

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

Thursday, February 16, 2017 at 9:00 am

Michigan Legislative Hearing on School Accountability

Foundation for Excellence in Education



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

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

Guiding Principles:

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

Foundation for Excellence in Education



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

Our Services

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



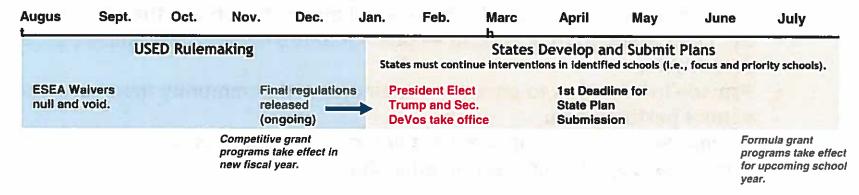


ESSA Overview

Updated Timeline



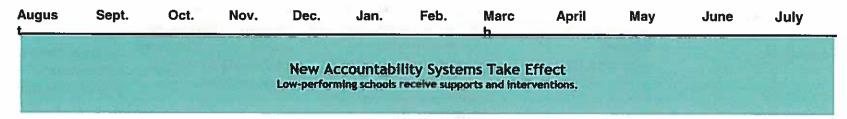
2016-17 School Year: Rulemaking and Transition



2017-18 School Year: New Systems in Place



2018-19 School Year: New Systems in Place; Interventions Begin





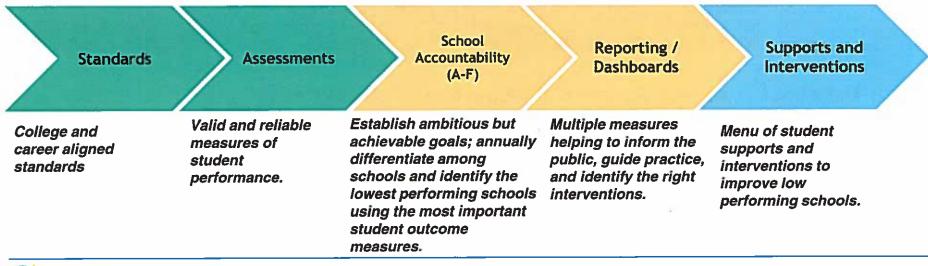
Defining "State Accountability System"



What is the purpose of state accountability systems?

- Hold schools responsible for helping all students achieve their full potential;
- Set clear goals to rally around goals that are meaningful, ambitious, and achievable;
- Provide information to parents, educators, and community members about school performance;
- Prompt and support improvement where it's needed; and
- Protect taxpayer investment in education.

Components of a state accountability system





School Accountability vs. Public Reporting



Standards

Assessments

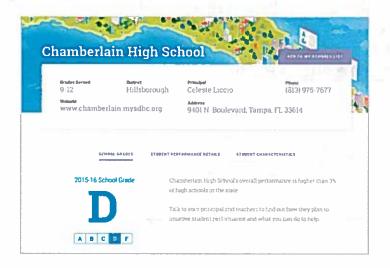
Goals and School Designation

Reporting / Dashboards

Supports and interventions

School Accountability

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



Report Cards / Dashboards

Required Under ESSA

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

Optional

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



Goals and Identification



Goals

States must establish "ambitious, state-designed long-term goals" and interim progress targets for all students and for each subgroup for:

- Academic achievement
- High school graduation
- English language proficiency (all students only)

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School Accountability

States must establish a <u>system of meaningfully differentiating schools on an annual basis</u>, based on the following indicators for all students and separately for each subgroup (except that English proficiency need not be disaggregated). The system must give <u>substantial weight</u> to each indicator.

- Academic achievement indicator
- Another academic indicator (growth, grad rate)
- English proficiency
- Additional indicator of school quality or student success

In the aggregate, the system must give much greater weight to these indicators (and proposed rules require three "levels" of performance within each indicator)

Identification of Schools

The accountability system must identify at least three categories of schools:

- Comprehensive support and improvement schools
- Targeted support and intervention schools
- Additional schools



Example School Grading Component and Weights



ESSA Indicator: State measure	Elem/ Middle	High
Academic Achievement: Reading Proficiency	15%	15%
Academic Achievement: Math Proficiency	15%	15%
Academic Achievement (Student Success): Science Proficiency	5%	5%
Academic Achievement (Student Success): Social Studies Prof	5%	5%
Another Academic Indicator: Reading Growth of All Students	15%	10%
Another Academic Indicator: Math Growth of All Students	15%	10%
Another Academic Indicator: Four-Year Graduation Rate	-	10%
Student Success: Reading Growth of Lowest Performing Students	10%	5%
Student Success: Math Growth of Lowest Performing Students	10%	5%
Student Success: College and Career Ready		10%
English Language Proficiency: Proficiency and Progress	10%	10%
Participation Rate: Lower a letter grade if less than 95%		
TOTAL POINTS		MARIEN .
Grading Scale: 80-100% = A, 70-79% = B, 60-69% = C, 50-59% = D,	0-49% =	F



