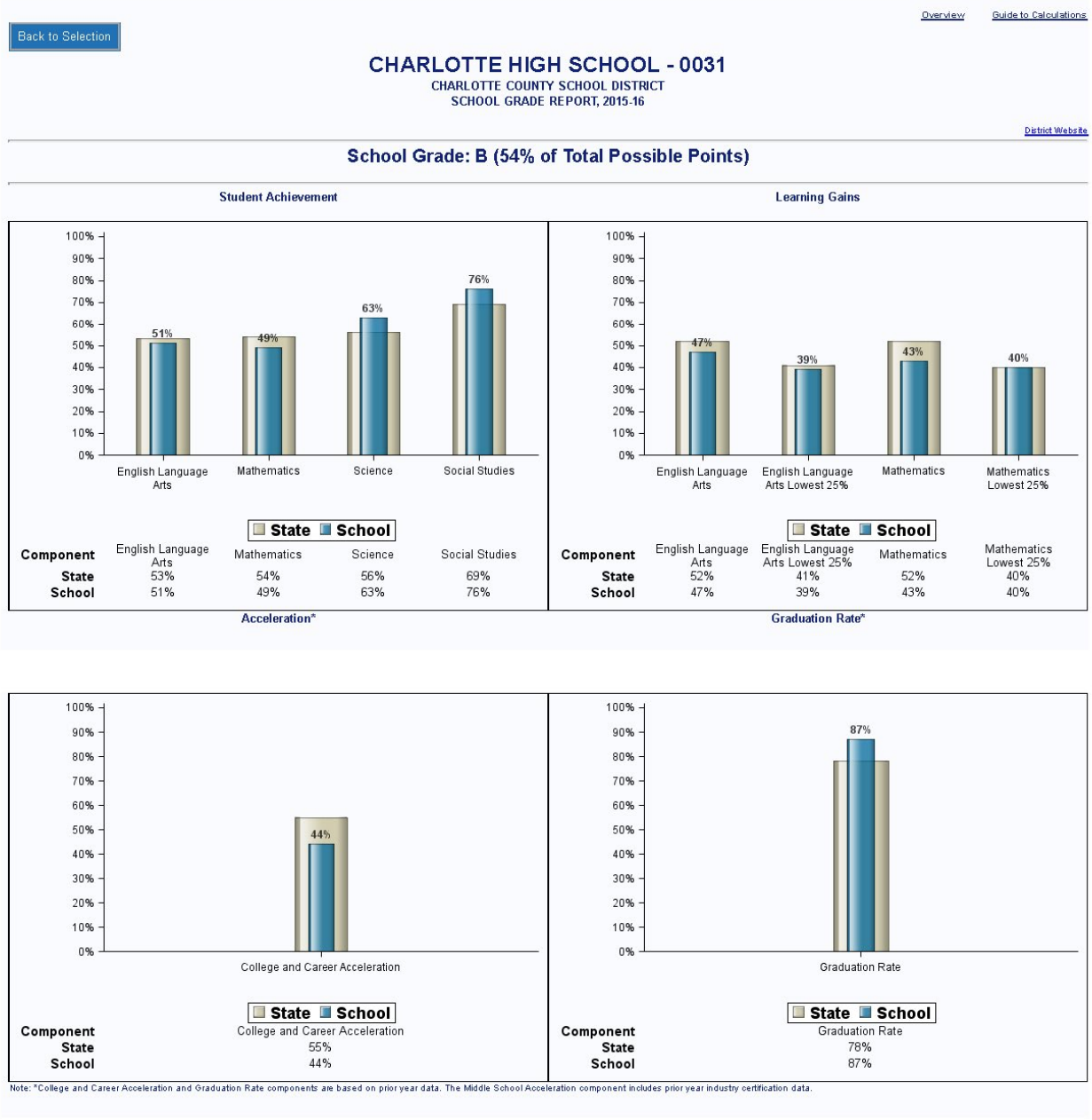
The school grading system focuses the school grading formula on student success measures.

- Achievement
- Learning gains
- Graduation
- Acceleration success
- Maintaining a focus on students who need the most support

Table 1. The 2015-16 School Grades Model

English Language Arts (FSA & FSAA)	Mathematics (FSA, EOCs, FSAA)	Science (NGSSS, EOC, FSAA)	Social Studies (EOCs)	Graduation Rate	Acceleration Success
Achievement (0% to 100%)	Achievement (0% to 100%)	Achievement (0% to 100%)	Achievement (0% to 100%)	4-year Graduation Rate (0% to 100%)	High School (AP, IB, AICE, Dual Enrollment or
Learning Gains (0% to 100%)	Learning Gains (0% to 100%)				Industry Certification) (0% to 100%)
Learning Gains of the Lowest 25% (0% to 100%)	Learning Gains of the Lowest 25% (0% to 100%)				Middle School (EOCs or Industry Certifications) (0% to 100%)

EXHIBIT B[6]


Overview
Guide to Calculations
Back to Selection
CHARLOTTE HIGH SCHOOL - 0031
CHARLOTTE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL GRADE REPORT, 2015-16
District Website
School Grade: B (54% of Total Possible Points)
Student Achievement
Learning Gains
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
51%
49%
63%
76%
English Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
State
School
Component | English Language Arts | Mathematics | Science | Social Studies
State | 53% | 54% | 56% | 69%
School | 51% | 49% | 63% | 76%
47%
39%
43%
40%
English Language Arts
English Language Arts Lowest 25%
Mathematics
Mathematics Lowest 25%
Component | English Language Arts | English Language Arts Lowest 25% | Mathematics | Mathematics Lowest 25%
State | 52% | 41% | 52% | 40%
School | 47% | 39% | 43% | 40%
Acceleration*
Graduation Rate*
44%
College and Career Acceleration
Component | College and Career Acceleration
State | 55%
School | 44%
87%
Graduation Rate
Component | Graduation Rate
State | 78%
School | 87%
Note: *College and Career Acceleration and Graduation Rate components are based on prior year data. The Middle School Acceleration component includes prior year industry certification data.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 72–76, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. 2015-2016 Guide to Calculating Informational Baseline School and District Grades," Florida Department of Education, page 1, accessed July 26, 2016, http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/pdf/1516/SchoolGradesCalcGuide16.pdf.

3. Ibid., 12–21.

4. Ibid., 23–24.

5. Ibid., 1.

6. "Charlotte High School 2015-16 Report Cards" Florida Department of Education, accessed July 26, 2016, https://edstats.fldoe.org/SASStoredProcess/do?_program=%2FARM%2FPERA%2FEIAS%2FSCHOOL+REPORT+CARD%2FSTORED+PROCESSES%2FSchool+Grades&_action=update%2Cnobanner&_updatekey=2081970322.

Georgia

Georgia's high school accountability system is one of the best in the country for high achievers. Other states should take heed.

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To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Georgia's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Georgia's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

How States Can Prioritize High Achievers in Their High School Accountability Systems

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES GEORGIA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	Georgia gives additional credit for students achieving at a "distinguished" level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Georgia uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	Excluding graduation, achievement counts for 35 percent of summative high school ratings, while "growth for all students" counts for 40 percent. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	Georgia rates high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment programs. (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[4]

Scoring

Richard Woods,
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
gadoe.org

Component	Points (100)
Achievement	50 points
Content Mastery	40% = 20 points
Post Readiness	30% = 15 points
Graduation Rate (or predictor)	30% = 15 points
Progress	40 points
Achievement Gap	10 points
Challenge Points	Up to 10 points

Notes:

- Points are equally distributed among indicators within a section
  - Exception: High school graduation rate – 4-year cohort grad rate is worth 2/3 of the points while 5-year cohort grad rate is worth 1/3 of the points

EXHIBIT B[5]

GaDOE
Georgia Department of Education
Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

2015 College and Career Ready Performance Index
High School Grades 9-12

CONTENT MASTERY

1. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones Ninth Grade Literature EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)
2. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones American Literature EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)
3. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones Coordinate Algebra EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)
4. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones Analytic Geometry EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)
5. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones Physical Science EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)
6. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones Biology EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)
7. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones US History EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)
8. Percent of students scoring at Developing Learner or above on the Georgia Milestones Economics EOC (required participation rate ≥ 95%)

*Developing Learners are weighted at 0.5, Proficient Learners are weighted at 1.0, and Distinguished Learners are weighted at 1.5.

POST HIGH SCHOOL READINESS

9. Percent of graduates completing a CTAE pathway, or an advanced academic pathway, or an IB Career Related Programme, or a fine arts pathway, or a world language pathway within their program of study
10. Percent of graduates completing a CTAE pathway and earning a national industry recognized credential
11. Percent of graduates entering TCSG/USG not requiring remediation or learning support courses; or scoring program ready on the Compass; or scoring at least 22 out of 36 on the composite ACT; or scoring at least 1550 out of 2400 on the combined SAT; or scoring 3 or higher on two or more AP exams; or scoring 4 or higher on two or more IB exams
12. Percent of graduates earning high school credit(s) for accelerated enrollment via ACCEL, Dual HOPE Grant, Move On When Ready, Early College, Gateway to College, Advanced Placement courses, or International Baccalaureate courses
13. Percent of students scoring at Meets or Exceeds on the Georgia High School Writing Test
14. Percent of students achieving a Lexile measure greater than or equal to 1275 on the Georgia Milestones American Literature EOC
15. Percent of students' assessments scoring at Proficient or Distinguished Learner on Georgia Milestones EOCs
16. Percent of students missing fewer than 6 days of school

GRADUATION RATE

17. 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate (%)
18. 5-Year Extended Cohort Graduation Rate (%)

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 77–81, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Georgia Department of Education: 2015 and 2016 CCRPI – Summary of Changes," page 1, accessed July 14, 2016, http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Accountability/Documents/Indicators%20and%20Targets/SummaryofChanges.pdf.

3. "A Guide to the Georgia Student Growth Model," accessed July 14, 2016, http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Documents/GSGM/SGPGuide%20121515.pdf.

4. "Understanding the CCRPI: Metro Area Instructional Leadership Conference: February 25, 2016,"Georgia Department of Education, page 15, accessed July 15, 2016, http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Accountability/Documents/Webinars and Presentations/2016-02-24 Understanding the CCRPI ILC 022516.pptx.

5. Ibid., 5.

Hawaii

Some features of Hawaii's accountability system for high schools give them an incentive to focus on high-achieving students. However, by awarding bonus points for the number of students who pass AP/IB courses instead of the number who pass the exams, the system encourages schools to enroll students in courses for which they may not be prepared.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

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Here we examine Hawaii's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

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HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES HAWAII'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Hawaii does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Hawaii uses a student growth percentile model.[2] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, "growth for all students" and achievement (in ELA and math) each count for 15 percent of summative school ratings. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	High schools earn points for students who pass AP, IB, and/or dual credit classes. (See Exhibit A.) In our view, this indicator would be stronger if it were based on AP and IB test scores, thus rewarding achievement instead of encouraging schools to enroll students in courses for which they may not be prepared.

EXHIBIT A[3]

Strive HI Index: Indicators and Measures						
	Elementary		Middle/Intermediate		High	
Achievement	~~160 points~~		~~160 points~~		~~80 points~~	
	ELA proficiency rate	~~70~~	ELA proficiency rate	~~70~~	ELA proficiency rate	~~30~~
	Math proficiency rate	~~70~~	Math proficiency rate	~~70~~	Math proficiency rate	~~30~~
	Science proficiency rate	~~20~~	Science proficiency rate	~~20~~	Science proficiency rate	~~20~~
Growth	~~140 points~~		~~140 points~~		~~60 points~~	
	ELA median SGP	~~70~~	ELA median SGP	~~70~~	ELA median SGP	~~30~~
	Math median SGP	~~70~~	Math median SGP	~~70~~	Math median SGP	~~30~~
Readiness	~~50 points~~		~~50 points~~		~~200 points~~	
	Chronic Absenteeism rate	~~50~~	Chronic Absenteeism rate	~~50~~	4-yr grad rate	~~100~~
					11th grade ACT	~~80~~
					College-going rate	~~10~~
					Five-year graduates	~~10~~
Achievement Gap	~~50 points~~		~~50 points~~		~~60 points~~	
	ELA Current Year Gap rate	~~25~~	ELA Current Year Gap rate	~~25~~	ELA Current Year Gap rate	~~30~~
	Math Current Year Gap rate	~~25~~	Math Current Year Gap rate	~~25~~	Math Current Year Gap rate	~~30~~
Total	~~400 points~~		~~400 points~~		~~400 points~~	

Other Measures					
Elementary		Middle		High	
Retention rate	~~5~~	% of students earning Algebra I credit	~~10~~	Chronic Absenteeism rate	~~5~~
% of 3rd grade students scoring "Above" on SBA Reading claim	~~5~~			% completing advanced coursework (AP, IB, Dual Credit) or completion of CTE pathway (CTE Concentrator)	~~5~~

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 82–87, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Hawaii Growth Model Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)," Hawaii State Department of Education, page 9, accessed July 21, 2016, https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/StriveHIIndexReports/sgp_faq_2013-06-04.pdf.

3. "Strive HI System Index," Hawaii State Department of Education, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/VisionForSuccess/AdvancingEducation/StriveHIPerformanceSystem/Pages/Strive-HISystem-Index.aspx.

Idaho

Idaho's proposed accountability system is among the best in the country for high-achieving students. Other states should take heed.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Idaho's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Idaho's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

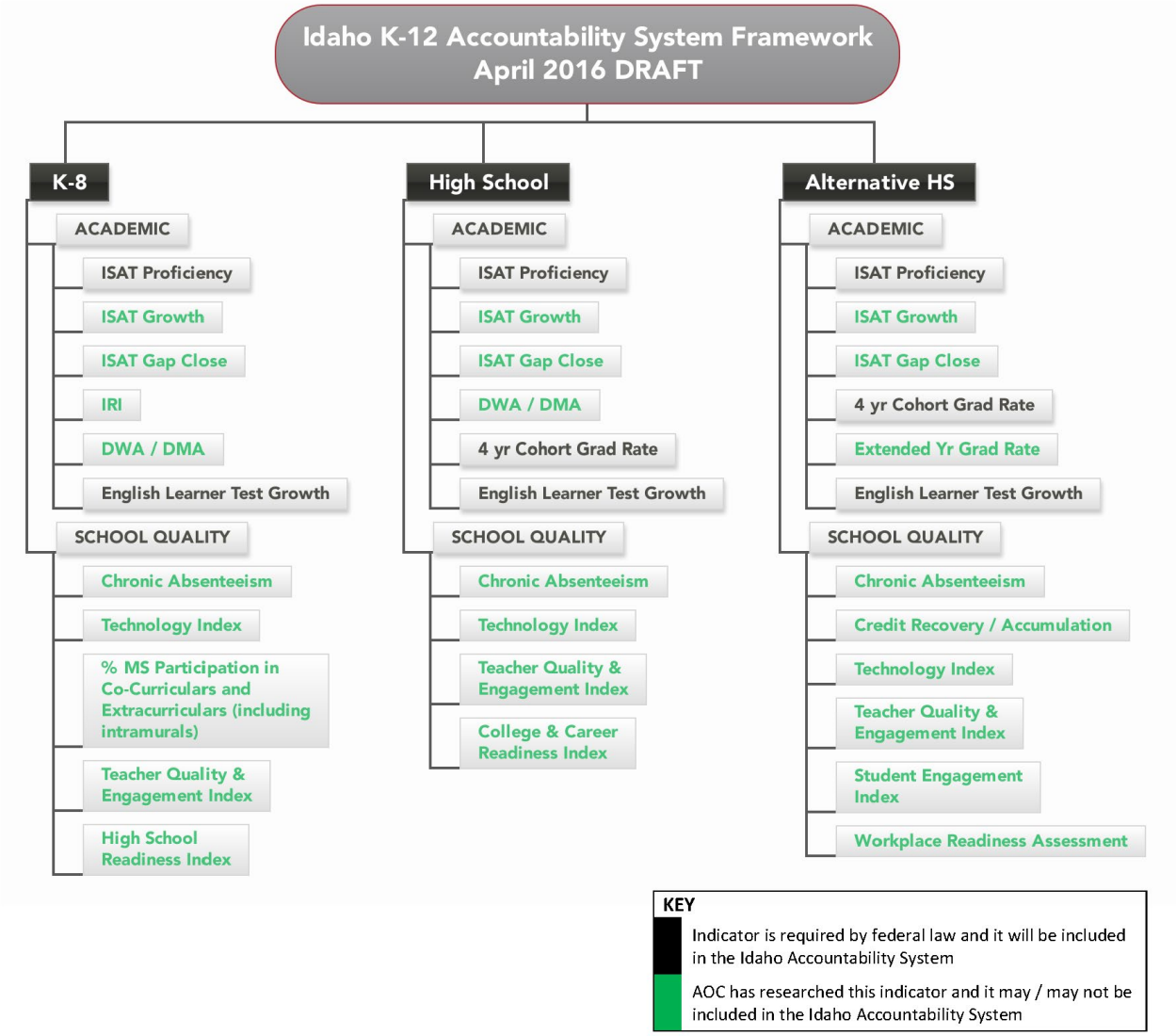
3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES IDAHO'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	Idaho's proposed accountability system will use a performance index to give schools additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Idaho uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	Under its proposed accountability system, Idaho will not assign summative ratings to schools.[4]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	Idaho's proposed accountability system will rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit, via AP, IB, and/or dual credit programs.[5] (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[6]


Idaho K-12 Accountability System Framework
April 2016 DRAFT
K-8
ACADEMIC
ISAT Proficiency
ISAT Growth
ISAT Gap Close
IRI
DWA / DMA
English Learner Test Growth
SCHOOL QUALITY
Chronic Absenteeism
Technology Index
% MS Participation in Co-Curriculars and Extracurriculars (including intramurals)
Teacher Quality & Engagement Index
High School Readiness Index
High School
ACADEMIC
ISAT Proficiency
ISAT Growth
ISAT Gap Close
DWA / DMA
4 yr Cohort Grad Rate
English Learner Test Growth
SCHOOL QUALITY
Chronic Absenteeism
Technology Index
Teacher Quality & Engagement Index
College & Career Readiness Index
Alternative HS
ACADEMIC
ISAT Proficiency
ISAT Growth
ISAT Gap Close
4 yr Cohort Grad Rate
Extended Yr Grad Rate
English Learner Test Growth
SCHOOL QUALITY
Chronic Absenteeism
Credit Recovery / Accumulation
Technology Index
Teacher Quality & Engagement Index
Student Engagement Index
Workplace Readiness Assessment
KEY
Indicator is required by federal law and it will be included in the Idaho Accountability System
AOC has researched this indicator and it may / may not be included in the Idaho Accountability System

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 88–92(District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. Idaho State Board of Education, Tab 10, https://boardofed.idaho.gov/meetings/board/archive/2016/0810-1116/04PPGA04.pdf?cache=1473688935689.

3. "Star Rating Accountability and Business System Rules" Idaho Department of Education, accessed March 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20160429202808/http:/sde.idaho.gov/topics/accountability/files/appeals/StarRating-Accountability-System-Business-Rules.pdf.

4. Idaho State Board of Education.

5. Ibid.

6. "Idaho Draft Accountability Framework," Idaho State Board of Education, page 2, accessed October 14, 2016, https://boardofed.idaho.gov/k_12/documents/accountability/Accountability%20System%20Draft.pdf.

Illinois

The first draft of Illinois's ESSA implementation plan does very little for high-achieving students, but there is still time for the state to rethink its approach. We strongly encourage the Illinois State Board of Education to create an achievement index rather than rely on raw proficiency rates, and to include achievement on AP/IB tests (rather than equitable access to AP/IB coursework) in its measures of "school quality."