School Grading Component and Weights



ESSA Indicator: State measure	Elem/ Middle	High			
Academic Achievement: Reading Proficiency	100	100			
Academic Achievement: Math Proficiency	100	100			
Academic Achievement: Science Proficiency	100	100			
Academic Achievement: Social Studies Proficiency	100	100			
Another Academic Indicator: Reading Growth of All Students	100	100			
Another Academic Indicator: Math Growth of All Students	100	100			
Another Academic Indicator: Four-Year Graduation Rate		100			
Student Success: Reading Growth of Lowest Performing Students	100	100			
Student Success: Math Growth of Lowest Performing Students	100	100			
Student Success: College and Career Ready		100			
English Language Proficiency: Proficiency and Progress	+/-	+/-			
	100	100			
Participation Rate					
TOTAL POINTS	800	1000			
Grading Scale: 62-100% = A, 54-61% = B, 41-53% = C, 32-40% = D, 0-31% = F					

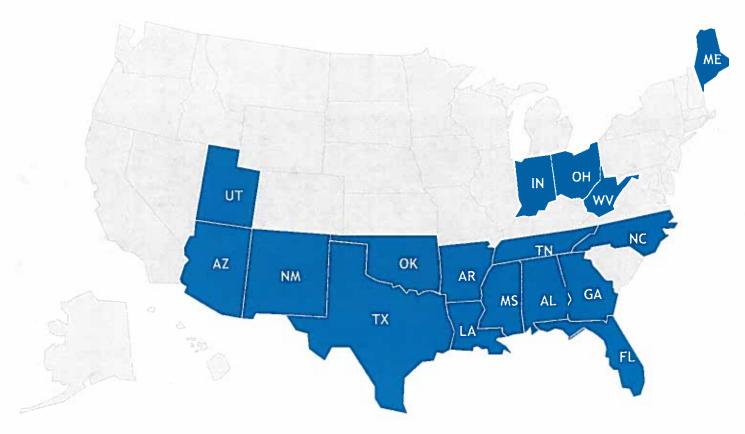


A-F School Grading

School Accountability



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



17 States Have Adopted A-F School Grading



NAEP



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



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

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

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





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

- Use clear and transparent descriptors of A, B, C, D, and F
- 2 Include only objective, concise student learning outcome measures
- Measure college and career readiness in high school
- Balance measures of student performance and progress

- Calculate student progress toward grade level and advanced achievement
- Focus attention on the progress of the lowest performing students in each school, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status
- Report results in a timely manner as close to the end of the school year as possible
- 8 Communicate clearly to parents
- Establish rigorous criteria, with automatic increases, to earn A, B, C, D or F grades





1

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

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

Red Orange Yellow Lime Green Dark Green



Florida School Classifications

1995

Florida began "grading" schools

High Performing Performing Low Performing Critically Low Performing 1998

Moved to Performan ce Levels

 $I,\,II,\,III,\,IV,\,V$

1999

Adopted Letter Grades

A, B, C, D, F

2015

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



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



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

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

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



Feeling the Florida Heat? How Low-Performing Schools Respond to Voucher and Accountability Pressure



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

American Economic Association

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

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



Public Opinion Favors A-F Grading Schools



May 2014 National Survey Conducted by McLaughlin & Associates

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

2013 Public Opinion Strategies of likely Tennessee voters

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

2015 Georgia statewide poll Conducted by McLaughlin & Associates

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





2

Include objective, concise student learning outcome measures

School accountability measures need to be based on what is important and what measures student success. Measures also need to be consistent across schools so accurate comparisons can be made.

Strong school accountability models include measures such as:

- Proficiency on statewide assessments
- Growth on statewide assessments
- Proficiency and Progress on English Language Assessments
- Graduation rates
- College & career readiness performance measures. Passing AP, IB, dual credit, industry certification or scoring ready on ACT/SAT

Input measures such as attendance, parental satisfaction or school climate surveys do not ensure that students are learning and reduce local control. Inputs should be reported but not part of a school's grade.



Selecting School Accountability Indicators



- Is the indicator valid, reliable and accurate?
- Does it relate to improved student achievement?
- Does the indicator differentiate among schools?
- What perverse incentives might result from including the indicator?
- Will adding the indicator dilute the emphasis on student outcome measures?
- Does the indicator measure something that is actually under the school's control?
- Does the value of the indicator outweigh the administrative budget of collecting and verifying the accuracy of data for that indicator?
- Is the indicator aligned to the overall policy goals of the state's education system?





Balance measures of student performance and progress

All students have the ability to learn and grow, and a strong accountability system must capture measures of that growth.

The ultimate goal is that all students will be performing on grade level but focusing on both proficiency and growth provides a true picture of how a school is doing.

Proficiency and growth should be equally weighted in an accountability system.

- Weighting growth more than proficiency provides less incentive to ensure students are on grade level.
- Weighting proficiency more than growth creates an uneven playing field.

The growth component requires schools to demonstrate that all students, high achieving and low achieving, have made progress.



Example Elementary and Middle School Grade



English/ Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science	
Proficiency 83%	Proficiency 78%	Proficiency 81%	Proficiency 63%	
Progress (all students) 90%	Progress (all students) 85%	800 Points Total Each component has 100 possible points The percent equals the points earned		
Progress (lowest 25%)	Progress (lowest 25%)	648 points earned / 800 points possible		
86%		81%	= B	

A high school grade includes additional components for graduation rate and college and career readiness.



Example High School Grade



1000 Points Total: Each category has 100 possible points (percent of students)

English/ Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science	College & Career Acceleration	Graduation
Proficiency	Proficiency	Proficiency	Proficiency	Proficiency	4-Year Rate
Progress (all students)	Progress (all students)				
Progress (lowest 25%)	Progress (lowest 25%)				

23





Calculate student progress toward grade level and advanced achievement

There are two widely used methods for calculating student growth - "criterion-based" and "norm-referenced."

- Criterion-based methods determines whether or not the student has the demonstrated growth towards the mastery of a certain set of skills.
- Norm-referenced growth models compare a student's performance to the performance of other students.

Criterion-based growth models are the fairest, because they measure what matters - whether each student is learning each year - not how well a student did compared to their peers, on an ever-changing scale.

It is also important that "enough" growth is made to ensure students are going to achieve proficiency or advance performance at a certain time.



Reasons to Measure Growth to Proficient and Advanced



- Individual student learning expectations are set and measured
- All students could demonstrate growth
- Criteria for determining individual student growth is set, and expectations are known by students, parents, educators, policymakers, and the public before testing
- Consistent expectations from year to year allows for longitudinal comparisons
- Expectations, if met each year, will result in proficient or advanced student achievement
- Educators can compute and replicate growth calculation





Focus attention on the progress of the lowest performing students in each school

Effective school accountability systems place more focus on students most in need, without ignoring those that are proficient or advanced.

- Under federal accountability, states had been required to focus on demographic and curricular subgroups.
- Many schools did not have students in these subgroups.
- Schools do have students that are low performing who were not receiving more focus.
- By focusing on the lowest performing students the accountability system will focus on the students that need the most attention, and guarantees that all schools have a focus group of lowest performing students.





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

Timely reporting has many benefits:

- Gives parents enough time to make decisions about where to send their child to school
- Allows teachers and students in schools with a high grade to celebrate success
- Ensures that administrators and educators in schools with a low grade have ample time over the summer to analyze where and how to improve.





7

Communicate clearly to parents

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

Federal law requires a school report card to be issued.





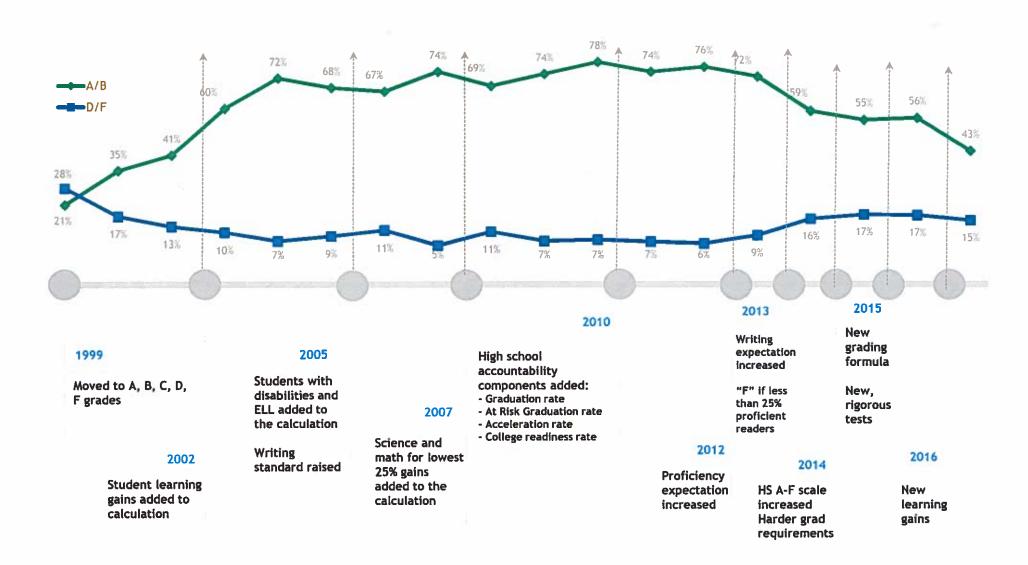
- Establish rigorous criteria, with automatic increases, to earn A, B, C, D or F grades
 - Setting the grading scale for earning an A, B, C, D, and F is critical to the success of school accountability.
 - The scale should be aspirational, yet attainable
 - Automatic increases in the scale should occur when most schools are experiencing success.

For example, the grading scale will increase by five percentage points the year after 65% or more schools earn an A or B until the grading scale is: 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, and <60% = F.



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







9 Use grades to identify schools for recognition, intervention, and support

Regardless of the nuances of method states use to meaningfully differentiate schools, a key factor is identification of schools that should be rewarded or provided extra support and resources for schools that are consistently failing to serve students.

- Schools that improve a letter grade or earn an A, should be recognized as Reward Schools with financial awards for educators and publicity.
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to identify Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement Schools. Using A-F, these schools could be identified as:
 - Schools with a D or F letter grade.
 - High schools that have graduation rates below 67 percent.
 - A, B and C schools with the lowest performing and consistently low performing subgroups or not meeting the needs of their students learning English.