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Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Illinois's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Illinois's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

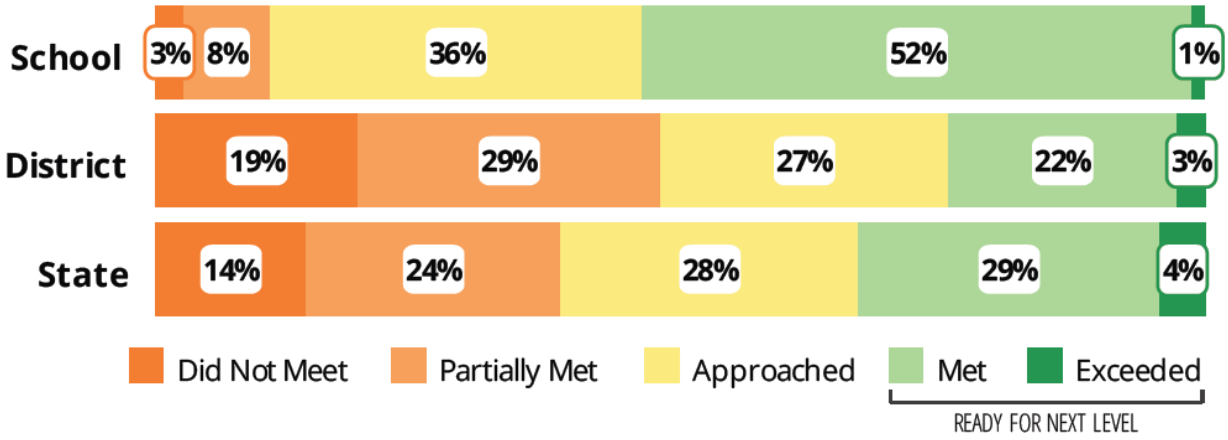
3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES ILLINOIS'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Illinois's draft ESSA plan asks stakeholders how its accountability system can avoid "bubble syndrome" (i.e., the tendency of educators to teach to students who are just above or below the standard for proficiency).[2] The best way to accomplish this is to use existing achievement data to construct a performance index instead of relying on raw proficiency rates. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Illinois does not estimate student growth at the high school level.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Illinois does not estimate student growth at the high school level.
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Illinois's draft ESSA plan suggests that it may include access to AP/IB coursework as an indicator of high school quality, which we believe would be a mistake. Rather than rewarding access, which encourages schools to enroll students in courses for which they may not be prepared, Illinois should award points for the proportion of a schools' students who earn a three on an AP exam or a four on an IB exam.[4]

EXHIBIT A[5]


School
3%
8%
36%
52%
1%
District
19%
29%
27%
22%
3%
State
14%
24%
28%
29%
4%
Did Not Meet
Partially Met
Approached
Met
Exceeded
READY FOR NEXT LEVEL

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 93–97, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan: Draft #1," Illinois State Board of Education, page 21, accessed October 5, 2016, http://www.isbe.net/ESSA/pdf/ESSA-Illinois-State-Plan-draft-1.pdf

3. "Fact Sheet: New Growth Model Using Value Tables," Illinois State Board of Education, accessed July 12, 2016, http://www.isbe.state.il.us/GMWG/pdf/gmvt-fact-sheet-0813.pdf

4. "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan: Draft #1," page 18.

5. "Illinois At-A-Glance Report Card 2014-2015 – Brooks College Prep Academy HS," page 1, accessed July 18, 2016, http://iirc.niu.edu/AtAGlancePDF/PrintToPdf.aspx?RCDTS=150162990250788.

Indiana

THREE STARS OUT OF FOUR

Several features of Indiana's accountability system encourage high schools to pay attention to their high-achieving students. Rewarding schools that help students achieve at an advanced level on state tests would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Indiana's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Indiana's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES INDIANA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Indiana does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Indiana uses a categorical growth model.[3] A categorical growth model compares the performance-level categories students fall into from one year to the next.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, "growth for all students" and achievement each count for 20 percent of a school's summative rating.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Indiana rates high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, or dual enrollment programs.[5] (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[6]

CALCULATING THE FINAL GRADE

To calculate the final A-F grade:

- For schools that DO NOT have grade 12:
  (Overall Performance Score * 50%) + (Overall Growth Score * 50%) = Final Points

- For schools that DO have grade 12 but DO NOT have any combination of grades K-8:
  (Overall Performance Score * 20%) + (Overall Growth Score * 20%) +
  (Multiple Measures Score * 60%) = Final Points

- For schools that DO have grades 3-10 and 12:
  Calculate % of students in the school enrolled in grades 3-8 (EW_{3-8})
  Calculate % of students in the school enrolled in grades 9-12 (EW_{9-12})
  Overall performance score = [(EW_{3-8} * 50% * Performance score) + (EW_{9-12} * 20% * Performance score)]
  Overall growth score = [(EW_{3-8} * 50% * Growth score) + (EW_{9-12} * 20% * Growth score)]
  Overall MM score = (EW_{9-12} * 60% * Multiple Measures score)
  Final Grade = Overall performance score + overall growth score + overall multiple measures score

IMAGINING the possibilities. MAKING THEM HAPPEN.
Indiana Department of Education
Glenda Ritz, NBCT

EXHIBIT B[7]

Student MULTIPLE MEASURES: Sample Calculation

High School XYZ (Grades 9-12)

Example

Graduation Rate:

- 88 of 100 students in the current year cohort graduated in four years
  Four year graduation rate = 88.0%
  Graduation rate score = (88.0% * 100) = 88.0 points
- For last year's cohort, High School XYZ's four-year graduation rate was 92%. For the same cohort, the five-year graduation rate was 97%.
  Graduation rate bonus score = (97 - 92) = 5 points

Overall Graduation Rate Score = (88.0 + 5) = 93.0

College and Career Readiness:

- 44 of 88 students in the graduating four-year cohort earned a college and career readiness measure (passing IB, passing AP, earning dual credit, and/or earning Industry Certification)

College and Career Readiness Score = (44 / 88 = 50%. 50% is > 25%). Above 25% = 100 points

Overall Multiple Measures Score = (93 + 100) / 2 = 96.5 points

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Indiana Department of Education
Glenda Ritz, NBCT
Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 98–103, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "The NEW A-F Accountability System," Indiana Department of Education, page 6, accessed July 22, 2016, http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/accountability/accountability-presentationadvanced.pdf.

3. "Growth," Indiana Department of Education, accessed July 22, 2016, http://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/growth.

4. "The NEW A-F Accountability System," page 23.

5. Ibid., 19, 24.

6. Ibid., 23.

7. Ibid., 20.

Iowa

Iowa includes high-achieving students in its growth model but its accountability system does little else to encourage schools to pay attention to them. Rewarding schools that help students achieve at an advanced level and earn college credit before graduation would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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Here we examine Iowa's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Iowa's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

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DOES IOWA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Iowa does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Iowa uses a gain-score model.[3] A gain-score model measures the absolute improvement in students' achievement (in points) using a common scale.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, "growth for all students" and achievement (in ELA and math) each count for 22.5 percent of a school's summative rating.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Iowa does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

Measures	High School	Middle School	Elementary School
Proficiency	22.2%	25.0%	28.6%
Closing Achievement Gap	22.2%	25.0%	28.6%
College and Career Ready Growth	11.1%	12.5%	14.3%
Annual Expected Growth	11.1%	12.5%	14.3%
College and Career Readiness	11.1%	12.5%	NA
Graduation Rate	11.1%	NA	NA
Attendance	5.6%	6.3%	7.1%
Staff Retention	5.6%	6.3%	7.1%
	100.0%	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 104–109, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Iowa School Report Card –Technical Guide," Iowa Department of Education, page 6, accessed July, 14 2016, http://reports.educateiowa.gov/schoolreportcard/content/Technical%20Guide-Iowa%20Report%20Card%20v1_1.pdf.

3. Ibid., 10–11.

4. Ibid., 6.

5. Ibid.

Kansas

Kansas includes high-achieving students in its growth model, but its high school report cards provide parents and policymakers with little information about how well these students are served.

The Purpose of This Analysis

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2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES KANSAS'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

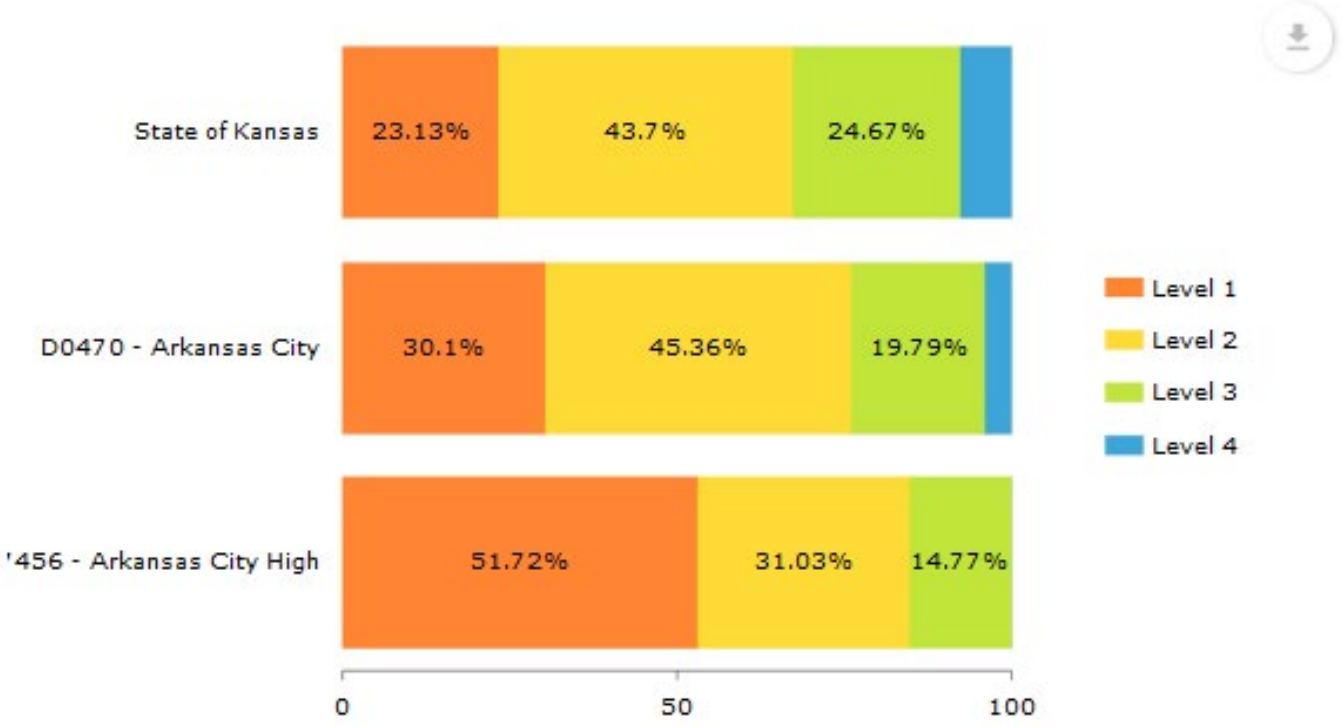
INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Kansas does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Kansas uses a student growth percentile model.[2] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	Kansas does not have a system for calculating summative school ratings. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Kansas does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[3]

Assessment Results

Assessment Results

*To protect student privacy, when a subgroup has fewer than 10 students the data is not displayed.



Percent in each Performance Category and Percent Not Tested

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Organization Level	% Level 1	% Level 2	% Level 3	% Level 4	% Not Tested
State of Kansas	23.13	43.7	24.67	7.57	0.9
D0470 - Arkansas City	30.1	45.36	19.79	4.04	0.69
7456 - Arkansas City High	51.72	31.03	14.77	0	2.46

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 110–115, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "ESEA Flexibility" Renewal from Kansas – June 11, 2015," pages 110, 141, accessed July 19, 2016, http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Title%20Programs%20and%20Services/ESEAWaiver/20150611-ESEA-FlexRequest.pdf.

3. "Kansas Report Card 2014-2015 – Arkansas City High," accessed July 19, 2016, http://ksreportcard.ksd.e.org/home.aspx?org_no=D0470&bldg_no=7456&rptType=1.

Kentucky

Several features of Kentucky's accountability system encourage high schools to pay attention to high-achieving students. Rewarding schools where students earn college credit via AP, IB, or dual enrollment programs would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Kentucky's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Kentucky's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES KENTUCKY'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Kentucky gives additional credit for students achieving at a "distinguished" level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Kentucky uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, "growth for all students" and achievement each count for 20 percent of a school's summative rating. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Kentucky does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating, though it does report school level data on AP performance.[4] (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

How will student performance be used for accountability?

Next-Generation Learners is the main component of Unbridled Learning and is based on many measures of student performance on various tests. Points will be awarded based on how well a school performs on each measure.

- Achievement – Just as in the past, elementary and middle school students' scores will be labeled as novice, apprentice, proficient or distinguished. Kentucky's goal is 100 percent proficiency for all students. At high school, achievement is based on end-of-course exams and an on-demand writing test.
- Gap – Schools will compare test results for African-American, Hispanic, Native American, special education, low income and limited English proficiency students, combined into one gap group, to results for other students who aren't in those categories.
- Growth – A statistical program will measure how much students' scores are improving from one year to the next.
- College/Career Readiness – Schools and districts will provide information about how many students are ready for college and/or careers, based on test scores and certifications earned.
- Graduation Rate – Schools and districts will report how many students graduate within four years of high school.

Calculating Next-Generation Learner Score

	Elementary	Middle	High
Achievement	30%	28%	20%
Gap	30%	28%	20%
Growth	40%	28%	20%
Readiness for College/Career	n/a	16%	20%
Graduation Rate	n/a	n/a	20%

EXHIBIT B[6]

Advanced Placement (AP)

These are tests that can be taken upon completion of Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Students earning a score of three or above may qualify for college credit. ***The number of students listed in the Assessment results reflects students tested at a school.***

Advanced Placement - Performance and Participation															
Group	Number of Test Takers			Percent of Total Test Takers			Number of Exams Taken			Number of Exams with Scores 3-5			Percent of Exams with Scores 3-5		
Level	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
All Students	17	17	31,772	100.0	100.0	100.0	28	28	50,912	3	3	24,437	10.7	10.7	48.0
Male	***	***	13,138			41.4			21,817			11,234			51.5
Female	***	***	17,782			56.0			27,910			12,678			45.4
White (Non-Hispanic)	***	***	26,524			83.5			42,556			20,713			48.7
African American			1,750			5.5			2,489			690			27.7
Hispanic			1,001			3.2			1,573			644			40.9
Asian			1,028			3.2			2,180			1,487			68.2
American Indian or Alaska Native			39			0.1			50			21			42.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander			27			0.1			37			15			40.5
Two or more races			551			1.7			842			342			40.6
Migrant			23			0.1			33			8			24.2
Free/Reduced-Price Meals	***	***	8,756			27.6			13,056			4,122			31.6
Disability-With IEP (Total)			154			0.5			191			61			31.9
Gap Group (non-duplicated)	***	***	9,942			31.3			14,858			4,919			33.1
Limited English Proficiency			41			0.1			46			20			43.5

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. School results are based on the grades in the school.

*** Using guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, counts must be displayed for all groups. In order to protect student identification required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), performance results are suppressed.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 116– 121, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Unbridled learning accountability model," Kentucky Department of Education, page 5, accessed July 20, 2016, http://education.ky.gov/comm/ul/documents/white%20paper%20062612%20final.pdf.

3. "PGES Student Growth," Kentucky Department of Education, accessed May 31, 2016, http://education.ky.gov/teachers/pges/tpges/pages/tpges-student-growth-page.aspx.

4. "Unbridled learning accountability model," page 8.

5. "A Parent's Guide to School Accountability in Kentucky," Kentucky Department of Education, accessed May 31, 2016, http://education.ky.gov/comm/UL/Documents/Parents%20Guide%20Accountability%20082812.pdf.

6. "Kentucky School Report Card – Bellevue High School," Kentucky Department of Education, accessed July 20, 2016, https://applications.education.ky.gov/src/Assessment.aspx.

Louisiana

Louisiana's proposed high school accountability system is one of the best in the country for high achievers. Other states should take heed.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Louisiana's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Louisiana's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

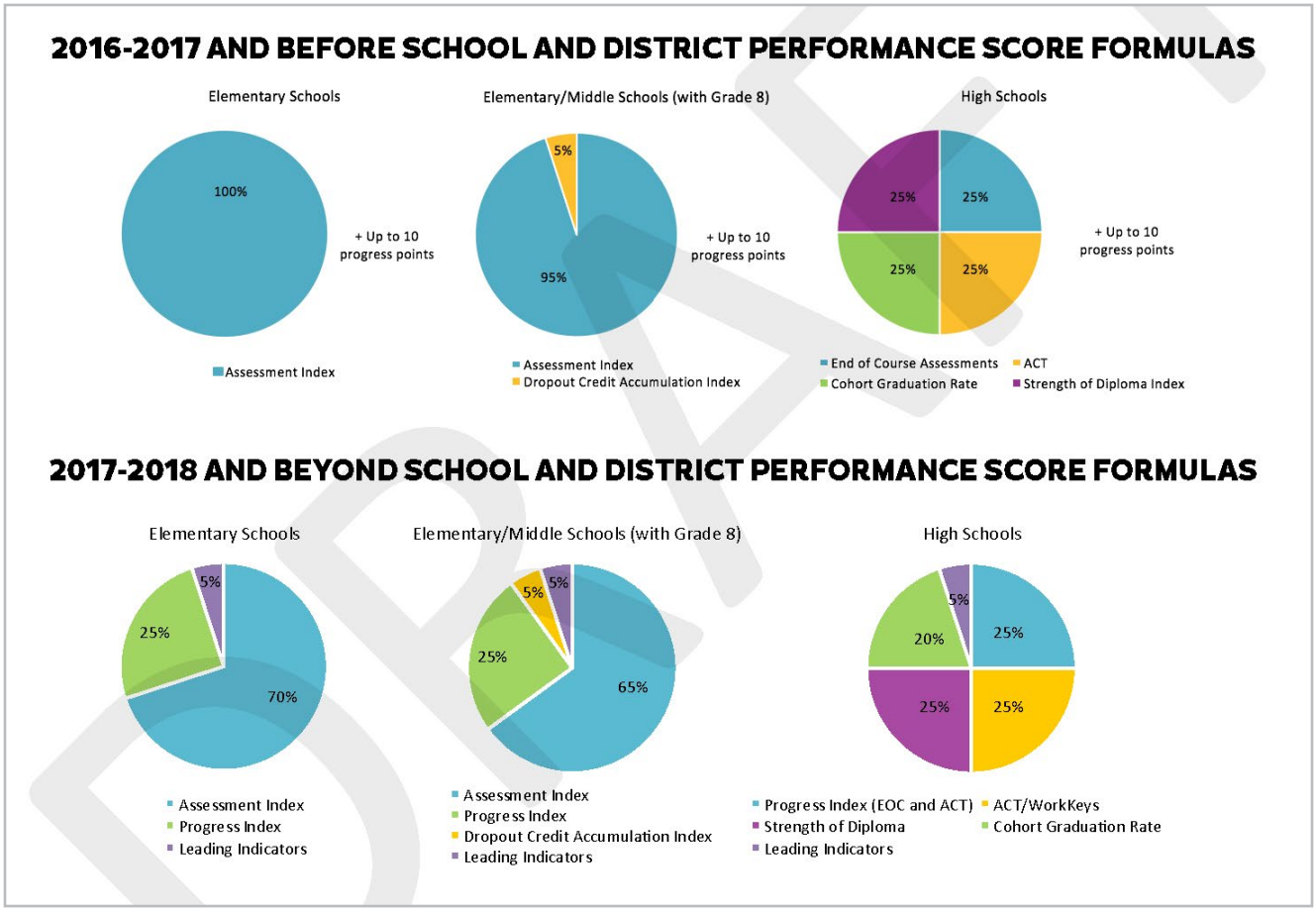
3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES LOUISIANA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	Louisiana will use a performance index to reward advanced achievement.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Louisiana will use a model that considers the growth of all students (most likely a multivariate value-added model).[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	Achievement and "growth for all students" will each count for 25 percent of a high school's summative rating.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	High schools will earn points for AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment performance and participation.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]