Impact of A-F

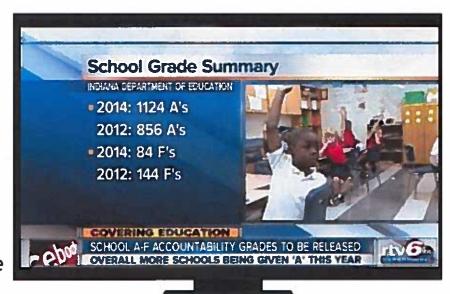


Increased Transparency

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

Improved Student Achievement*

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



Increased Parent Involvement

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

Command Focus on Learning

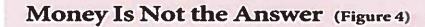
 Leon County (Tallahassee, FL) School board dedicated entire meeting on how to be the first district in the state with no "C" schools.

*National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research

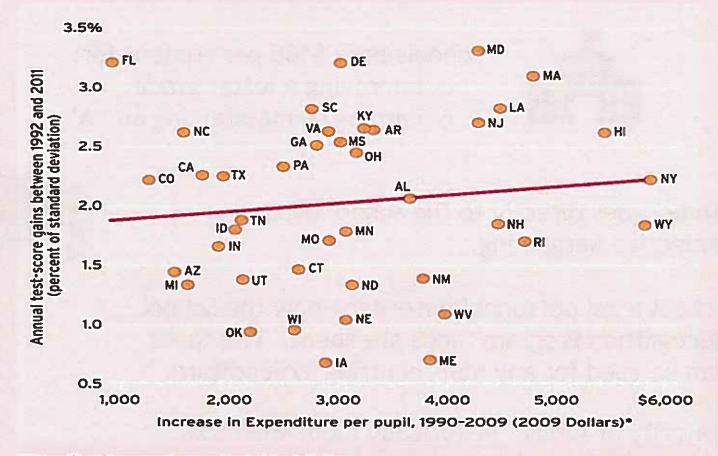


Money is not the Answer





Spending more does not necessarily lift test scores.



*Expenditure Increments are adjusted for Inflation

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on National Assessment of Educational Progress and Digest of Education Statistics



Rewards for Successful Schools



School Recognition Program



Schools earn \$100 per student for:

- o Improving a letter grade
- o Earning or maintaining an "A"

Money goes directly to the school bypassing collective bargaining.



School level personnel determine how the School Recognition Program funds are spent. The funds can be used for any non-recurring expenditure.

Majority of funds - historically more than 85% - are used for teacher and staff bonuses.





Florida Opportunity Scholarships (1999 – 2006)

Eligibility: students in F graded schools two out of four years

Choices:

- A higher performing public school within the district
- A higher performing public school in any other district, with space available
- A participating private school

<u>Funding:</u> scholarship equal to public school funding or private school tuition and fees, whichever is less.

<u>Status:</u> Ruled unconstitutional by the Florida Supreme Court in 2006 – that year 753 students participated





Research concludes competition fuels student achievement in the <u>public</u> schools:

Manhattan Institute: Threat of vouchers improved student performance.

"Florida's low-performing schools are improving in direct proportion to the challenge they face from voucher competition. These improvements are real, not the result of test gaming, demographic shifts, or the statistical phenomenon of 'regression to the mean'."

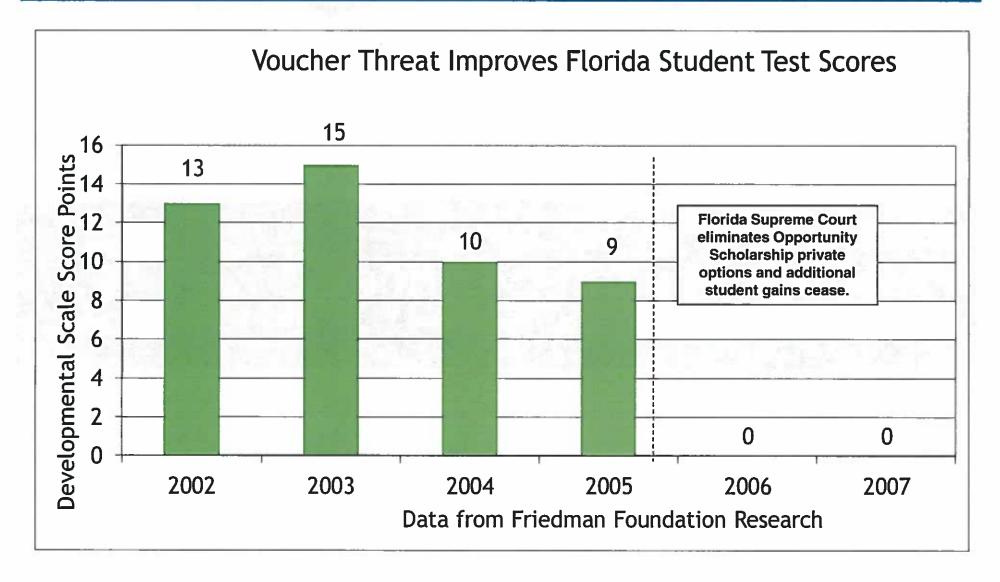
Cornell University: Failing schools respond to threat of vouchers by raising student achievement.

Harvard University: Choice provisions of Florida's A+ Plan leveraged student achievement gains.