2016-2017 AND BEFORE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT PERFORMANCE SCORE FORMULAS
Elementary Schools
100%
+ Up to 10 progress points
Assessment Index
Elementary/Middle Schools (with Grade 8)
5%
95%
+ Up to 10 progress points
Assessment Index
Dropout Credit Accumulation Index
High Schools
25%
25%
25%
25%
+ Up to 10 progress points
End of Course Assessments
ACT
Cohort Graduation Rate
Strength of Diploma Index
2017-2018 AND BEYOND SCHOOL AND DISTRICT PERFORMANCE SCORE FORMULAS
Elementary Schools
5%
25%
70%
Assessment Index
Progress Index
Leading Indicators
Elementary/Middle Schools (with Grade 8)
5%
5%
25%
65%
Assessment Index
Progress Index
Dropout Credit Accumulation Index
Leading Indicators
High Schools
5%
20%
25%
25%
25%
Progress Index (EOC and ACT)
ACT/WorkKeys
Strength of Diploma
Cohort Graduation Rate
Leading Indicators

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 122–127, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Louisiana Every Student Succeeds Act Framework," Louisiana Department of Education, accessed October 17, 2016, https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/louisiana-believes/essa-framework.pdf?sfvrsn=4.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

Maine

Because it is based on proficiency and graduation rates, Maine's accountability system for high schools gives them a strong incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Maine's system for rating high school performance during the 2013–14 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Maine's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MAINE'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Maine does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Maine does not estimate student growth at the high school level.[3] (See Exhibit A.)
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Growth plays no role in determining summative high school ratings.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Maine does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5] (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[6]

School Report Card 2014

Edward Little High School — **This School's Grade: D** (Grades 11)

Previous Grade: C

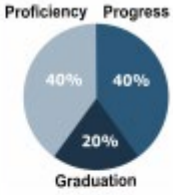
Principal	JAMES MILLER (207) 333-6652
Superintendent	KATHERINE GRONDIN (207) 784-6431
School Website	www.auburnschl.edu/education/school/school.php

Measures	School Average / Maine Average	School Points	Maximum Available Points
Proficiency			
Math 44.4% — The percentage of students who scored proficient or above on the 2012-13 MHSA and the 2012-13 PAAP.	'14 / '13	44.4	100
Reading 42% — The percentage of students who scored proficient or above on the 2012-13 MHSA and the 2012-13 PAAP.	'14 / '13	42.0	100
Progress			
Math - All Students 45.3 — The most recent 3-year average of math proficiency plus the change from the previous 3-year average. The 3-year comparisons mitigate year-to-year volatility.	'14 / '13	45.3	100
Reading - All Students 39.9 — The most recent 3-year average of reading proficiency plus the change from the previous 3-year average. The 3-year comparisons mitigate year-to-year volatility.	'14 / '13	39.9	100
Graduation Rate			
4-Year Rate 79.4 — This school's 2012-13 rate. Multiply by the maximum 50 points for score on this measure. Divide by 2 to get the total school points.	'14 / '13	39.7	50
5-Year Rate 79.0 — This school's 2012-13 rate. Multiply by the maximum 50 points for score on this measure. Divide by 2 to get the total school points.	'14 / '13	39.5	50
Totals		250.7	500

How the points translate to a letter grade

A = 350 plus
B = 300
C = 225
D = 200
F = less than 200

Calculating the Score



Assessment participation: State assessments provide important information that informs classroom instruction and school improvement. The participation of all students ensures the progress of all learners is valued and reflected, and provides the most accurate picture of school strengths and challenges. Additionally, schools are required by State and federal law to meet at least a 95 percent participation rate. Participation of less than 90 percent results in an automatic "F" and participation between 90 and 95 percent results in a one letter grade reduction.

This school's participation rate is 91.1% — Reduction for inadequate participation: One Letter Grade

Note: Schools/districts have had an opportunity to verify all data utilized in their report card.

Maine Department of Education

www.maine.gov/doe

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 128–133, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Methodology," Maine Department of Education, accessed July 21, 2016, http://www.maine.gov/doe/schoolreportcards/resources/methodology.html.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. "Maine 2014 Report Card - Auburn Public Schools - Edward Little High School," Maine Department of Education, accessed July 21, 2016, http://dw.education.maine.gov/DirectoryManager/Web/maine_report/SnapshotGeneral.aspx.

Maryland

With an accountability system based on proficiency and graduation rates, Maryland gives high schools a strong incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Maryland's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Maryland's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MARYLAND'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Maryland does not rate high schools' academic achievement.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	Maryland does not rate high schools' growth.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	Maryland does not calculate summative school ratings.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Maryland does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

Mountain Ridge High School

Allegany County (01:2404)

Attendance Rate %	School 2015	School 2014	County 2015	County 2014	State 2015	State 2014
Elementary	*	*	≥ 95.0	≥ 95.0	95.4	95.7
Middle	*	*	94.3	94.5	95.0	95.4
High	93.3	93.1	93.6	93.2	92.4	92.7

Cohort Graduation Rate%			
Class of 2014 (4-Year Rate)	87.88	91.51	86.39
Class of 2014 (5-Year Rate)	87.88	91.69	88.70

Teacher Qualifications	School 2015	School 2014	County 2015	County 2014	State 2015	State 2014
% of certificates:						
Standard Professional	5.7	7.9	11.0	11.5	27.4	27.2
Advanced Professional	91.4	89.5	88.3	87.0	65.2	65.5
Resident Teacher	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.7
Conditional Teacher	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.0
% of classes NOT taught by highly qualified teachers						
All Quartiles	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.7	8.4	7.6
Elementary Low Poverty	*	*	*	*	2.9	3.0
Elementary High Poverty	*	*	0.0	0.0	10.5	11.4
Secondary Low Poverty	*	*	*	*	6.7	6.0
Secondary High Poverty	*	*	0.0	0.0	17.7	15.7

"" indicates no students or fewer than 10 students in category.*

Attendance Rate

Attendance Rate is the percentage of students in school for at least half of the average school day during the school year. Attendance is a school accountability measure for elementary and middle schools. Yearly targets were set for attendance so that by the end of school year 2013-14, the State, schools, and school systems would achieve and maintain an attendance rate of at least 94 percent.

Cohort Graduation Rate

The U.S. Department of Education now requires each state to use an adjusted cohort graduation rate for school accountability. The adjusted cohort graduation rate ensures that all students who entered 9th grade together are counted in the graduation rate at the end of 4 years and at the end of 5 years.

The cohort graduation rate data for 2014 is the 4-year rate for the student cohort entering grade nine for the first time in fall 2010 and graduating no later than 2014. The 2014 5-year rate is the same cohort graduating no later than 2015.

Teacher Qualifications

The percentage of teachers in each category is based on the number of teachers who have credentials and are teaching core academic subjects as defined by the federal government under the No Child Left Behind Act. The core academic subjects are English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Teachers who are teaching other subjects are not included in the totals.

Standard Professional Certificate. A Standard Professional Certificate indicates the teacher meets all certification requirements.

Advanced Professional Certificate. The Advanced Professional Certificate requires three years of satisfactory professional school-related experience, and a master's degree or a minimum of 36 semester hours of post baccalaureate course work.

Resident Teacher Certificate. The Resident Teacher Certificate is issued to a teacher in an approved alternative preparation program at the request of a local school system superintendent.

Conditional Teacher Certificate. The Conditional Certificate is issued only at the request of a local school system superintendent to an applicant who has a bachelor's degree but does not meet all certification requirements.

Highly Qualified Teachers. "Highly qualified" is specifically defined by federal law. Teachers must meet minimum requirements both in content knowledge and teaching skills. Teachers must have a bachelor's degree, full State certification, and demonstrate content knowledge in the subjects they teach.

School Progress and Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In accordance with the U.S. Department of Education's (USED) authority to ensure an orderly transition to ESSA, USED will not require States to identify AMOs for school years 2014-2015 or 2015-2016 for USED's review and approval, nor will USED require States to report performance against AMOs for the 2014-2015 or 2015-2016 school years.

Due to this direction, Maryland will not measure LEAs and schools against AMOs.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 134–138, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2016 Maryland Report Card," Maryland Department of Education, accessed October 10, 2016, http://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. "2015 Maryland Report Card – Mountain Ridge High School," Maryland Department of Education, accessed July 12, 2016, http://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/printreports/2015/01/SchoolReports/English/012404_2015ReportCard.pdf.

Massachusetts

Several features of Massachusetts's accountability system for high schools encourage them to pay attention to high-achieving students. Rewarding schools that help students earn college credit before graduating would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Massachusetts's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Massachusetts's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MASSACHUSETTS'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Massachusetts gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Massachusetts uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		"Growth for all students" and achievement (in ELA and math) each count for 29 percent of high schools' summative ratings.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Massachusetts does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

Table 7: Sample PPI calculation

Indicators		2012	2013	2014	2015
English Language Arts	Narrowing proficiency gaps (CPI)	50	50	75	100
	Growth (SGP)	0	25	50	75
	Extra credit for decreasing % *Warning/Failing* (≥ 10%)	0	25	0	0
	Extra credit for increasing % *Advanced* (≥ 10%)	0	0	25	0
Mathematics	Narrowing proficiency gaps (CPI)	75	50	100	75
	Growth (SGP)	50	50	75	100
	Extra credit for decreasing % *Warning/Failing* (≥ 10%)	0	0	0	25
	Extra credit for increasing % *Advanced* (≥ 10%)	0	0	0	0
Science	Narrowing proficiency gaps (CPI)	50	50	50	100
	Extra credit for decreasing % *Warning/Failing* (≥ 10%)	0	0	25	25
	Extra credit for increasing % *Advanced* (≥ 10%)	0	0	0	25
High School	Annual dropout rate	75	100	75	100
	Cohort graduation rate	75	75	75	75
	Extra credit for reengaging dropouts (2 or more)	-	-	0	25
English Language Acquisition	Extra credit for high growth on ACCESS for ELLs assessment (Student Growth Percentile on ACCESS)	-	-	-	25
Points awarded for achievement, growth, and high school indicators		375	400	500	625
Points awarded for extra credit		0	25	50	125
Total points awarded		375	425	550	750
Number of achievement, growth, and high school indicators		7	7	7	7
Annual PPI		**54**	**61**	**79**	**107**
Cumulative PPI (2012*1 + 2013*2 + 2014*3 + 2015*4) ÷ 10		**84**			

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 139–144, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "School Leader's Guide to the 2016 Accountability Determinations," page 7, Massachusetts Department of Education, accessed July 26, 2016, http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/annual-reports/school-leaders-guide.pdf.

3. Ibid., 5.

4. Including science achievement increases the proportion of a high school's summative rating that is determined by achievement to 43 percent. However, because we support a broad curriculum (and growth measures are not as well established for science as they are for ELA and math) we decided to exclude these measures from our calculations for this indicator.

5. "School Leader's Guide to the 2016 Accountability Determinations," page 9.

Michigan

Michigan's accountability system for high schools encourages them to focus on all students' academic progress. Rewarding schools where students achieve at an advanced level and earn college credit before graduating would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

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HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MICHIGAN'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Michigan does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Michigan uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		"Growth for all students" and achievement each count for 50 percent of high schools' summative ratings.[4]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Michigan does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

STUDENT GROUP	ELA (VIEW DETAILS)	MATHEMATICS (VIEW DETAILS)	SCIENCE (VIEW DETAILS)	SOCIAL STUDIES (VIEW DETAILS)	PROFICIENCY POINTS EARNED / POSSIBLE
All Students	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
Bottom 30%	Red - 0	Green - 2	Red - 0	Green - 2	4/8
American Indian or Alaska Native	-	-	-	-	-
Asian	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
Black or African American	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
Hispanic Or Latino	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-
Two or More Races	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
White	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
Economically Disadvantaged	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
English Language Learners	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
Students with Disabilities	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	Green - 2	8/8
Shared Educational Entity	-	-	-	-	-

CELL COLOR	DEFINITION
Green - 2	Proficiency target was met and 2 points were earned toward Preliminary Status.
Red - 0	Proficiency target was not met and no points were earned toward Preliminary Status.
-	There were not enough students in the subgroup to calculate proficiency (no points possible).

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 145–149, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2015-16 Accountability: Fall 2016 Student Assessment and Accountability Webcast," accessed October 9, 2016, http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/2016_MDE_Accountability_WayneRESAWebcast_FINAL-jl_535226_7.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

Minnesota

Minnesota's accountability system encourages high schools to focus on all students' academic progress. Rewarding schools where students achieve at a high level and earn college credit before graduating would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Minnesota's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Minnesota's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MINNESOTA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

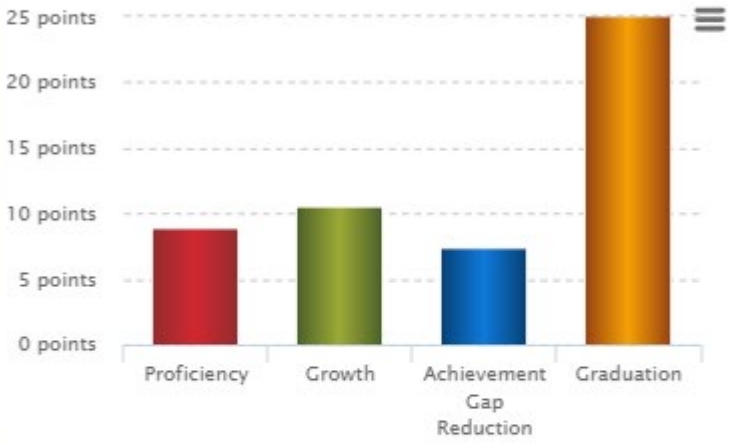
INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Minnesota does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Minnesota uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, both "growth for all students" and achievement count for 25 percent of a school's summative rating. (See Exhibits A and B.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Minnesota does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[4]

EXHIBIT A[5]

Royalton High School
Royalton Public School District

2016 Multiple Measurement Domains

Please note that minor changes were made to the MMR and FR calculations, and the results on this page reflect these improved calculations starting in 2013. Results prior to 2013 used the previous MMR and FR calculations.



Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) is 51.82%.

Domain	Score
Proficiency Weighted percentage of subgroups reaching targets	**8.89 points** 35.6%
Growth Average Growth Z-Score	**10.53 points** -0.2165
Achievement Gap Reduction Achievement Gap Reduction Score	**7.39 points** 0.4648
Graduation Weighted percentage of subgroups reaching targets	**25.00 points** 100.0%
TOTAL POINTS Possible points	**51.82 points** 100 points

EXHIBIT B[6]

2016 Focus Domains

Focus Rating (FR) is 64.78%.

Domain	Score
Achievement Gap Reduction	7.39 points
Achievement Gap Reduction Score	0.4648
Focused Proficiency	25.00 points
Weighted percentage of subgroups reaching targets	100.0%
TOTAL POINTS	32.39 points
Possible points	50 points

Designations and Status

Scores

MMR: 51.82% FR: 64.78%

Multiple Measurement Designation

This school has not been designated as a Priority, Focus, Continuous Improvement, Celebration Eligible or Reward School.

Current Comparison Group

High School

Title I Status

Did not apply for Title I funding in 2017 (2016-17 school year)

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 150–154, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Minnesota Report Card Information Guide," Minnesota Department of Education, accessed July 13, 2016, page 6, http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/hiddencontent/bwrl/mdm0/~edisp/mde034431.pdf.

3. "Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver Frequently Asked Questions," Minnesota Department of Education, accessed July 13, 2016, http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/ESEAFlex/FedAccount/041739.

4. "Minnesota Report Card Information Guide."

5. "Royalton High School," Minnesota Department of Education, accessed October 10, 2016, http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#MMR/orgId--10485020000__year--2016__p--7.

6. Ibid.

Mississippi

THREE STARS OUT OF FOUR

Several features of Mississippi's accountability system encourage high schools to pay attention to their high-achieving students. Rewarding schools that help students achieve at an advanced level on state tests would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Mississippi's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Mississippi's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MISSISSIPPI'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Mississippi does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Mississippi uses a categorical growth model.[3] A categorical growth model compares the performance-level categories students fall into from one year to the next.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, both "growth for all students" and achievement (in reading and math) count for 22 percent of a school's summative rating. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Mississippi rates high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating through AP and IB coursework.[4]

EXHIBIT A[5]

Exhibit A: Components of a School's or District's Accountability Grade, as of 2013-2014 Assessment Year

Components	Without 12th Grade	With 12th Grade
	700 Possible Points	*900 Possible Points*
Reading Proficiency	100	100
Reading Growth-All Students	100	100
Reading Growth-Low 25% of Students	100	100
Math Proficiency	100	100
Math Growth-All Students	100	100
Math Growth-Low 25% of Students	100	100
Science Proficiency	100	50
U.S. History Proficiency		50
Graduation Rate-All Students*		200

*MDE uses a federally approved four-year graduation rate calculation (MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-17-6 [1972]). See page 26 of the report.

NOTE: MDE does not currently use "college and career readiness" and "acceleration" to calculate a school's or district's grade. However, according to MDE, these components will be included beginning with school year 2015-2016 results. See pages 52-53 of the report for more information on these components.

SOURCE: MDE.

Exhibit B: MDE Cut-Points for Schools and Districts, as of 2013-2014 Assessment Year

Letter Grade	Cut-Point Range	
	Without 12th grade	With 12th grade
A	518 or higher	695 or higher
B	455-517	623-694
C	400-454	540-622
D	325-399	422-539
F	324 or lower	421 or lower

SOURCE: MDE.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 155–160, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Report to the Mississippi Legislature: A Review of the Accountability Standards of the Mississippi Department of Education," Mississippi PEER Committee, pages 16 –18, accessed July 26, 2016, http://www.peer.state.ms.us/reports/rpt596.pdf.

3. "Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards 2014," Mississippi Department of Education, page 28, accessed July 26, 2016, http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/accreditation-library/2014-mpsas-20140811.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

4. "Report to the Mississippi Legislature: A Review of the Accountability Standards of the Mississippi Department of Education," pages 13 and 52.

5. Ibid., page ix.

Missouri

The Missouri School Improvement Program rewards districts where students achieve at an advanced level. But developing a growth measure for the high school years would give policymakers a better sense of district performance.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Missouri's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Missouri's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MISSOURI'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Missouri gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Missouri does not estimate growth at the high school level.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Missouri does not estimate growth at the high school level.
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Missouri rates districts' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment programs.[4] (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

MSIP 5 Performance Standard 3: Indicator 4
College and Career Readiness (CCR) (K-12 LEAs only)

College and Career Readiness (K-12 Districts) — The district provides adequate post-secondary preparation for all students.

4. The percent of graduates who earned a qualifying score on an Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) assessments and/or receive college credit through early college, dual enrollment, or approved dual credit courses meets or exceeds the state standard or demonstrates required improvement.

Status		Progress	
2020 Target	10	Exceeding	7.5
On Track	7.5	On Track	4
Approaching	6	Approaching	2
Floor	0	Floor	0

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 161–165, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Comprehensive Guide to the Missouri School Improvement System," Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, page 18, accessed July 22, 2016, http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/MSIP_5_2015_Comprehensive_Guide.pdf.

3. Ibid., 15.

4. Ibid., 6.

5. "Comprehensive Guide to the Missouri School Improvement System."

Montana

With no accountability system to speak of, Montana does nothing to encourage high schools to focus on high-achieving students—or any other group.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Montana's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Montana's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

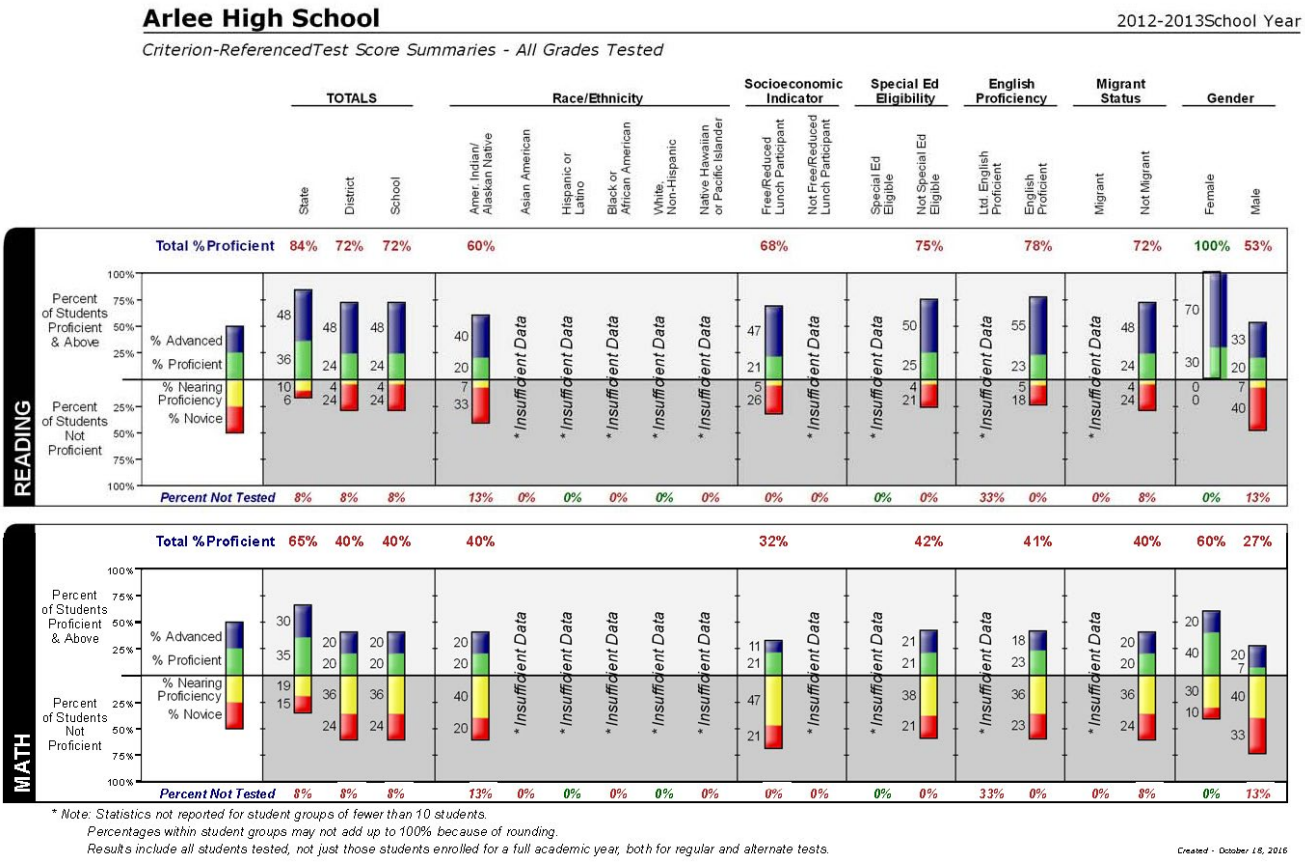
3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES MONTANA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Montana does not rate high schools' academic achievement, though it does report these data.[2] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	Montana does not have a growth model.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	Montana does not calculate summative school ratings.
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Montana does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.

EXHIBIT A[4]



* Note: Statistics not reported for student groups of fewer than 10 students.
Percentages within student groups may not add up to 100% because of rounding.
Results include all students tested, not just those students enrolled for a full academic year, both for regular and alternate tests.

Created - October 18, 2016

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 166–170, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Adequate Yearly Progress Manual 2012-13 School Year," Montana Office of Public Instruction, pages 6-7, accessed July 21, 2016, http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/AYP/2013/2013-AYP-Manual.pdf.

3. "IT Strategic Plan 2014," Montana Office of Public Instruction, page 5, accessed July 21, 2016, https://sitsd.mt.gov/Portals/77/docs/IT%20Plans/Agencies%20IT%20Plans/2014%20plans/Office%20Public%20Instruct%20IT%20Plan%201014.pdf.

4. "Arlee High School Criterion-Referenced Test Score Summaries - All Grades Tested," Montana Office of Public Instruction, accessed July 21, 2016, http://opi.mt.gov/Reports-Data/nclb-reports.php.

Nebraska

Nebraska's accountability system rewards high schools that help students achieve at an advanced level, but because the state doesn't estimate growth at the high school level, it is difficult to know how much progress these students are making.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Nebraska's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Nebraska's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

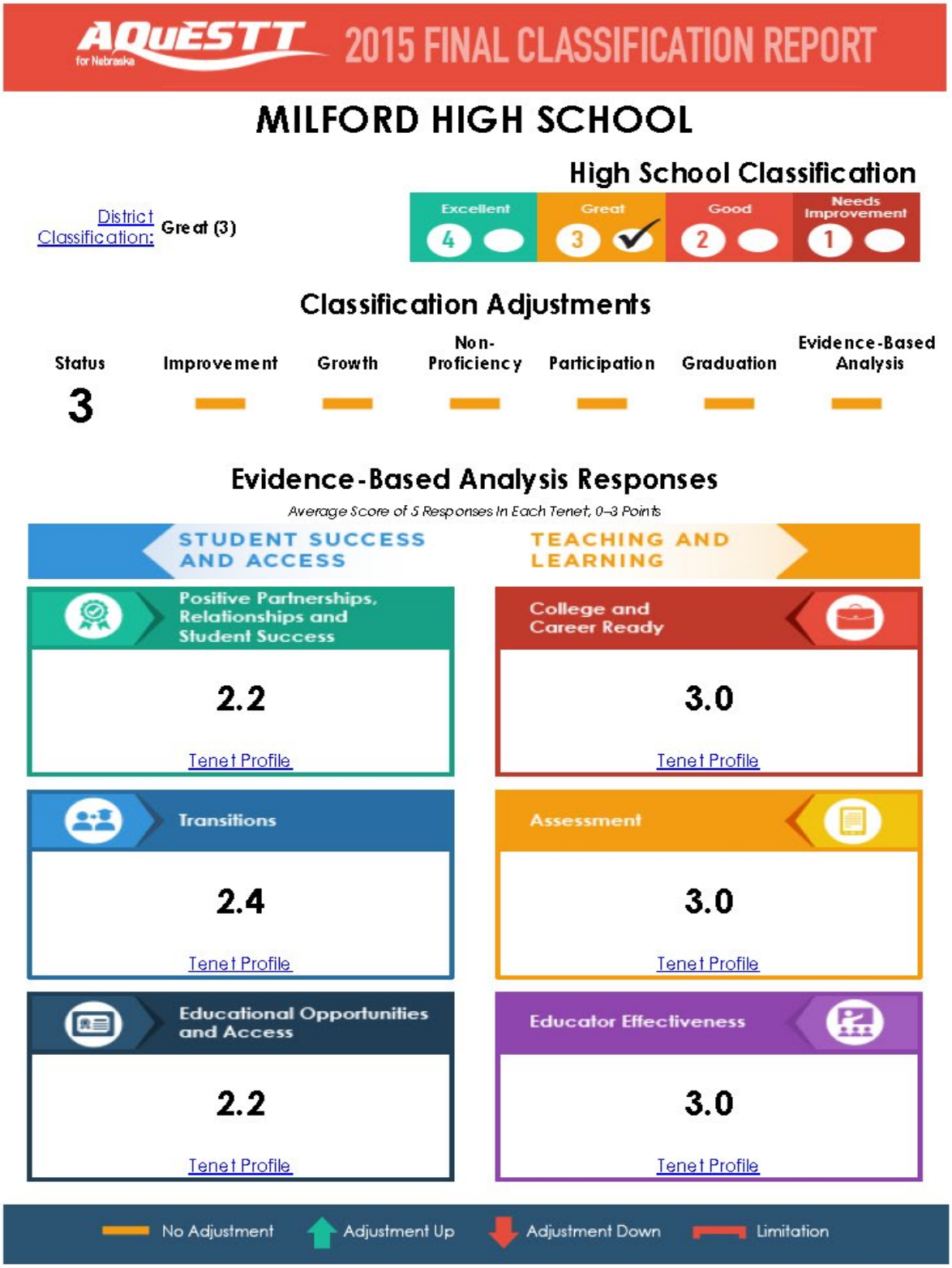
3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES NEBRASKA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Nebraska rates schools' academic achievement by averaging students' raw test scores, thereby giving additional credit for students who achieve at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Nebraska does not estimate growth at the high school level.[3] (See Exhibit A.)
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Nebraska does not estimate growth at the high school level.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Nebraska does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]


AQuESTT for Nebraska
2015 FINAL CLASSIFICATION REPORT
MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL
High School Classification
District Classification: Great (3)
Excellent 4
Great 3
Good 2
Needs Improvement 1
Classification Adjustments
Status 3
Improvement
Growth
Non-Proficiency
Participation
Graduation
Evidence-Based Analysis
Evidence-Based Analysis Responses
Average Score of 5 Responses In Each Tenet, 0–3 Points
STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACCESS
TEACHING AND LEARNING
Positive Partnerships, Relationships and Student Success
2.2
Tenet Profile
College and Career Ready
3.0
Tenet Profile
Transitions
2.4
Tenet Profile
Assessment
3.0
Tenet Profile
Educational Opportunities and Access
2.2
Tenet Profile
Educator Effectiveness
3.0
Tenet Profile
No Adjustment
Adjustment Up
Adjustment Down
Limitation

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 171–176, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "AQuESTT Classification System," Nebraska Department of Education, pages 4–5, accessed August 1, 2016, http://drs.education.ne.gov/guidedinquiry/AQuESTT/AQuESTT%20Final%20Classification%20Business%20Rules.pdf.

3. Ibid., 5–7.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. "AQuESTT 2015 Final Classification Report" Nebraska Association of School Boards, accessed August 1, 2016, https://meeting.nasbonline.org/public/Meeting/Attachments/DisplayAttachment.aspx?AttachmentID=145686.

Nevada

Nevada's accountability system rewards high schools that help students earn college credit before graduating. Assigning more weight to student growth would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Nevada's system for rating high school performance during the 2013–14 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Nevada's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES NEVADA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Nevada does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Nevada uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, achievement counts for 20 percent of summative school ratings, while "growth for all students" counts for just 10 percent. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		High schools earn points for students who score a three or higher on at least one AP exam.[4] (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

High School Index (100 points possible)		
Status/Growth (30 points possible)		
	Math	Reading
Overall % of 10th Grade Students Meeting Proficiency Expectations	5	5
Cumulative % of 11th Grade Students Meeting Proficiency Expectations	5	5
School Median Growth Percentile for 10th Grade (MGP)	5	5
Gap (10 points possible)		
Cumulative % of 11th Grade IEP, ELL, FRL Proficiency Gap	5	5
Graduation (30 points possible)		
Overall Graduation Rate	15	
Graduation Rate Gap for IEP, ELL and FRL Students	15	
College and Career Readiness (16 points possible)		
% of Students in NV Colleges Requiring Remediation	4	
% of Students Earning an Advanced Diploma	4	
AP Proficiency	4	
ACT/SAT Participation	4	
Other Indicators (14 points possible)		
Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	10	
% of 9th Grade Students who are Credit Deficient	4	

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA* , pages 177–182, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Nevada School Performance Framework – Performance Indicators – High School," Nevada Department of Education, accessed July 25, 2016, http://nspf.doe.nv.gov/Home/AboutHS.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire's high school accountability system is based on proficiency and graduation rates, giving schools a strong incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

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Here we examine New Hampshire's system for rating high school performance during the 2013–14 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined New Hampshire's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers

(States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES NEW HAMPSHIRE'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		New Hampshire does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		New Hampshire does not estimate student growth at the high school level.[2]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		New Hampshire does not estimate student growth at the high school level.[3]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		New Hampshire does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.

EXHIBIT A[4]

2013 - 2014 NEW HAMPSHIRE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS REPORT
KINGSWOOD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (22425) IN GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL

SCHOOL PROFILE: Enrollment: 777 Grades : 9 to 12 ELL (English Learners): 1 % SWD (Students with Disabilities): 0 % Low SES: 34 %

READING:		N	Index Score	% Met AMA01 Target	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School (all Index groups)	177	91		4	
	EL - AMA01	0				
	EL - Index	0				
	SWD - Index	32	73		2	
	Low SES - Index	50	95		4	
	All Others - Index	95	95		4	
				READING AVERAGE POINTS	3.5	
				WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		3.5

MATHEMATICS:		N	Index Score		Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School (all Index groups)	175	58		1	
	EL - Index	0				
	SWD - Index	32	36		1	
	Low SES - Index	50	58		1	
	All Others - Index	93	66		1	
				MATHEMATICS AVERAGE POINTS	1.0	
				WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		1.0

SCIENCE:		N	Index Score		Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School (all Index groups)	179	61		1	
	EL - Index	1				
	SWD - Index	35	45		1	
	Low SES - Index	37	58		1	
	All Others - Index	106	68		1	
				SCIENCE AVERAGE POINTS	1.0	
				WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		1.0

WRITING:		N	Index Score		Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School (all Index groups)	178	80		3	
	EL - Index	0				
	SWD - Index	32	62		1	
	Low SES - Index	51	82		3	
	All Others - Index	95	86		3	
				WRITING AVERAGE POINTS	2.5	
				WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		2.5

EXCESSIVE ABSENCE: Percent of students absent more than 10% of enrolled time		N	Excessive Absence Rate		Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School	776	28		1	
	ELs	4				
	SWD	124	31		1	
	Low SES	205	36		1	
	All Others	443	23		1	
				EXCESSIVE ABSENCE AVERAGE POINTS	1.0	
				WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		1.0

PARTICIPATION (IN NECAP AND ACCESS FOR ELLS)		N	Participation Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Math Whole School	198	96	4	
	Math ELLs	1			
	Math SWD	33	100	4	
	Math Low SES	59	93	1	
	Math:All others	105	97	4	
	Reading Whole School	198	97	4	
	Reading ELs	1			
	Reading SWD	33	100	4	
	Reading Low SES	59	93	1	
	Reading: All Others	105	99	4	
	Reading - ACCESS	3			
			PARTICIPATION AVERAGE POINTS	3.3	
			WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		3.3

GRADUATION RATE: (4 yr cohort) Class of 2013		N	Graduation Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School	198	88	3	
	ELs	2			
	SWD	37	70	1	
	Low SES	70	91	4	
	All Others	89	92	4	
			GRADUATION AVERAGE POINTS	3.0	
			WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		3.0

GRADUATION RATE: (5 yr cohort) Class of 2012		N	Graduation Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School	0			
	ELs	0			
	SWD	0			
	Low SES	0			
	All Others	0			
			GRADUATION AVERAGE POINTS		
			WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		

DROPOUT RATE: (4 yr cohort) Class of 2013		N	Dropout Rate	Points Earned	TOTAL
	Whole School	198	5	4	
	ELs	2			
	SWD	37	14	2	
	Low SES	70	6	3	
	All Others	89	0	4	
			DROPOUT RATE AVERAGE POINTS	3.3	
			WEIGHTING = TIMES 1		3.3

KINGSWOOD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TOTAL	18.6
Score for Adequacy Decision:	**Total/8.0** 2.3

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 183–187, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2014 Adequacy Report," New Hampshire Department of Education, page 7, accessed July 20, 2016, http://education.nh.gov/instruction/school_improve/documents/adequacy-report14.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. "2013-2014 New Hampshire Performance Indicators Report Kingswood Regional High School," New Hampshire Department of Education, accessed July 20, 2016, https://my.doe.nh.gov/profiles/accountability/performanceindicatorreport.aspx?year=2015&d=208&s=22425&rpt=PerformanceHigh.

New Jersey

New Jersey's accountability system rewards high schools that help students earn college credit before graduating. It should also reward those that help them achieve at an advanced level on state tests.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine New Jersey's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined New Jersey's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES NEW JERSEY'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	New Jersey does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	New Jersey does not estimate growth at the high school level.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	New Jersey does not have a system for calculating summative school ratings.[2]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	New Jersey rates high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduation, via AP or IB. (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[3]

NJ SCHOOL PERFORMANCE Report

State of New Jersey
2014-15

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
ATLANTIC
ATLANTIC CITY

GRADE SPAN 09-12

01-0110-010
ATLANTIC CITY HIGH SCHOOL
1400 N ALBANY AVENUE
ATLANTIC CITY, NJ 08401-6153

The Academic Achievement section measures the content knowledge that students have in English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA/L), Mathematics and Biology as demonstrated in 2014-2015 *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers* (PARCC) assessments and the End-of-Course Biology assessment. The below chart consist of three columns with measures. The first column - Schoolwide Performance - below includes the percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations in ELA/L or Math. The middle column - Peer School Percentile - indicates how the school's outcomes compare to its group of peer schools. The last column - Statewide Percentile - indicates how the school's outcomes compare to schools across the state in ELA/L.

Academic Achievement	Schoolwide Performance	Peer Percentile	State Percentile
HS English Language Arts/Literacy Met or Exceeded Expectation	27%	68	30
Math Met or Exceeded Expectation	14%		

ESEA Waiver - English Language Arts/Literacy

This table presents, for each subgroup in the school, the total number of valid test scores, the percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations, the assessment participation goal, and the participation rate. The participation goal is established as 95% by the United States Department of Education.

Subgroups	Valid Scores	% Meeting Standards	Participation Goal	Participation Rate	Met Participation?
Schoolwide	680	27%	95%	84.4%	NO
White	90	51.1%	95%	88.7%	YES*
African American	161	11.8%	95%	73.6%	NO
Hispanic	255	14.9%	95%	82.8%	NO
American Indian	-	-	--	--	--
Asian	159	49.7%	95%	96.8%	YES
Two or More Races	-	-	--	--	--
Students with Disability	-	-	--	--	--
English Learner Students	-	-	--	--	--
Economically Disadvantaged Students	515	23.1%	95%	82.5%	NO

YES* = Met Participation Rate (Participation Averaging applied)

Data is presented for subgroups when the count is high enough under ESEA Waiver suppression rules.

EXHIBIT B[4]

NJ SCHOOL PERFORMANCE Report

State of New Jersey
2014-15

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
ATLANTIC
ATLANTIC CITY

GRADE SPAN 09-12

01-0110-010
ATLANTIC CITY HIGH SCHOOL
1400 N ALBANY AVENUE
ATLANTIC CITY, NJ 08401-6153

Students in high schools begin to demonstrate college readiness behaviors long before they actually graduate from high school. Among those behaviors are taking college entrance exams and challenging themselves with rigorous course work. The table below presents five such indicators: the percentage of students enrolled in the 12th grade who took the SAT or ACT, the percentage of 10th and 11th graders who took the PSAT, the percentage of students who scored above the SAT benchmark of 1550, the percentage of 11th and 12th graders who took at least one AP or IB test in English, math, social studies or science, and the percentage of those AP or IB tests that were scored a 3 or higher.

The below chart consist of five columns with measures. The first column - Schoolwide Performance - represents the outcomes for these particular indicators in the school. The second column - Peer School Percentile - indicates how the school's performance compares to its group of peer schools. The third column - Statewide Percentile - indicates how the school's performance compares to schools across the state. The fourth column - Statewide Target - provides the statewide targets for each of these indicators. The last column - Met Target? - indicates whether the School Performance met or exceeded the statewide target. The Summary row presents the averages of the peer school percentiles, the average of statewide percentiles and the percentage of statewide targets met.

College and Career Readiness Indicators	Schoolwide Performance	Peer Percentile	Statewide Percentile	Statewide Target	Met Target?
Percent of Students Participating in SAT or ACT	65%	32	19	80%	NO
Percent of Students Participating in PSAT or PLAN	100%	100	100	60%	YES
Percent of Students Scoring Above 1550 on SAT	31%	94	40	40%	NO
Percent of Students Taking at least one AP Test or IB Test in English, Math, Social Studies or Science	24%	68	57	35%	NO
Percent of AP Tests >= 3 or IB Test >= 4 in English, Math, Social Studies or Science	49%	92	35	75%	NO
Summary		77	50		20%

College Readiness Test Participation

The first column of the table below presents the percentage of students enrolled in the 12th grade who took the SAT or ACT and the percentage of students enrolled in 10th and 11th grade who took the PSAT. The second column provides the average across the school's peer group for these two metrics.

2014-15 Percent of Students	School	Peer Avg.	State Avg
Participating in SAT	63.5%	77.8%	79.1%
Participating in ACT	15.1%		25.2%
Participating in PSAT or PLAN	100.0%	76.4%	79.6%
Participating in Dual Enrollment	0.0%		14.9%

AP/IB Participation - 'Unique' Students

The table below presents the proportion of 'unique' students enrolled in at least 11th and 12th grade i.e, each student is counted once regardless of how many AP or IB courses he/she may take. The table also presents the proportion of how many 'unique' students took at least one AP or IB test to the school's enrollment in 11th and 12th grade.