Impact of School Choice on Student Performance









Supports and Interventions

Flexibility Around Supports and Interventions



Standards

Assessments

Goals and School Designation

Reporting / Dashboards

Supports and interventions

NCLB

	In need of improvement (year)				
Interventions:	1	2	3	4	5
School Transfer Options	X	Χ	Χ	X	X
Supplemental Services		Χ	Χ	Χ	X
Corrective Action			Χ	Χ	X
Restructuring (planning)				Χ	X
Restructuring (implementation)					X

ESSA

What should be in your toolbox?

- Achievement School District
- Tutoring
- School Choice
- CMOs
- Integrated Student Supports (e.g. CIS)

For which identified school?

- Comprehensive support & improvement schools
- Targeted support and intervention schools
- Additional schools

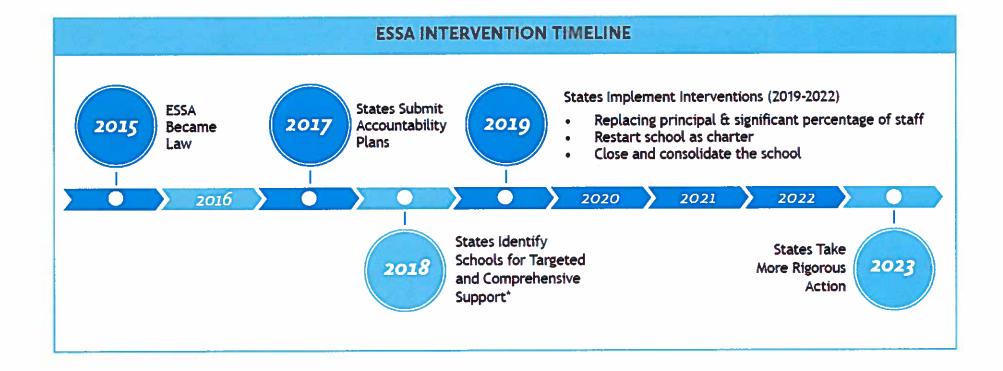
At what time?

 How many years does a school need to be identified before triggering the next set of escalating intervention?



ESSA Interventions Timeline





Two Key State Actions



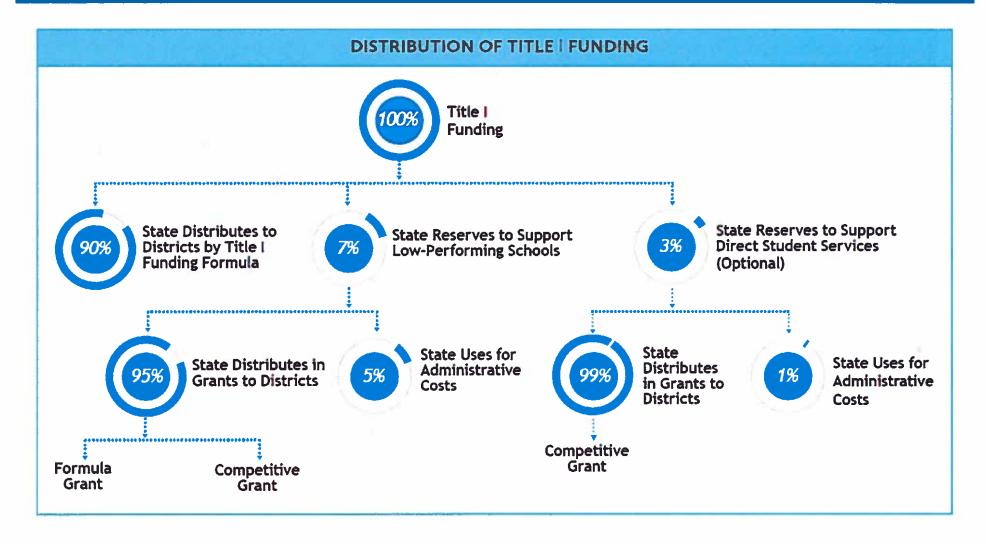
ExcelinEd recommends two key state actions to turn around comprehensive support schools.

- States should influence district turnaround strategies by reviewing districts' school improvement plans and by distributing federal improvement funds through competitive grants. (see next slide)
- 2 Increase choice to address persistently low-performing schools.
 - Remove Artificial Limits On And Promote The Growth Of High-Quality School Options
 - Attract and Cultivate High-Quality Charter Management Organizations
 - Harness The Power Of Opportunity Scholarships



Title I Funding Distribution





Enabling Policy Conditions



Staff Quality and Support

- Schools' ability to recruit and retain effective teachers has a significant impact on school quality.
- Strong instructional leadership from the principal and district support can produce positive results.
- Strong teacher and leader preparation programs.

High-Quality Data and Reporting

- Data-driven decision-making at the state, district and school level is a common strategy in successful school turnaround efforts.
- High-quality and accessible data on school quality helps parents make informed choices for their children.

Integrated Student Supports

- Struggling schools, students and families often have additional health, emotional and behavioral needs but have trouble effectively accessing the maze of public and private services in the community.
- Organizations like Communities in Schools can work in conjunction with other transformative reforms to ensure state and local resources are reaching those that need it most.