2014-15 Percent of Students Taking	School	Peer Avg.	State Avg.
One or More Course	33.9%	22.9%	36.3%
One or More Test	26.6%	22.5%	30.7%
At least one AP or IB Test in English, Math, Social Studies or Science	23.9%	19.3%	25.3%

Note: Students who are enrolled in AP/IB coursework or take AP/IB tests in grades other than 11th and 12th are included in the numerator of this calculation.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 188–192, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "NJ School Performance Reports – Interpretive Guide," page 3, accessed August 10, 2016, http://www.nj.gov/education/pr/1415/NJSchoolPerformanceInterpretiveGuide.pdf.

3. "2014-2015 School Performance Report-Atlantic City High School," New Jersey Department of Education, page 3, accessed August 10, 2016, http://www.nj.gov/education/pr/1415/01/010110010.pdf.

4. Ibid., 13.

New Mexico

THREE STARS OUT OF FOUR

New Mexico has a sophisticated accountability system that encourages high schools to focus on all students' academic progress and rewards schools where students earn college credit before graduating. Replacing the first measure of "current standing" with a performance index would further improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine New Mexico's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined New Mexico's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES NEW MEXICO'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

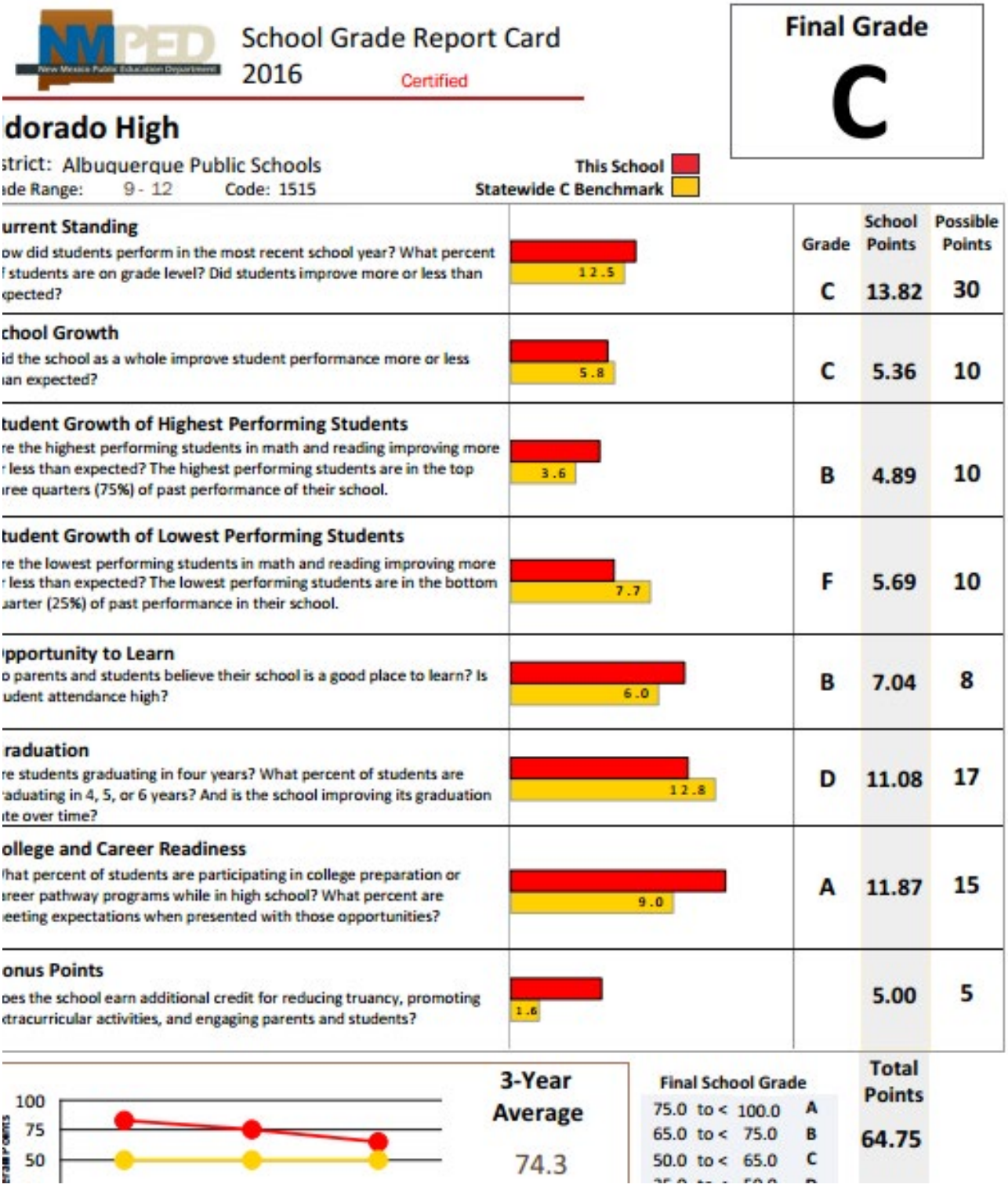
INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		New Mexico's first measure of "current standing" does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		New Mexico uses several multivariate value-added models.[3] Multivariate value-added models estimate a school's contribution to students' academic growth by comparing their actual growth to their expected growth based on prior achievement and other factors.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, "growth for all students" and growth for the three highest achieving quartiles count for 30 percent of a school's summative rating, while achievement counts for 20 percent. (See Exhibits A and B.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		New Mexico rates high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[4] (See Exhibits A and B.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

Overall Model and Points - Elementary and Middle Schools		Points	
Current Standing How did students perform in the most recent school year? Students are tested on how well they met targets for their grade level (Proficient).	Percent Proficient	20*	40
	Value-added conditioning of proficiencies, accounting for school characteristics for the past 3 years.	20*	
School Growth In the past 3 years did the school increase grade level performance? For example, did this year's 3rd graders improve over last year's 3rd graders?	Value-added conditioning of performance, taking into account school characteristics for the past 3 years.	10	10
Growth of Higher Performing Students (Q3) How well did the school help individual students improve? The highest performing students are those whose prior scores placed them in the top three quarters (75%) of their school.	Individual *Student Growth* over the past 3 years is compared to the average for the state.	20	20
Growth of Lowest Performing Students (Q1) How well did the school help individual students improve? The lowest performing students are those whose prior scores placed them in the bottom quarter (25%) of their school.	Individual *Student Growth* over the past 3 years is compared to average for the state.	20	20
Opportunity to Learn Does the school foster an environment that facilitates learning? Are teachers using recognized instructional methods, and do students want to come to school?	Attendance for all students	5	10
	Classroom survey	5	
Total			100
Student and Parent Engagement Does the school show exceptional aptitude for involving students and parents in education, reducing truancy, and promoting extracurricular activities?	Bonus Points		+5

***These values will change in 2017 to the original weighting scheme of 25 / 15.**

Exhibit B[6]



School Grade Report Card
2016 Certified

Final Grade
C

dorado High

strict: Albuquerque Public Schools
ade Range: 9 - 12 Code: 1515

This School
Statewide C Benchmark

		Grade	School Points	Possible Points
urrent Standing ow did students perform in the most recent school year? What percent f students are on grade level? Did students improve more or less than pected?	12.5	C	13.82	30
chool Growth id the school as a whole improve student performance more or less an expected?	5.8	C	5.36	10
tudent Growth of Highest Performing Students re the highest performing students in math and reading improving more less than expected? The highest performing students are in the top ree quarters (75%) of past performance of their school.	3.6	B	4.89	10
tudent Growth of Lowest Performing Students re the lowest performing students in math and reading improving more less than expected? The lowest performing students are in the bottom uarter (25%) of past performance in their school.	7.7	F	5.69	10
pportunity to Learn o parents and students believe their school is a good place to learn? Is udent attendance high?	6.0	B	7.04	8
raduation re students graduating in four years? What percent of students are aduating in 4, 5, or 6 years? And is the school improving its graduation te over time?	12.8	D	11.08	17
ollege and Career Readiness hat percent of students are participating in college preparation or areer pathway programs while in high school? What percent are eeting expectations when presented with those opportunities?	9.0	A	11.87	15
onus Points oes the school earn additional credit for reducing truancy, promoting tracurricular activities, and engaging parents and students?	1.6		5.00	5

100
75
50

3-Year Average
74.3

Final School Grade		
75.0 to < 100.0	A	
65.0 to < 75.0	B	
50.0 to < 65.0	C	

Total Points
64.75

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 193–198, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "School Grading Technical Guide," New Mexico Public Education Department, page 15, accessed October 10, 2016, http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolGradingLinks/1516/TECHNICAL%20ASSISTANCE%20FOR%20EDUCATORS/School%20Grading%20Technical%20Guide%20%202016.pdf.

3. Ibid., 18.

4. Ibid., 26–27.

5. "School Grading Technical Guide," 33.

6. "School Grade Report Card 2016 – Albuquerque Public Schools - Eldorado High," New Mexico Public Education Department, page 1, accessed October 10, 2016, http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/1516/SchoolGrading/001_515_ALBUQUERQUE_PUBLIC_SCHOOLS_ELDORADO_HIGH__SchoolGrading_2016.pdf.

New York

The "high level concepts" released by the New York State Education Department suggest its planned accountability system will give schools a stronger incentive to focus on their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine New York's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA.[1] We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined New York's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[2]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES NEW YORK'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	In addition to using a performance index, New York will give "extra credit" for students who perform at an advanced level.[3] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	New York will use a student growth percentile model.[4] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	New York will not calculate summative ratings for most high schools.[5]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	New York plans to rate high schools based on students' participation in advanced coursework and performance on nationally recognized tests.[6] We encourage state policymakers to focus on performance rather than participation, so schools don't have an incentive to enroll students in courses for which they may not be prepared.

EXHIBIT A[7]

Performance Index (PI)

- For each school and district, NYSED calculates a Performance Index value for all the accountable subgroups (30 or more tested students) for all the accountability measures at the elementary/middle and secondary levels.
- A Performance Index is a value from 0 to 200 that is assigned to an accountability group, indicating how that group performed on a required State assessment (or approved alternative) in English language arts, mathematics, or science.
- PI = %Level 2 + %Level 3 + %Level 4 + %Level 3 + %Level 4

engage^ny

Performance Index: Example

		Count of students performing at level:			
Grade	Student Count	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
5	35	12	7	10	6
6	42	4	14	14	10
7	30	6	10	10	4
Total	107	22	31	34	20

PI = [(31+34+20+34+20) ÷ 107] x 100 = 130

For Common Core Regents Exams, the five performance levels are converted into four accountability levels and the PI is determined.

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Endnotes

1. New York's rating is based on "high level concepts" documents released by the State Education Department on October 18, 2016. According to the NYSED website, feedback on these concepts will be gathered during the remainder of 2016 and into 2017. That feedback "will inform the draft ESSA plan to be presented to the Board of Regents for approval. After the Board approves the plan, the Department will submit the plan to the Governor for review and the U.S. Department for Education for approval in 2017." See here for more: http://www.nysed.gov/news/2016/state-education-department-proposes-high-level-concepts-draft-every-student-succeeds-act. (Note that New York would not have rated as highly had we rated its existing system.)

2. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 199–203, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

3. "High Concept Idea Summaries: Accountability Measurements and Methodology," New York State Department of Education, page 5, accessed October 20, 2016, http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/essa.html.

4. "2014–15 Technical Report for Growth Measures," New York State Education Department, accessed July 27, 2016, https://www.engageny.org/file/147081/download/2014-15-technical-report-for-growth-measures.pdf?token=4Kdm3PMf.

5. "New York State Education at a Glance," accessed October 21,2016, http://data.nysed.gov/.

6. "High Concept Idea Summaries: Accountability Measurements and Methodology," page 13.

7. "Focus Districts: Identification, Requirements, and Interventions," slide 12, accessed July 17, 2016, http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/PPTFocusDistrictWebinar020116.pptx.

North Carolina

North Carolina includes high-achieving students in its growth model but does little else to encourage high schools to pay attention to them.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine North Carolina's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined North Carolina's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

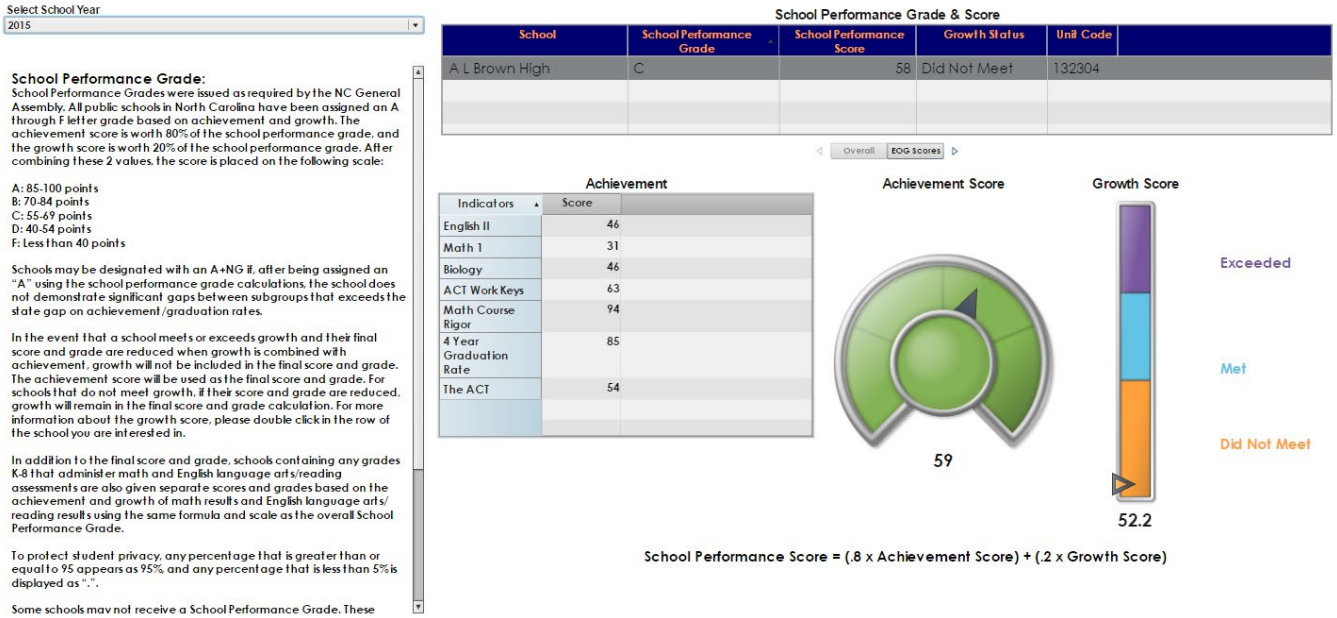
3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

Does North Carolina's High School Accountability System Prioritize High Achievers?

INDICATOR	*RATINGS*	*NOTES*
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		North Carolina does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		North Carolina uses a multivariate value-added model.[3] A multivariate value-added model estimates a school's contribution to students' academic growth by comparing their actual growth to their expected growth based on prior achievement and other factors.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		At the high school level, achievement counts for 80 percent of a school's summative rating, while "growth for all students" counts for just 20 percent. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		North Carolina does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[4]

EXHIBIT A[5]



Select School Year

2015

School Performance Grade:

School Performance Grades were issued as required by the NC General Assembly. All public schools in North Carolina have been assigned an A through F letter grade based on achievement and growth. The achievement score is worth 80% of the school performance grade, and the growth score is worth 20% of the school performance grade. After combining these 2 values, the score is placed on the following scale:

A: 85-100 points
B: 70-84 points
C: 55-69 points
D: 40-54 points
F: Less than 40 points

Schools may be designated with an A+NG if, after being assigned an "A" using the school performance grade calculations, the school does not demonstrate significant gaps between subgroups that exceeds the state gap on achievement/graduation rates.

In the event that a school meets or exceeds growth and their final score and grade are reduced when growth is combined with achievement, growth will not be included in the final score and grade. The achievement score will be used as the final score and grade. For schools that do not meet growth, if their score and grade are reduced, growth will remain in the final score and grade calculation. For more information about the growth score, please double click in the row of the school you are interested in.

In addition to the final score and grade, schools containing any grades K-8 that administer math and English language arts/reading assessments are also given separate scores and grades based on the achievement and growth of math results and English language arts/reading results using the same formula and scale as the overall School Performance Grade.

To protect student privacy, any percentage that is greater than or equal to 95 appears as 95% and any percentage that is less than 5% is displayed as ".".

Some schools may not receive a School Performance Grade. These

School Performance Grade & Score

School	School Performance Grade	School Performance Score	Growth Status	Unit Code
A L Brown High	C	58	Did Not Meet	132304

Overall | EOG Scores

Achievement

Indicators	Score
English II	46
Math 1	31
Biology	46
ACT WorkKeys	63
Math Course Rigor	94
4 Year Graduation Rate	85
The ACT	54

Achievement Score

59

Growth Score

52.2

Exceeded

Met

Did Not Meet

School Performance Score = (.8 x Achievement Score) + (.2 x Growth Score)

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 204–208, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Accountability Brief," North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, pages 1–2, accessed July 18, 2016, http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/schlprfrmbrf15.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. "A.L. Brown High School Performance Grade and Score," North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, accessed July 18, 2016, https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=/ReportCard/NC_SRC&reportName=NC+Report+Cards.

North Dakota

ZERO STARS OUT OF THREE

With an accountability system based on proficiency rates, North Dakota gives high schools a strong incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine North Dakota's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined North Dakota's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES NORTH DAKOTA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	North Dakota does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	North Dakota has yet to develop a growth model.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	North Dakota does not have a system for calculating summative school ratings.
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	North Dakota does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[4]

Report: North Dakota Assessment - School, Distr 0 **2014-15**

School: Turtle Mountain Community High School ***40-007-8567-0912*** **Belcourt 7 (0K-12)**

Adequate Yearly Progress **Section C**

		School Year 2013-2014			School Year 2014-2015		
Mathematics		**State**	**District**	**School**	**State**	**District**	**School**
	Proficiency Goal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
	Actual Percent Proficient:	76.7%	62.0%	24.2%			
	Participation Goal	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
	Actual Percent Participation:	98.5%	99.2%	98.3%	98.6%	99.0%	97.9%
Reading							
	Proficiency Goal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
	Actual Percent Proficient:	74.4%	52.9%	35.6%			
	Participation Goal	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
	Actual Percent Participation:	98.4%	99.3%	98.3%	98.5%	99.0%	98.2%
Attendance							
	Secondary Goal						
	Actual Rate:						
Graduation							
	Secondary Goal	89.0%	89.0%	89.0%	89.0%	89.0%	89.0%
	Actual Rate:	87.2%	68.6%	68.6%	88.6%	68.9%	68.9%
Did entity make AYP?		NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES

	School Year 2013-2014					School Year 2014-2015				
Reasons for School not making AYP:	Math Partic.	Math Prof.	Reading Partic.	Reading Prof.	Grad	Math Partic.	Math Prof.	Reading Partic.	Reading Prof.	Grad
All students		*		*	+					
White	i	i	i	i	i					
American Indian		*		*	+					
Black										
Hispanic										
Asian										
Students w/Limited English Prof. (LEP)		*		*	+	i		i		i
Low Income		*		*	+					
Students w/disabilities (IEP)		*		*	+					

Secondary Indicators:	School Year 2013-2014	School Year 2014-2015
Graduation Rate	+	
Attendance Rate		

** indicates an area for which AYP was not met*
+ indicates met AYP based on the 4-, 5-, or 6-year graduation improvement target
DK, i = Insufficient data to determine AYP status
Partic. = Participation Rate
Prof. = Proficiency Rate
Adequate Yearly Progress was not determined based on achievement during school year 2014-15.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 209–213, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "A Guide to the 2014-15 Annual Adequate Yearly Progress Report: August 2015," North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, pages 14–16, accessed July 27, 2016, https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/91/Ayp1415Guide.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. "North Dakota School Plant Profile 2014-2015 – Turtle Mountain Community High School," North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, page 6, accessed July 27, 2016, https://www.nd.gov/dpi/reports/profile/1415/ProfilePlant/4000785670912.pdf.

Ohio

THREE STARS OUT OF THREE

Ohio's accountability system is among the best in the country at encouraging high schools to pay attention to their high-achievers. Other states should take heed.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Ohio's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Ohio's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

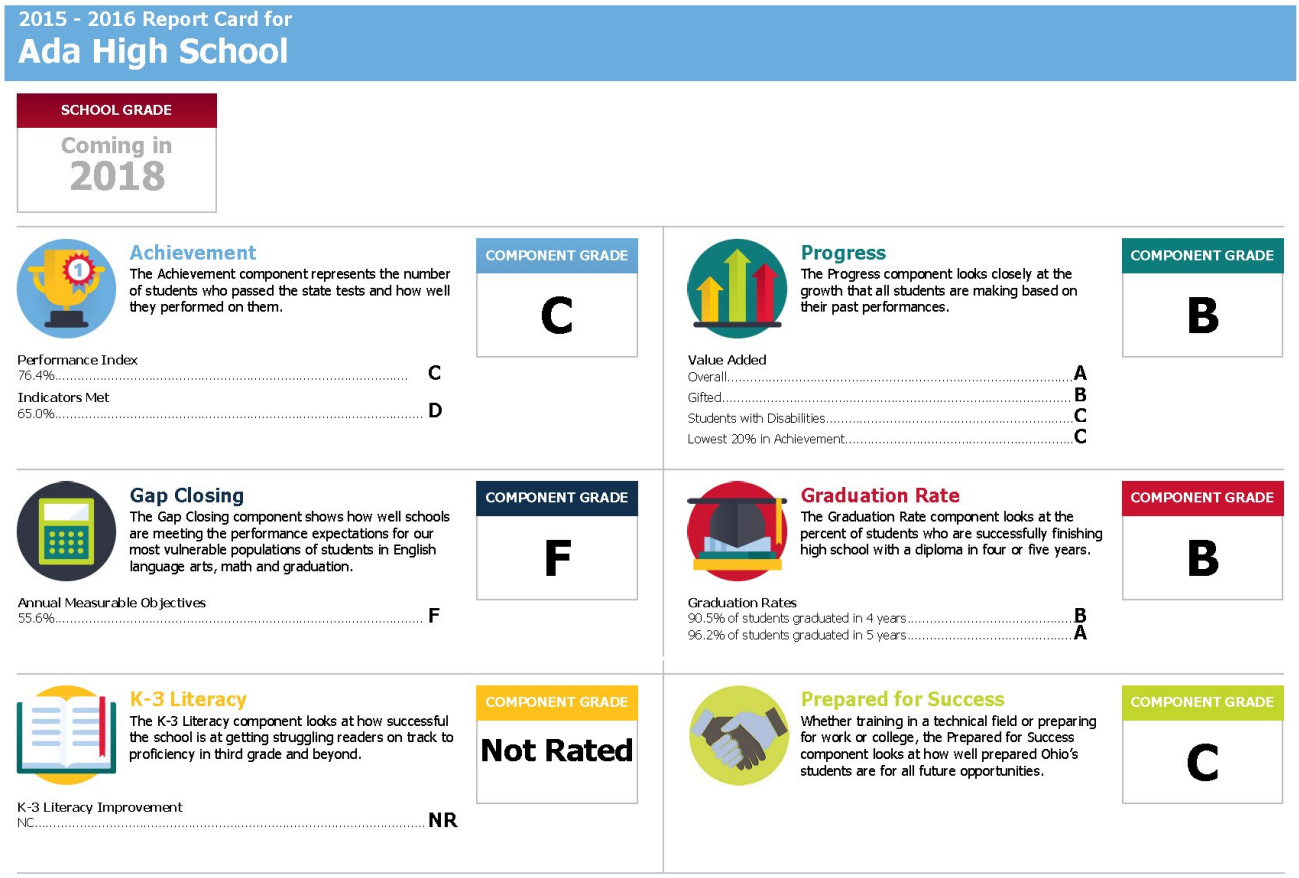
3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES OHIO'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	Ohio uses an achievement index to give additional credit for students achieving at "accelerated," "advanced," and "advanced plus" levels.[2] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Ohio uses a multivariate value-added model.[3] A multivariate value-added model estimates a school's contribution to students' academic growth by comparing their actual growth to their expected growth based on prior achievement and other factors.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	Ohio will not calculate summative school ratings until 2018.[4]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	Starting in 2016, schools will earn points for students who earn a three on AP tests, a four on IB tests, or at least three dual enrollment credits.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]



2015 - 2016 Report Card for
Ada High School

SCHOOL GRADE
Coming in 2018

Achievement
The Achievement component represents the number of students who passed the state tests and how well they performed on them.

COMPONENT GRADE: C

Performance Index
76.4% C

Indicators Met
65.0% ..... D

Progress
The Progress component looks closely at the growth that all students are making based on their past performances.

COMPONENT GRADE: B

Value Added
Overall ..... A
Gifted ..... B
Students with Disabilities C
Lowest 20% in Achievement C

Gap Closing
The Gap Closing component shows how well schools are meeting the performance expectations for our most vulnerable populations of students in English language arts, math and graduation.

COMPONENT GRADE: F

Annual Measurable Objectives
55.6% ..... F

Graduation Rate
The Graduation Rate component looks at the percent of students who are successfully finishing high school with a diploma in four or five years.

COMPONENT GRADE: B

Graduation Rates
90.5% of students graduated in 4 years ..... B
96.2% of students graduated in 5 years ..... A

K-3 Literacy
The K-3 Literacy component looks at how successful the school is at getting struggling readers on track to proficiency in third grade and beyond.

COMPONENT GRADE: Not Rated

K-3 Literacy Improvement
NC ..... NR

Prepared for Success
Whether training in a technical field or preparing for work or college, the Prepared for Success component looks at how well prepared Ohio's students are for all future opportunities.

COMPONENT GRADE: C

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 214–219, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Achievement Measure" Technical Documentation-2015-2016 Performance Index (PI) Score, Ohio Department of Education, page 1, accessed July, 1, 2016, http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Achievement-Measure.

3. "Common Questions about Ohio's Value-Added Student Growth Measure," Ohio Department of Education, page 1, accessed May 9, 2016, https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Accountability-Resources/Value-Added-Technical-Reports-1/Questions-Value-Added-Student-Growth.pdf.aspx.

4. "State Percentages for 2016 Ohio School Report Card", Ohio Department of Education, accessed July 5, 2016 http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Ohio-Report-Cards/State-Percentages-for-2016-Ohio-School-Report-Card.

5. "Prepared for Success Measure" Ohio Department of Education, accessed July 1, 2016 http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Prepared-for-Success-Measure.

6. "Ohio School Report Cards," Ohio Department of Education, assessed October 10, 2016, http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/School-Report.aspx?SchoolIRN=000067.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma's accountability system rewards high schools that help students earn college credit before graduating, but its growth and achievement indicators give schools an incentive to ignore high achievers.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Oklahoma's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Oklahoma's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES OKLAHOMA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Oklahoma does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Oklahoma uses a growth-to-proficiency model, which does not reward progress beyond the standard for proficiency.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Achievement counts for 50 percent of a high school's summative rating, while growth-to-proficiency for "all students" counts for just 25 percent. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Oklahoma gives bonus points to schools that help students earn college credit through AP and IB courses.[4] (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

A-F Report Card

2014-2015

Grades 09 - 12

District: OKLAHOMA CITY

55 I089 770

School: SOUTHEAST HS

A

94

2015 Student Achievement (50%)[1]

Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
English II/English III	371	91	A
Algebra I/Algebra II/Geometry	464	84	B
Biology I	182	58	F
US History	185	76	C
Overall 2015 Student Performance Grade	**1202**	**81**	**B**

Overall Student Growth (Progress Towards Proficiency) (25%)[2]

Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
English II	157	94	A
Algebra I	201	93	A
Overall 2015 Student Growth Grade	**358**	**93**	**A**

Bottom Quartile Student Growth (Progress Toward Proficiency)(25%) [3]

Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
English II	39	85	B
Algebra I	50	92	A
Overall Bottom Quartile Growth Grade	**89**	**89**	**B**

Bonus Points (Maximum 10 Points) [4]

Category	Points Earned
Cohort Graduation Rate	5 (92%)
Advanced Coursework	1 (Performance 94%, Participation >95%)
College Entrance Exam	0 (Performance 45%, Participation 61%)
Low Performing Eighth Grade Cohort Rate	1 (90%)
EOI Performance	0 (72%)
Year to Year Growth	1
Total	**8**

FINAL GRADE 94 A

School Performance Grading Scale

Grade Range	Letter Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

[1] 2015 Student Achievement: 50% of the overall grade is based on the Oklahoma School Testing Program assessments in grades three (3) through high school.

[2] Overall Student Growth: 25% of the grade is based on annual student learning gains as measured by Oklahoma's standardized assessments in reading and mathematics in grades three(3) through eight (8); and Algebra I and English II end-of-instruction tests.

[3] Bottom Quartile Student Growth: 25% of the grade is based on the growth of the bottom 25% of incoming students as measured by Oklahoma's standardized assessments in reading and mathematics in grades three(3) through eight(8); and Algebra I and English II end-of-instruction tests.

[4] Up to 10 bonus points are awarded for factors including attendance, dropout rate, advanced coursework, college entrance exams, graduation rate, overall performance and year to year growth. The categories for bonus points are determined by grades served at the site.

*** Insufficient number of students' scores to display results.

Note: If the percent of students tested is less than 95%, the overall grade is dropped one letter grade. If the percent of students tested is less than 90%, the grade is reduced to an F.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 220–224, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "A to F Report Card Calculation Guide," Oklahoma State Department of Education, page 8, accessed July 25, 2016, http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/AtoFReportCardGuide.pdf.

3. Ibid., 13.

4. Ibid., 26.

5. "A-F Report Card 2014-2015 Southeast HS," Oklahoma State Department of Education, accessed July 25, 2016, http://afreportcards.ok.gov/Files/ReportCards2015/201555l089770.pdf.

Oregon

Oregon's accountability system gives high schools few incentives to focus on their high-achieving students. Rewarding schools that help students earn college credit through AP, IB, or dual enrollment programs would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Oregon's system for rating high school performance during the 2013–14 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Oregon's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

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4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES OREGON'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Oregon does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	Oregon uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	☆	At the high school level, "growth for all students" and achievement each count for 20 percent of a school's summative rating.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Oregon does not rate schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

Table 20. Rating Indicators and Weights by School Type

Rating Indicator	Weights by School Type		
	Elementary/Middle	Combined	High
Achievement	25	20	20
Growth	50	30	20
Subgroup Growth	25	15	10
Graduation	Not Applicable	25	35
Subgroup Graduation		10	15

EXHIBIT B[6]

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2013-2014
Report Card Rating Details
Public Version - Final - October 9, 2014

District: Portland SD 1J
School: Wilson High School

The purpose of the Report Card Rating Details report is to describe the rating methodology and display the data used by the school accountability system to determine the overall school rating that is shown on each school's Report Card. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) piloted the school accountability system in 2011-2012 to identify Priority, Focus, and Model schools as part of the ESEA Waiver. For more details on the school report cards, please visit the following link: http://www.ode.state.or.us/go/schoolRC.

Overall Level: Level 3

Performance Indicator	*Level*	*% of Points Earned*	*Weight*	*Weighted Points*
Academic Achievement (page 3)	Level 4	80.0%	20	16.0
Academic Growth (page 4)	Level 4	70.0%	20	14.0
Subgroup Growth (page 5)	Level 3	56.7%	10	5.7
Graduation^ (page 6)	Level 4	80.0%	35	28.0
Subgroup Graduation (page 7)	Level 3	53.3%	15	8.0
Number of Missed Participation Targets* (page 8)	3	NA		
		Totals**		71.7
		Weighted Percent		71.7%

^ Schools that have Level 1 for Graduation can have an Overall Level no higher than Level 2.
* Schools do not receive points for participation. However, a school's overall Level is lowered by one level for each consecutive year that it did not meet all participation targets, starting in 2012-13.
** Schools may not be eligible for all possible points. Schools are not rated in categories where they do not meet minimum student count requirements.

Level Assignment	Weighted Percent
Level 5	87.0 or above
Level 4	70.0 to 86.9
Level 3	47.0 to 69.9
Level 2	26.5 to 46.9
Level 1	Less than 26.5

Levels are calculated using the percentage of points earned out of the total points eligible. For schools with data on all indicators, the total points possible are:
- 20 for Academic Achievement
- 20 for Academic Growth
- 10 for Subgroup Growth
- 35 for Graduation
- 15 for Subgroup Gradua

The total score is matche e scoring guide above to determine the school rating.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 225–229, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Report Card Rating Policy and Technical Manual," Oregon Department of Education, pages 7–9, accessed July 5, 2016, http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/data/schoolanddistrict/reportcard/docs/rc_rating_policy_technical_manual_1314.pdf.

3. Ibid., 10.

4. Ibid., 11–15.

5. Ibid., 28.

6. "Oregon Department of Education School and District Report Cards" Oregon Department of Education, accessed July 11, 2016 http://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/reports.aspx.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's high school accountability system is one of the best in the country for high achievers. Other states should take heed.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Pennsylvania's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Pennsylvania's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

How States Can Prioritize High Achievers in Their High School Accountability Systems

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES PENNSYLVANIA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	Pennsylvania gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Pennsylvania uses a multivariate value-added model.[3] A multivariate value-added model estimates a school's contribution to students' academic growth by comparing their actual growth to their expected growth based on prior achievement and other factors.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, "growth for all students" and achievement both count for 40 percent of a school's summative rating.[4]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	Pennsylvania rates high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment programs.[5]

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 230–234, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Pennsylvania School Performance Profile Frequently Asked Questions," Pennsylvania Department of Education, page 6, accessed July 13, 2016, http://paschoolperformance.org/FAQ.

3. "Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS)," Pennsylvania Department of Education, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/Pennsylvania%20Value%20Added%20Assessment%20System/Pages/default.aspx#.VzDjC9IrIdU.

4. "Pennsylvania School Performance Profile Frequently Asked Questions," page 3.

5. Ibid., 6–7.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island plans to reward high schools where students earn college credit before graduating, but it does little else to encourage a focus on high achievers.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Rhode Island's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Rhode Island's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES RHODE ISLAND'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Rhode Island will not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Rhode Island will not rate growth at the high school level.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Growth will play no role in determining summative high school ratings.[4]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Rhode Island will rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 235–240, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Rhode Island Accountability Process Revisions for School Year 2015 and 2016," Rhode Island Department of Education, accessed October 1, 2016, http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Information-and-Accountability-User-Friendly-Data/Accountability/RI-Accountability-Process-Revisions-for-SY15-16.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. "Frequently asked questions," Rhode Island Advanced Coursework Network, page 6, http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Advanced%20Coursework/FAQ-AdvancedCoursework.pdf.

South Carolina

ZERO STARS OUT OF THREE

South Carolina's accountability system does little to encourage high schools to focus on high achievers. Developing an individual growth measure for the high school years would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine South Carolina's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined South Carolina's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

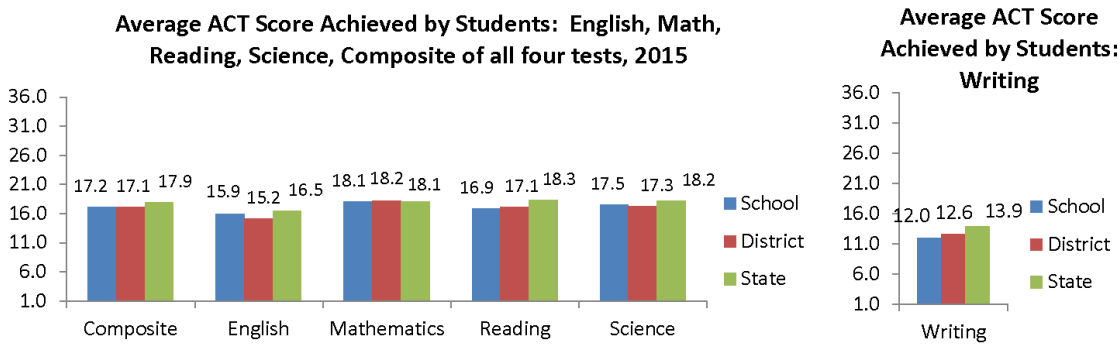
DOES SOUTH CAROLINA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	South Carolina does not rate high schools' academic achievement.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	South Carolina has yet to develop a growth model for high schools.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	South Carolina does not calculate summative school ratings at this time. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	South Carolina does a good job of reporting these data but does not rate high schools' success in this area.[4] (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

DIXIE HIGH SCHOOL 3/30/2016

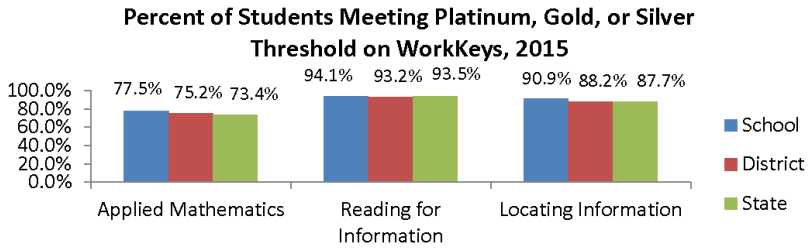
KNOWLEDGE



The ACT, a college readiness assessment, was given to every South Carolina 11th grader in 2015 with the exception of those eligible for alternate assessments. The ACT scores range from 0 to 36. The district and state averages are included for comparison. State averages for ACT data are based on regular public schools and do not include private schools in the state.

Percent of Students Meeting ACT College-Ready Benchmarks, 2015				
English Benchmark Score: 18	**Math** Benchmark Score: 22	**Reading** Benchmark Score: 22	**Science** Benchmark Score: 23	All 4 Subjects
37.5	22.7	14.8	11.4	4.5

ACT benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject-area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses.



ACT WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system measuring "real world" skills that employers believe are critical in the workplace. The assessment is given to every South Carolina 11th grader with the exception of those eligible for alternative assessments. The assessment consists of three subtests: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. Students can earn certificates at the Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze level on WorkKeys assessments.

Abbreviations for Missing Data

N/A-Not Applicable | N/AV-Not Available | N/C-Not Collected | N/R-Not Reported | I/S-Insufficient Sample

EXHIBIT B[6]

DIXIE HIGH SCHOOL 3/30/2016

OPPORTUNITIES

For students to meet the profile of the SC Graduate

	Our School	Change from Last Year	High Schools with students like ours
Students (n = 430)			
Percent of students participating in Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF; homeless, foster, or migrant students (poverty index)	65.6	Down from 73.7%	N/A
Attendance Rate	95.8	Down from 97.6%	94.0
With disabilities	10.7	Up from 9.1%	11.5
Out of school suspensions or expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses	0.0	Down from 1.4%	0.9
Percentage of students served by gifted and talented programs	3.3	Down from 9.1%	19.5
Enrolled in AP/IB programs	0.0	Down from 4.4%	17.4
Successful in AP/IB programs	N/A	N/A	51.3
Career/tech students in co-curricular organizations	100.0	Up from 38.1%	1.7
Enrollment in career/technology courses	129	Down from 247	920
Students participating in work-based experiences	12.4	Up from 12.1%	15.1
Number of seniors who have completed FAFSA forms	53	N/A	241
Percentage of seniors completing college applications	97.3	N/A	67.4
Number of students in dual enrollment courses	24	N/A	63
Success rate of students in dual enrollment courses	100.0	N/A	95.2
Annual dropout rate	2.1	Down from 2.8%	2.6
Dropout recovery rate	14.3	N/A	6.5
Percentage of students retained	3.0	Up from 1.5%	2.7
Teachers (n = 26)			
Percentage of teachers with advanced degrees	50.0	Down from 55.2%	67.5
Percentage of teachers on continuing contract	84.6	Down from 86.2%	83.6
Teachers returning from previous year	83.0	Down from 84.8%	88.0
Teacher attendance rate	99.7	Down from 99.8%	95.3
Average teacher salary*	$45,885	Up 0.7%	$50,039
Professional development days / teacher	14.7 days	Up from 10.5 days	11.2 days
Percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers	4.6	Down from 7.8%	1.7
Percentage of teacher vacancies for more than 9 weeks	3.7	N/A	0.6

Evaluations by Teachers, Students, and Parents

Evaluations by Teachers, Students and Parents	Teachers	Students*	Parents*
Number of surveys returned	29	66	53
Percent satisfied with learning environment	93.1	81.9	94.3
Percent satisfied with social and physical environment	89.7	69.2	80.8
Percent satisfied with school-home relations	86.2	83.1	58.5

* Only students in grade 11 and their parents were included.