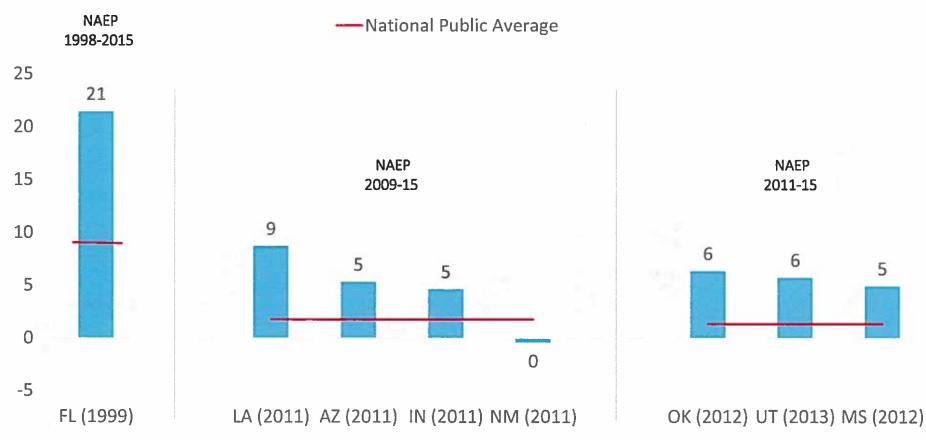
Data

A-F Accountability - 4th Grade Reading



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





Years in () represents first year schools were graded.

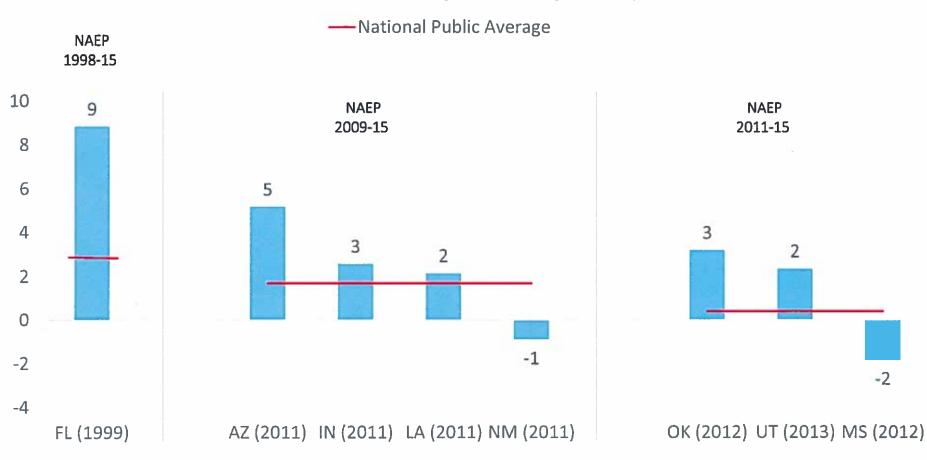


A-F Accountability - 8th Grade Reading



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

Scale Score Point Change Following A-F Implementation



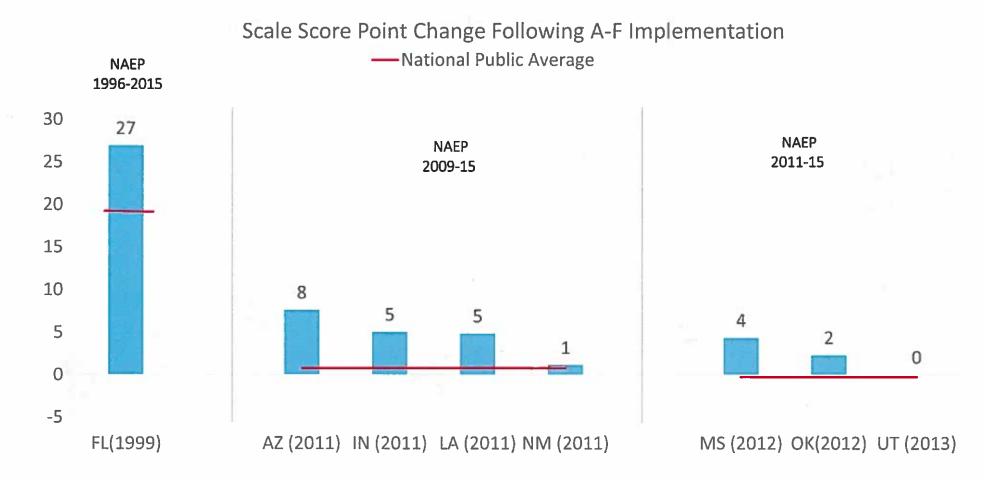
Years in () represents first year schools were graded.