Abbreviations for Missing Data

N/A-Not Applicable | N/AV-Not Available | N/C-Not Collected | N/R-Not Reported | I/S-Insufficient Sample

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 241–246, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2013-2014 Accountability Manual," South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, page 36, accessed July 28, 2016, http://www.eoc.sc.gov/Reports%20%20Publications/Current%20Reports%202008-14/Accountability/2013-14%20Accountability%20Manual/2013-14%20Accountability%20Manual.pdf.

3. Ibid., 38.

4. Ibid., 36.

5. "2015 Dixie High School Annual Report Card," South Carolina Department of Education, page 2, accessed October 17, 2016, http://ed.sc.gov/assets/reportCards/2015/high/c/h0160003.pdf.

6. Ibid, 4.

South Dakota

Regrettably, South Dakota's accountability system gives high schools a strong incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

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In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

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HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

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2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES SOUTH DAKOTA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	South Dakota does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2] (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	South Dakota does not estimate growth at the high school level.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	☆	Growth plays no role in determining summative high school ratings.[4] (See Exhibit B.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	South Dakota does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

south dakota STARS | Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System

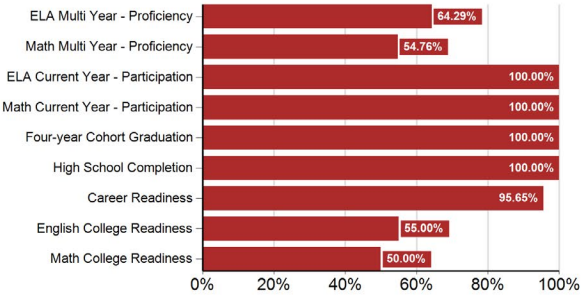
South Dakota DOE
2015-2016 Report Card

Avon 04-1 | Avon High School - 01

School Classification: Exemplary High Performance

Title I Designation: Non-Title I

Performance Indicators



* No bar will display at the school or district level if the subgroup does not meet minimum size for reporting purposes.

School Performance Index

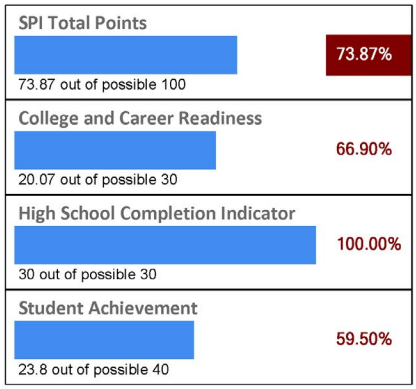


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EXHIBIT B[7]

Indicator	Maximum Points Available					
	2014-15		2015-16			
Student Achievement	Math ELA	25 25	Math ELA	20 20		
	Total	50	Total	40		
High School Completion	Completion Graduation	12.5 12.5	Completion Graduation	15 15		
	Total	25	Total	30		
College and Career Ready	College Career N/A	25	College Career	20 10	College Career	30 0
	Total	25	Total	30	Total	30
Total	100		100		100	

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 247–251, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Public School Accountability System," South Dakota Department of Education, pages 3–5, accessed July 5, 2016, http://doe.sd.gov/secretary/documents/AccModSum.pdf.

3. Ibid., 5–6.

4. Ibid., 2.

5. Ibid., 6–9.

6. "South Dakota Student Teaher Accountability and Reporting System," South Dakota Department of Education, page 1, accessed October 10, 2016, http://doe.sd.gov/NCLB/reports/2016/reportcard/2016school04001-01.pdf.

7. "Public School Accountability System," page 2.

Tennessee

Tennessee includes high-achieving students in its growth model but does little else to encourage high schools to pay attention to them.

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DOES TENNESSEE'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Tennessee does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Tennessee uses a multivariate value-added model.[3] A multivariate value-added model estimates a school's contribution to students' academic growth by comparing their actual growth to their expected growth based on prior achievement and other factors.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	NA	Tennessee does not calculate summative school ratings at this time, though state law requires that it adopt a system of letter grades by 2017–2018.
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Tennessee does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[4]

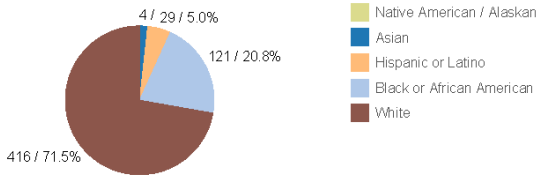
Profile

School Year	District Name	School Name
2014-2015	Alcoa	Alcoa High School

Alcoa, Alcoa High School

Education Commissioner	Dr. Candice McQueen
District Name	Alcoa
District Director	Dr. Brian Bell
District Grades Served	PK-12
District Address 1	524 Faraday ST
District Address 2	Alcoa City Education Buil..
District City, ST ZIP	Alcoa, TN 37701-2098
School Name	Alcoa High School
School Grades Served	9-12
School Address 1	1205 Lodge ST
School City, ST ZIP	Alcoa, TN 37701
Safe School	

Student Ethnicity: Alcoa, Alcoa High School



Values reflect October 1 enrollment data

Students & Teachers: Alcoa, Alcoa High School

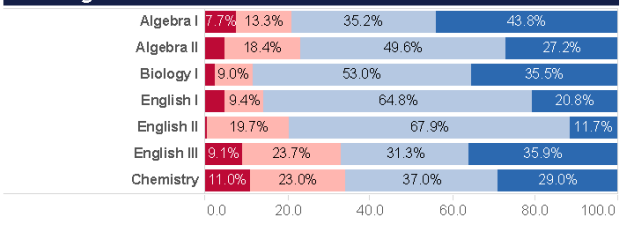
Students	582
Economically Disadvantaged Student Percent	36.3%
Students with Disabilities	65
Students with Disabilities Percent	11.2%
Per-Pupil Expenditure	$10,320.00

TVAAS Composites: Alcoa, Alcoa High School

The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) is a statistical analysis used to measure the impact of districts, schools and teachers on the academic progress rates of groups of students from year-to-year. The TVAAS Composites listed here are scores that assess growth at the school or district level based on student performance on statewide assessments across all available subjects and grades. For districts that opted to test students in grades K-2 in years in which they are available, those scores are included in the composite.
The file available at the below link indicates which districts had early grades data included in their composites each year.
http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/update/other/Early-grades-TVAAS-districts.xlsx

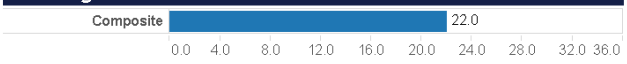
TVAAS Composites are reported on a 1-5 scale and are one-year scores. Levels 4 and 5 indicate that a district or school is exceeding the expected growth, Level 3 indicates that they are making about the expected growth, and Levels 1 and 2 indicate that they are making less than the expected growth. The Overall TVAAS Composite includes all available data from the K-2 (SAT-10) assessment and from all applicable TCAP and EOC tests. The TVAAS Literacy Composite includes all literacy-focused tests included in the Overall TVAAS Composite. The TVAAS Numeracy Composite includes all numeracy-focused tests included in the Overall TVAAS Composite. The TVAAS Literacy and Numeracy Composite includes all tests included in the Literacy Composite and the Numeracy composite. More detailed TVAAS data can be viewed on the Public TVAAS Site (https://tvaas.sas.com/welcome.html).

Achievement: Alcoa, Alcoa High School



The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program, or TCAP, is a set of statewide assessments given in Tennessee to measure students' skills and progress. Students in grades 3-8 take the Achievement Test, and high school students take End of Course exams for various subjects. Student results are categorized as below basic, basic, proficient or advanced. Students that are proficient or advanced are commonly considered to be at or above grade level. Subjects with fewer than 10 valid tests and/or subjects with at least 99 percent or less than 1 percent of students scoring in any one proficiency category are suppressed in accordance with federal privacy laws.

Average ACT Composite: Alcoa, Alcoa High School



ACT is a national college admissions exam that includes subject level tests in English, Math, Reading and Science. Students receive scores that range from 1 to 36 on each subject and an overall Composite score. All Tennessee students are required to take the ACT in 11th grade.

Graduation Rate: Alcoa, Alcoa High School

The Graduation Rate measures the percentage of students who graduated from high school within four years and a summer out of those students that entered the ninth grade four years earlier.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 252–256, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "State Report Card," Tennessee Department of Education, accessed July 21, 2016 http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/report-card.

3. "Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS)," Tennessee Department of Education, accessed July 21, 2016, https://tvaas.sas.com/welcome.html?as=e&aj=e.

4. "Accountability Report – 2014-2015 Alcoa High School Report Card," Tennessee Department of Education, accessed July 21, 2016, http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/report-card.

Texas

Texas's high school accountability system is one of the best in the country for high-achieving students. Other states should take heed.

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DOES TEXAS'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	★	Texas gives additional credit for students from "economically disadvantaged groups" and "lowest performing racial/ethnic groups" who achieve at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Texas uses a gain score model.[3] A gain score model measures the absolute improvement in students' achievement (in points) using a common scale.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, "growth for all students" and achievement each count for 25 percent of a school's summative rating.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	High schools earn points for AP/IB participation and performance.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
2016 Accountability Summary
AUSTIN H S (101912001) - HOUSTON ISD

Accountability Rating

Met Standard

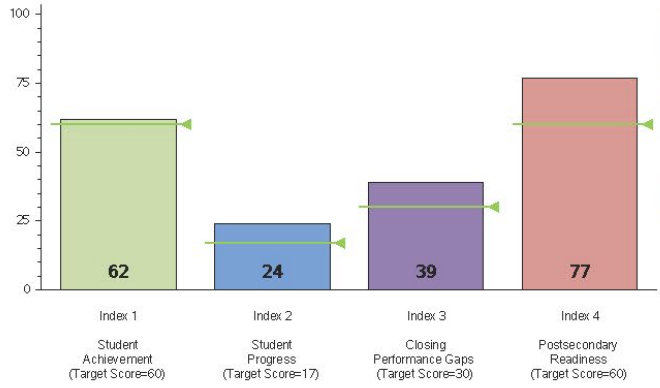
Met Standards on	Did Not Meet Standards on
- Student Achievement	- NONE
- Student Progress	
- Closing Performance Gaps	
- Postsecondary Readiness	

In 2016, to receive a Met Standard or Met Alternative Standard rating, districts and campuses must meet targets on three indexes: Index 1 **or** Index 2 **and** Index 3 **and** Index 4.

Distinction Designation

Academic Achievement in ELA/Reading	NO DISTINCTION EARNED
Academic Achievement in Mathematics	NO DISTINCTION EARNED
Academic Achievement in Science	DISTINCTION EARNED
Academic Achievement in Social Studies	NO DISTINCTION EARNED
Top 25 Percent Student Progress	NO DISTINCTION EARNED
Top 25 Percent Closing Performance Gaps	NO DISTINCTION EARNED
Postsecondary Readiness	NO DISTINCTION EARNED

Performance Index Report



Campus Demographics

Campus Type	High School
Campus Size	1,885 Students
Grade Span	09 - 12
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	88.6
Percent English Language Learners	18.6
Mobility Rate	20.0

Performance Index Summary

Index	Points Earned	Maximum Points	Index Score
1 - Student Achievement	2,055	3,305	62
2 - Student Progress	235	1,000	24
3 - Closing Performance Gaps	314	800	39
4 - Postsecondary Readiness			
STAAR Score	9.0		
Graduation Rate Score	21.6		
Graduation Plan Score	22.6		
Postsecondary Component Score	23.3		77

System Safeguards

Number and Percentage of Indicators Met	
Performance Rates	14 out of 23 = 61%
Participation Rates	12 out of 12 = 100%
Graduation Rates	3 out of 5 = 60%
Total	**29 out of 40 = 73%**

For further information about this report, please see the Performance Reporting Division website at https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/account/2016/index.html

TEA Division of Performance Reporting Page 1 September 2016

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 257–263, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2016 Accountability Manual for Texas Public School Districts and Campuses," Texas Education Agency, page 26, accessed July 29, 2016, http://tea.texas.gov/2016accountabilitymanual.aspx.

3. Ibid., 24–25.

4. Ibid., 27.

5. Ibid., 158.

6. "2014-2015 Texas School Report Card – Austin HS," Texas Education Agency, page 1, accessed July 29, 2016, https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/account/2015/static/summary/campus/c101912001.pdf

Utah

Utah includes high-achieving students in its growth model but does little else to encourage high schools to pay attention to them.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Utah's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Utah's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES UTAH'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Utah does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Utah uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	☆	At the high school level, achievement (in ELA and math) counts for 22 percent of a school's summative rating, while "growth for all students" counts for just 16.5 percent. (See Exhibits A and B.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Utah does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating. (See Exhibit B.)

EXHIBIT A[4]

Utah State Board of Education

How are the 2015-2016 grade ranges different?

TIMPANOGOS HIGH (ALPINE DISTRICT School Year: 2016)

High School Grade: B Points: 507/900 56 %

All Students Participation Rate: 98 % *

Below Proficient Participation Rate: 99 % *

Proficiency Total: 132/300

Language Arts	42/100
Mathematics	42/100
Science	48/100

Growth Total: 180/300

All Students

Language Arts	31/50
Mathematics	31/50
Science	29/50

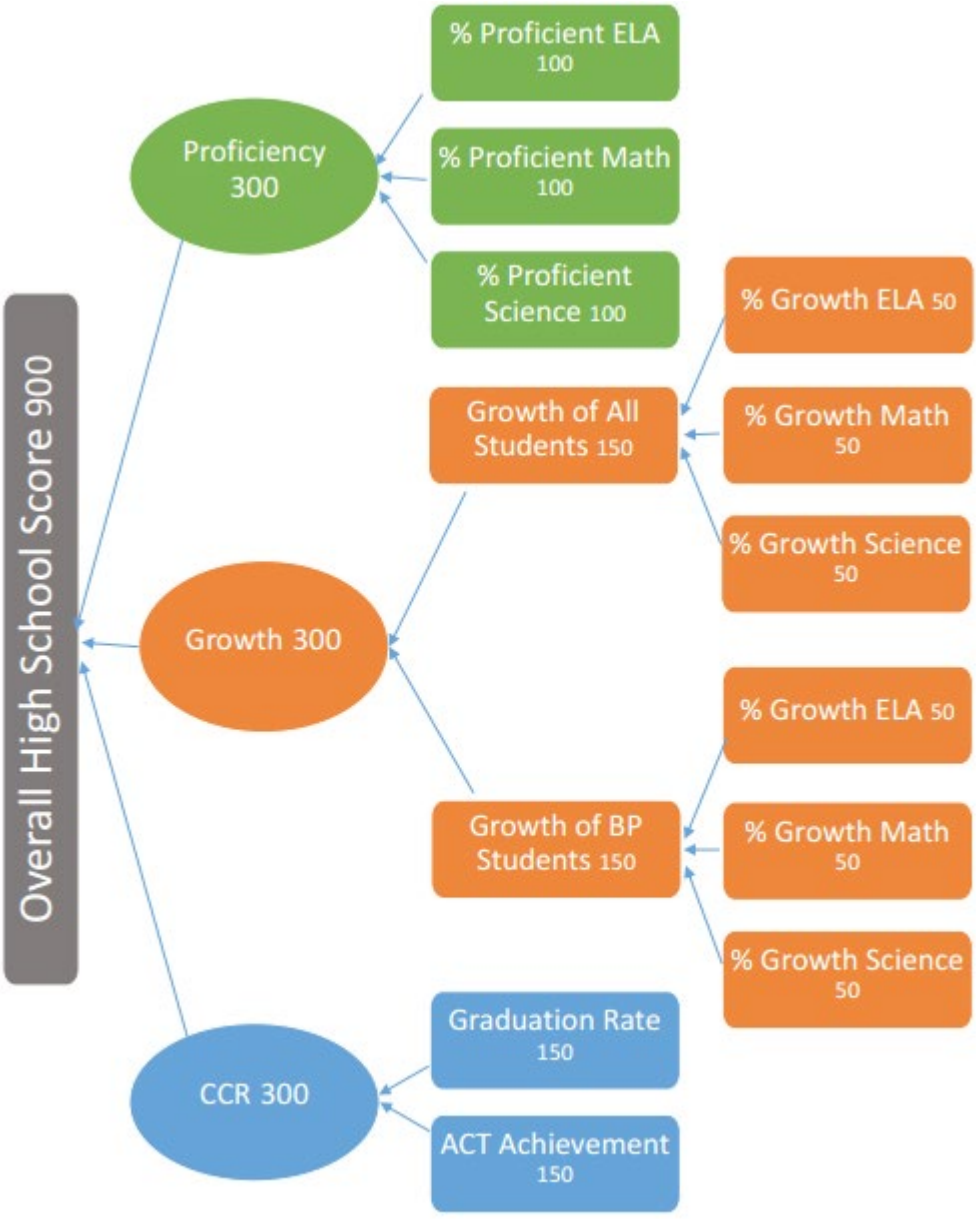
Below Proficient

Language Arts	32/50
Mathematics	29/50
Science	28/50

College & Career Readiness Total: 195/300

Graduation	144/150
ACT	51/150

EXHIBIT B[5]


Overall High School Score 900
Proficiency 300
% Proficient ELA 100
% Proficient Math 100
% Proficient Science 100
Growth 300
Growth of All Students 150
% Growth ELA 50
% Growth Math 50
% Growth Science 50
Growth of BP Students 150
% Growth ELA 50
% Growth Math 50
% Growth Science 50
CCR 300
Graduation Rate 150
ACT Achievement 150

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 264–269, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2015 Utah Accountability Technical Manual," Utah State Office of Education, page 14, accessed July 13, 2016, http://schools.utah.gov/assessment/Accountability/TechnicalManual.aspx.

3. Ibid., 14–15 and 31–32.

4. "School Grade for Timpanogos High," Utah State Office of Education, accessed October 17, 2016, https://datagateway.schools.utah.gov/Accountability/SchoolGrades/2016?leaNum=01&schNum=718&schoolGradeType=H.

5. "2015 Utah Accountability Technical Manual," page 300.

Vermont

Because it is based on proficiency rates, Vermont's accountability system gives high schools a strong incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Vermont's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Vermont's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES VERMONT'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Vermont does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Vermont has yet to develop a growth model.[3]
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Growth plays no role in determining a school's summative rating. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Vermont does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[4]

EXHIBIT A[5]

School Accountability System Based on Student Performance

2015 Adequate Yearly Progress Report

Bellows Free Academy High School (Fairfax) **(Franklin West S.U.)**

VERMONT AGENCY OF EDUCATION

Did not make AYP. Title I Year 1 Corrective Action.

READING

NA

MATH Remains in Title I Year 1 Corrective Action

NA

ACADEMIC INDICATOR

Met the Graduation Rate requirements.

PARTICIPATION

Met all Participation requirements.

	AYP Decisions				Participation	
Group	Reading Index (1)	Math Index (2)	Academic Indicator (3)	Participation (4)	Total Students (8)	Percent Tested (9)
All Students	NA	NA	YES	YES	78	99%
Not Free/Reduced Lunch (For Reporting Only)	NA	NA			59	98%
Free/Reduced Lunch	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	19	100%
Without Disability (For Reporting Only)	NA	NA			67	99%
With Disability	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	11	100%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	++	++
Asian	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	++	++
African American	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	++	++
Hispanic or Latino	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	++	++
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	++	++
White	NA	NA	YES	YES	++	++
Not English Language Learner (For Reporting Only)	NA	NA			78	99%
English Language Learner	NA	NA	N<40	N<40	0	

1-AYP decision for Reading. NA for 2015. No decision is made for subgroups with less than 40 students in the index.

2-AYP decision for Mathematics. NA for 2015. No decision is made for subgroups with less than 40 students in the index.

3-Accountability decision for the Academic Indicator. Academic Indicator must be met for All Students. No decisions are made for subgroups.

4-Accountability decision for Participation. Participation rate must be at least 95% for any group in which there are 40 or more students in the testing cohort.

8-Total number of students in the Participation Rate calculation. This is the total number of students expected to be tested.

9-Percentage of students tested.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 270–274, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Accountability Operations Manual: Vermont Accountability System Based on Student Achievement," Vermont Department of Education, pages 5–6, accessed July 21, 2016, http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Accountability_Operations_Manual_March_2011.pdf.

3. "State of Vermont Million Dollar Technology Project Report," Vermont Enterprise Project Management Office-Department of Information and Innovation, pages 34 – 37, accessed July 21, 2016, http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/reports/VT%20Million%20Dollar%20Technology%20Report%202016.pdf.

4. "Accountability Operations Manual: Vermont Accountability System Based on Student Achievement," page 5.

5. "2015 AYP Report-Bellows Free Academy High School," Vermont Agency of Education, page 1, accessed October 10, 2016, http://education.vermont.gov/documents/data-ayp-schools-2015.

Virginia

Because it is based on proficiency and graduation rates, Virginia's accountability system for high schools gives them an incentive to ignore their high-achieving students.

The Purpose of This Analysis

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How States Can Prioritize High Achievers in Their High School Accountability Systems

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4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES VIRGINIA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?		Virginia does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?		Virginia has developed a student growth percentile model.[3] However, because growth doesn't count towards a school's summative rating and isn't publicly reported we give no credit for this indicator.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?		Growth plays no role in determining summative high school ratings.[4]
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?		Virginian reports AP and dual enrollment success rates at the school level, but neither counts toward a school's summative rating. (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

Virginia Department of Education • www.doe.virginia.gov

McLean High

1633 Davidson Rd, McLean, VA 22101

Fairfax County Public Schools

Principal: Ms. Ellen Reilly	Superintendent: Dr. Karen K Garza
(703) 714-5700	(571) 423-1010

The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to providing a quality education for all students. The Virginia School Report Card provides transparent information about the performance of Virginia's schools. School accreditation and federal accountability ratings for a specific school year are based on student achievement on tests taken during the previous academic year.

State Accreditation Results for All Students

This table summarizes the data used in calculating the state accreditation status of the school and is reported for the "all students" group.

State Accreditation Results for All Students

Subject	Accreditation Benchmark	2014 - 2015		2015 - 2016		2016 - 2017		
		1 Year	3 Year	1 Year	3 Year	1 Year	3 Year	Met Accreditation Benchmark
English	75	97	97	96	97	98	97	YES
Mathematics	70	89	88	92	89	91	91	YES
History	70	97	96	97	97	97	97	YES
Science	70	93	95	96	94	96	95	YES
Graduation and Completion Index	85	98	98	98	98	98	98	YES

Key:
- YES = Met benchmark based on current year results
- AB = Met benchmark based on Alternative Benchmark
- - = No data for group
- < = A group below state definition for personally identifiable results
- * = Data not yet available
- N/A = Not applicable
- 3YR = Met benchmark based on the 3 year average result
- 4YR = Met benchmark based on the 4 year average result
- NO-A = Did not meet benchmark but is within the narrow margin
- NO-I = Did not meet benchmark but satisfies the criteria for improvement
- NO-W = Did not meet benchmark or criteria for narrow margin or improvement
- NO = Did not meet benchmark

School - Fall Membership

School membership (enrollment) is reported on September 30 of each school year.

School - Fall Membership

Grade	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
09 - Grade 9	525	494	541
10 - Grade 10	566	520	505
11 - Grade 11	514	572	515
12 - Grade 12	487	486	542
Total Students	2,092	2,072	2,103

Key:
- < = A group below state definition for personally identifiable results
- - = No data for group
- * = Data not yet available

Advanced Program Information

The percentage of students enrolled in advanced programs is a key indicator of school quality at the secondary level.

School - Advanced Program Information

Program type	Count / Percentage		
	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Advanced Placement Test Taken Preliminary Results	946 / 45.22%	958 / 46.24%	936 / 44.51%
Advanced Placement course enrollment	954 / 45.6%	964 / 46.53%	950 / 45.17%

Key:
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- - = No data for group
- * = Data not yet available

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1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 275–279, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Accountability in Virginia Public Schools," Virginia Department of Education, pages 1–3, accessed July 29, 2016, http://www.pen.k12.va.us/statistics_reports/school_report_card/accountability_guide.pdf.

3. "Frequently Asked Questions about Student Growth Models," Virginia Department of Education, page 1, accessed July 29, 2016, http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/scoring/student_growth_percentiles/fact_sheet.pdf.

4. "Accountability in Virginia Public Schools," page 2.

5. "2016 Virginia High School Report Card – T.C. Williams High," Virginia Department of Education, page 3, accessed July 29, 2016, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/report.do?division=101&schoolName=498.

Washington

Washington's accountability system rewards high schools that help students earn college credit before graduating. It should also reward schools that help students achieve at an advanced level on state tests.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Washington's system for rating high school performance during the 2014–15 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Washington's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES WASHINGTON'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Washington does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Washington uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	At the high school level, achievement counts for 32–48 percent of a school's summative rating, while "growth for all students" counts for at most 16 percent.[4] (See Exhibits A and B.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	★	Schools earn points for students who earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual credit programs.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

Washington State Board of Education - Index Rating Report 2014-2015

School Details

Name	Freeman High School
Code	3192
Type	Public
Category	High
District	Freeman
ESD	Educational Service District 101

TIER	INDEX RANGE
Exemplary	7.89 to 10.00
Very Good	6.85 to <7.89
Good	5.75 to <6.85
Fair	4.26 to <5.75
Underperforming	3.63 to <4.26
Bottom 5%	1.00 to <3.63

Achievement Awards

No awards assigned.

School Classification

Tier Label	Exemplary
Composite Index Rating	**9.13**
School Designation	No Designation Assigned
	No Description Assigned

Proficiency

	ELA	Math	Science	Average	Proficiency Average
All Students	9.00	5.00	10.00	8.00	7.75
Targeted Subgroups	9.00	6.00		7.50	

Growth

	ELA	Math	Average	Growth Average
All Students				
Targeted Subgroups				

Career and College Readiness

	Graduation Rate	Dual Credit Participation	TBD	Average	Overall Average
All Students	10.00	7.00	to be phased in	10.00	10.00
Targeted Subgroups		7.00			

2015 INDEX RATING	**8.80**

EXHIBIT B[7]

Washington State Board of Education - Index Rating Report 2014-2015

School Details

Name	Freeman High School
Code	3192
Type	Public
Category	High
District	Freeman
ESD	Educational Service District 101

TIER	INDEX RANGE
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Good	5.75 to <6.85
Fair	4.26 to <5.75
Underperforming	3.63 to <4.26
Bottom 5%	1.00 to <3.63

	Proficiency			Growth		Career and College Readiness		
	Rating based on Percent Proficient			Rating based on Median Growth Percentiles		Graduation Rate	Dual Credit Participation	11th Grade Assessments
	ELA	Math	Science	ELA	Math			
All Students	9.00	5.00	10.00			10.00	7.00	To be phased-in
Targeted Subgroup Average	9.00	6.00					7.00	
Targeted Subgroups								
American Indian/Alaska Native								
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian								
Black/African American								
Hispanic								
English Language Learners(ELL)								
Former ELL								
Students with Disabilities								
Free and Reduced Price Lunch	9.00	6.00					7.00	
Non-Targeted Subgroups								
Asian								
White	9.00	6.00	10.00			10.00	7.00	
Two or More Races								

Indicates fewer than 20 student records.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 280–284, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "Methodology, business rules, and data components used in the April, 2016 implementation of the Washington State Achievement Index," Washington State Board of Education, pages 2–3, accessed July 18, 2016, http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/AchievementIndex/IndexMethodology.pdf.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. "2014-2015 Achievement Index – Freeman High School," Washington State Board of Education, accessed July 18, 2016, https://eds.ospi.k12.wa.us/WAI/IndexReport/dropdown.

7. Ibid.

West Virginia

West Virginia's accountability system rewards high schools that help students earn college credit before graduating. Assigning more weight to student growth would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine West Virginia's plan for rating high school performance under ESSA. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined West Virginia's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES WEST VIRGINIA'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	West Virginia will not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	West Virginia will use a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	☆	At the high school level, achievement will count for 33 percent of summative school ratings, while "growth for all students" counts for 27 percent.[4] (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	West Virginia will rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[5]

EXHIBIT A[6]

Table 3. WVAS measures and point allocations for elementary, middle, and high schools.

Accountability measure	Point allocations		
	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High schools
Student proficiency in math	175	175	250
Student proficiency in ELA	175	175	250
Grade 3 reading performance	50		
Grade 8 math concepts and procedures performance		50	
Observed growth in math	100	100	100
Observed growth in ELA	100	100	100
Adequate growth in math	100	100	100
Adequate growth in ELA	100	100	100
Improvement of low-performing students[1] in math	100	100	100
Improvement of low-performing students in ELA	100	100	100
At-risk subgroup reduction	100	100	50
Attendance	100	100	50
College- and career-ready indicators			150
Graduation rate			150
Total	1,200	1,200	1,500

[1] Accelerated improvement of the lowest-performing 25 percent of students

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 285–290, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "West Virginia's School Accountability System," West Virginia Board of Education, page 4, accessed November 16, 2016, http://static.k12.wv.us/a-f/a-f_accountabilitysystem.pdf.

3. Ibid., pages 10–12.

4. Ibid., page 4.

5. Ibid., page 16.

6. Ibid., page 4.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin's accountability system rewards schools where students achieve at an advanced level. But without a growth measure for high schools it is difficult to know when they deserve credit for students' success.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

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To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

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Here we examine Wisconsin's system for rating high school performance during the 2013–14 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Wisconsin's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES WISCONSIN'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Wisconsin gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	☆	Wisconsin does not estimate growth at the high school level. (See Exhibit A.)
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	☆	Wisconsin does not estimate growth at the high school level. (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Wisconsin does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[3]

EXHIBIT A[4]

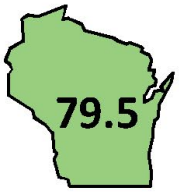
FINAL - PUBLIC REPORT - FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Lincoln Hi | Alma Center

School Report Card | 2013-14 | Summary

Overall Accountability Score and Rating



Exceeds Expectations

Overall Accountability Ratings	Score
Significantly Exceeds Expectations	83-100
Exceeds Expectations	73-82.9
Meets Expectations	63-72.9
Meets Few Expectations	53-62.9
Fails to Meet Expectations	0-52.9

Priority Areas	School Score	Max Score	9-12 State	9-12 Max
Student Achievement	**65.7/100**		**69.1/100**	
Reading Achievement	32.8/50		33.3/50	
Mathematics Achievement	33.0/50		35.8/50	
Student Growth	**NA/NA**		**NA/NA**	
Reading Growth	NA/NA		NA/NA	
Mathematics Growth	NA/NA		NA/NA	
Closing Gaps	**89.5/100**		**67.5/100**	
Reading Achievement Gaps	48.9/50		17.5/25	
Mathematics Achievement Gaps	40.6/50		17.0/25	
Graduation Rate Gaps	NA/NA		33.0/50	
On-Track and Postsecondary Readiness	**85.1/100**		**83.5/100**	
Graduation Rate (when available)	77.3/80		71.9/80	
Attendance Rate (when graduation not available)	NA/NA		NA/NA	
3rd Grade Reading Achievement	NA/NA		NA/NA	
8th Grade Mathematics Achievement	NA/NA		NA/NA	
ACT Participation and Performance	7.8/20		11.6/20	

Student Engagement Indicators	Total Deductions: 0
Test Participation Lowest Group Rate (goal ≥95%)	Goal met: no deduction
Absenteeism Rate (goal <13%)	Goal met: no deduction
Dropout Rate (goal <6%)	Goal met: no deduction

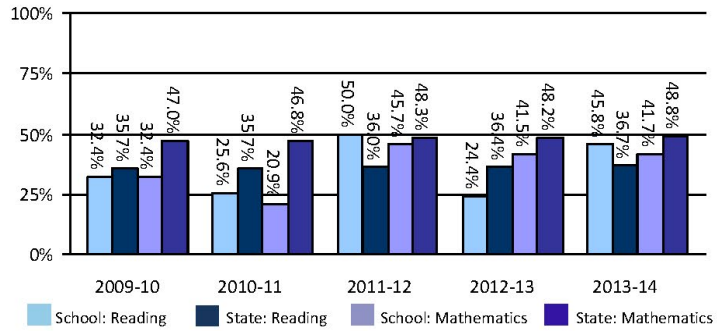
School Information

Grades	9-12
School Type	Public High School
Enrollment	196
Race/Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.0%
Black not Hispanic	1.0%
Hispanic	10.2%
White not Hispanic	87.2%
Student Groups	
Students with Disabilities	15.3%
Economically Disadvantaged	56.6%
Limited English Proficient	1.5%

Wisconsin Student Assessment System Percent Proficient and Advanced

Includes Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) and Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD). WKCE college and career readiness benchmarks based on National Assessment of Educational Progress.

State proficiency rate is for all tested grades: 3-8 and 10



Notes: Overall Accountability Score is an average of Priority Area Scores, minus Student Engagement Indicator deductions. The average is weighted differently for schools that cannot be measured with all Priority Area Scores, to ensure that the Overall Accountability Score can be compared fairly for all schools. Accountability Ratings do not apply to Priority Area Scores. Details can be found at http://reportcards.dpi.wi.gov/.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 291–297, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "School Report Card Technical Guide," Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, page 11, accessed July 2016, 2016, http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/accountability/pdf/Report%20Card%20Technical%20Guide%202015-16.pdf.

3. Ibid., 47.

4. "Wisconsin School Report Card 2013-2014 – Lincoln High," Virginia Department of Education, page 1, accessed July 29, 2016, https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/

Wyoming

TWO STARS OUT OF FOUR

Wyoming's high school accountability system puts a strong emphasis on growth. Rewarding schools that help more students achieve at an advanced level would improve the system.

The Purpose of This Analysis

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw: it strongly incentivized schools to focus exclusively on low-performing students' "proficiency" and high school graduation rates, ignoring the educational needs of high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests and earn a diploma regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth and much higher graduation rates for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former secretary of education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was a much fairer way of evaluating schools' impact on student achievement than looking only at proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. And, just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

In 2015, Congress replaced NCLB and its waivers with the ESSA, which maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Under ESSA, states must now use four types of indicators to rate high schools: academic achievement (which can include student growth); graduation rates; growth toward English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Furthermore, each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry "substantial" weight and, in the aggregate, must count "much more" than the fourth.

To help states make the most of the ESSA opportunity, we have reviewed how well their present, intended, or most recently employed accountability systems serve high achievers. If a state's system doesn't do a satisfactory job of incentivizing schools to focus on high achievers, we believe that strengthens the case for changing it materially.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Here we examine Wyoming's system for rating high school performance during the 2015–16 school year—the most recent year for which information is available. We do not examine the quality of the state's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

Part I of this report, released in August 2016, examined Wyoming's rating systems for elementary and middle schools.[1]

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA.

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (academic achievement), give high schools incentives for getting more students to an advanced level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give high schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to a basic level, full credit for getting students to a proficient level, and additional credit for getting students to an advanced level. (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)

2. **Use the flexibility provided by ESSA to rate high schools using a true growth model—that is, one that includes the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the "proficient" line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, don't use it at the high school level, or use a growth-to-proficiency system that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as those that estimate a school's value added or median growth percentile— is preferable.

3. **When determining summative high school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count at least as much as achievement.** The Department of Education's proposed regulations under ESSA require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the first three indicators (achievement, graduation rate, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry "substantial" weight. In our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth count at least as much as achievement does. Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high performers. (States that don't yet roll their indicators up to a summative rating for the school receive a "not applicable" designation here.)

4. **Include an indicator that gives high schools an incentive to help able students earn college credit before they graduate.** One "indicator of school quality or student success" should be the percentage of students who earn college credit via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs, which are among the best ways to challenge high performers. It's important that states focus on actual attainment of college credit or the equivalent, not just participation in these programs, lest the incentives encourage the wrong behavior by schools: shoving students into AP, IB, and/or dual enrollment even if they are not prepared to succeed, leading to frustration on their part and potentially harming the experience of their higher-achieving peers. Let us also acknowledge the questionable value of many of today's dual-enrollment programs. Students are often taught not by college professors but by high school teachers, and the "college credit" earned doesn't always transfer to bona fide colleges. States should therefore encourage more high schools to offer AP and IB courses because those come with external exams, which ensure program quality and rigor.

DOES WYOMING'S HIGH SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?

INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate high schools' academic achievement using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level?	☆	Wyoming does not give additional credit for students achieving at an advanced level.[2]
2. Does the state rate high schools' growth using a model that includes the progress of all individual students, not just those below the "proficient" line?	★	Wyoming uses a student growth percentile model.[3] A student growth percentile model compares students to peers with similar achievement in the previous school year by ranking them based on their year-to-year growth.
3. When calculating summative high school ratings, does the state assign at least as much weight to "growth for all students" as it does to achievement?	★	"Growth for all students" and achievement each count for one-third of a school's "academic performance rating." (See Exhibit A.)
4. Does the state rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating via AP, IB, and/or dual-enrollment programs?	☆	Wyoming does not rate high schools' success in helping students earn college credit before graduating.[4] (See Exhibit A.)

EXHIBIT A[5]

WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2015-16 High School Performance Report

District Name:	**Natrona #1**
School Name:	**Kelly Walsh High School**
Grades Served:	**9-12**
Enrollment:	**1786**

PARTIALLY MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Schools in Wyoming may fall within one of four performance levels based on their pattern of performance on three indicators: Achievement, Overall Readiness, and Equity.

The FOUR performance levels are:

- **EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS**
- **MEETING EXPECTATIONS**
- **PARTIALLY MEETING EXPECTATIONS**
- **NOT MEETING EXPECTATIONS**

Click this link for more information about the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA).

School Accountability Implementation Handbook

Note: In order to have an indicator score, a school must have 10 students with evidence on the indicator. When available up to two years of prior data was included to meet this minimum student count.

	School Indicator Performance Only students enrolled at the school for a full academic year were included. Full Academic Year is October 1st through the midpoint of the state assessment window.		
Indicator	**Category**	**Count of Students**	**Description**
		ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	
Equity	**Meeting Targets**	200	Equity is the median student growth percentile (MGP) in reading and math combined for a subgroup of grade eleven students who had low reading and math test scores in the prior year.
Achievement	**Meeting Targets**	405	Achievement is the percent of student test scores proficient or above in grade 11 on ACT subject area tests of mathematics, reading, science, and English/writing.
Growth	**Meeting Targets**	751	Growth is a median student growth percentile (MGP) in reading and math combined for all students during grades ten and eleven as measured on subject area tests of the Aspire, EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT.
		OVERALL READINESS	
Graduation Rate	**Below Targets**	472	Graduation rate is a measure of the extended rate (i.e.,four year on-time cohort plus five, six and seven year graduates).
Additional Readiness	**Meeting Targets**	364	Additional ReadinessHathaway index based on unweighted GPA, highest ACT composite score, and the success curriculum level reported on the transcript(weight = 40%).Tested readiness is an index based on composite scores on the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT (weight = 30%).Percent of grade 9 students earning 1/4th of the credits needed for graduation (weight = 30%).
Participation Rate	**Met**		The participation rate requirement is 95%. The participation rate threshold is 90%. When a school's participation rate is below the requirement but at or above the threshold, the school is docked one performance level. When a school's participation rate is below the threshold the school is considered not scorable and is assigned to the not meeting expectation performance level.

Endnotes

1. Michael J. Petrilli, et al., *High Stakes for High Achievers: State Accountability in the Age of ESSA*, pages 298–304, (District of Columbia: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), https://edexcellence.net/publications/high-stakes-for-high-achievers.

2. "2015 Wyoming School Performance Rating Model Implementation Handbook," Wyoming Department of Education, pages 6–7, accessed July 25, 2016, http://edu.wyoming.gov/downloads/accountability/2015/implementation-handbook.pdf.

3. Ibid., 30.

4. Ibid., 9–10.

5. "2015-16 High School Performance Report- Kelly Walsh High School," Wyoming Department of Education, accessed October 10, 2016,https://portals.edu.wyoming.gov/Reports/Public/wde-reports-2012/public-reports/waea/2016-public-high-school-performance.