A-F Accountability — 4th Grade Math



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



Years in () represents first year schools were graded

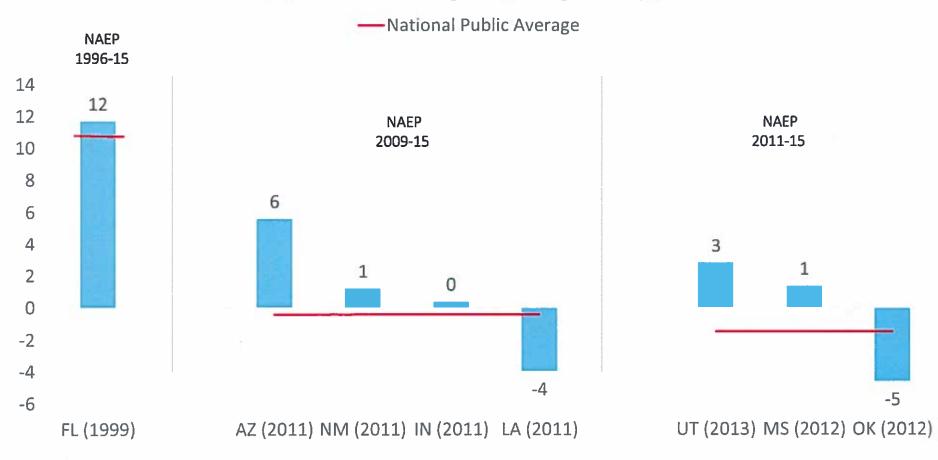


A-F Accountability - 8th Grade Math



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



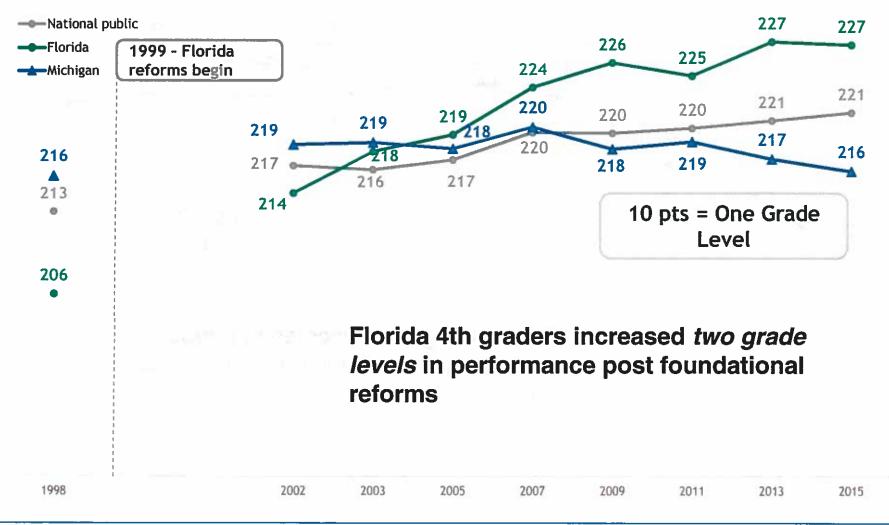


Years in () represents first year schools were graded.



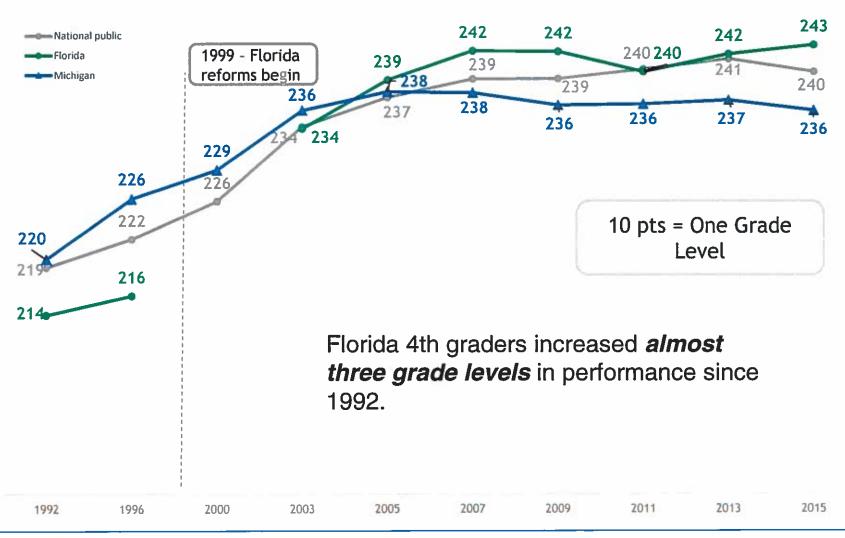


MICHIGAN NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores, 1998-2015



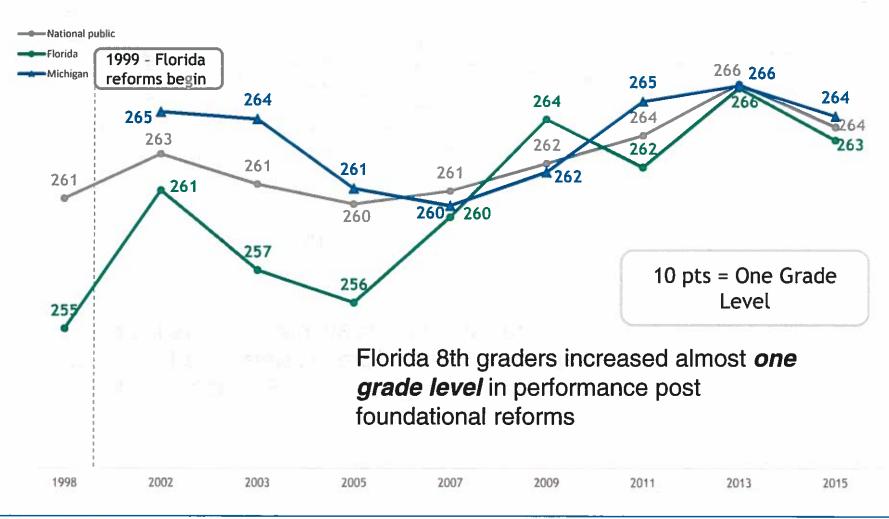


MICHIGAN Average NAEP 4th Grade Math Scores, 1992-2015





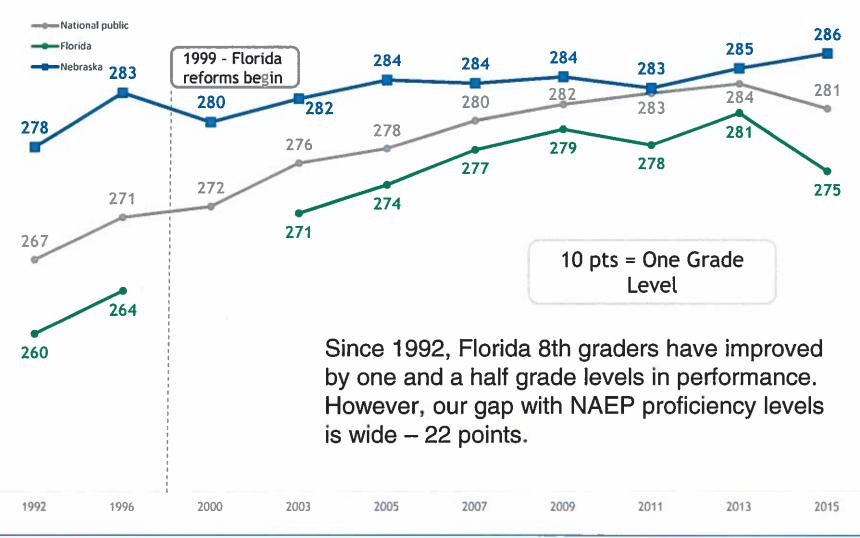
MICHIGAN Average NAEP 8th Grade Reading Scores, 1992-2015







MICHIGAN Average NAEP 8th Grade Math Scores, 1992-2015

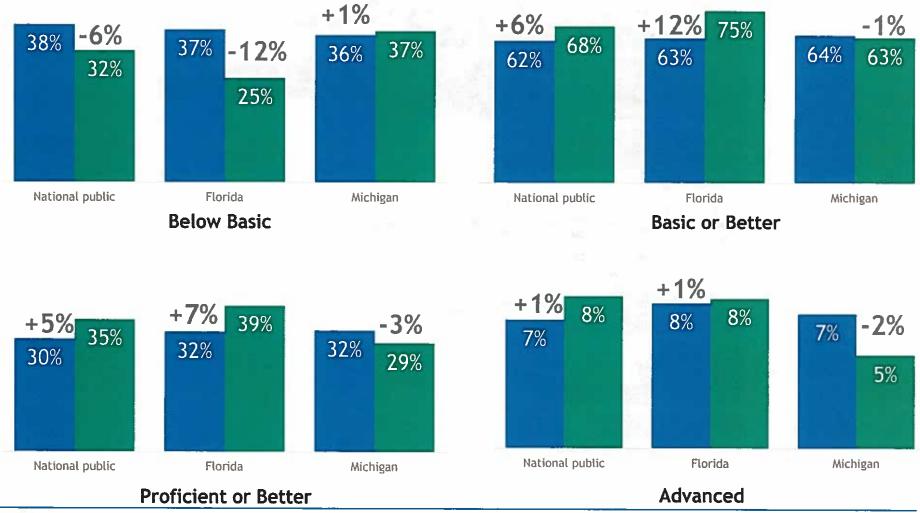




NAEP



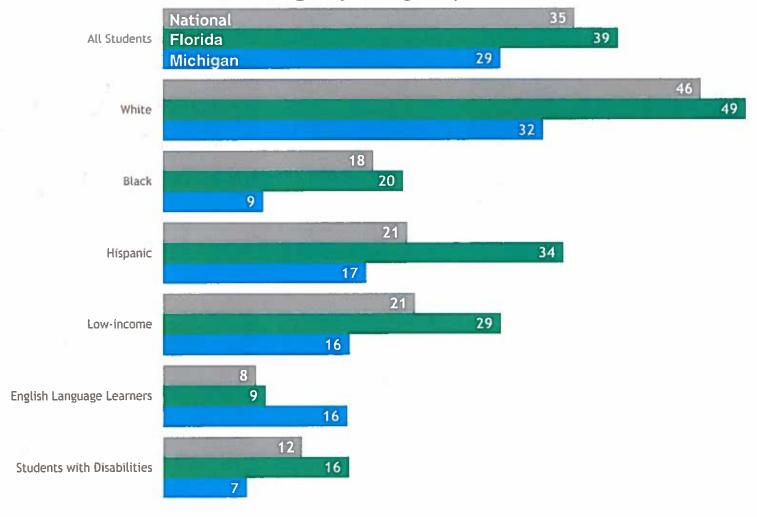
Percentage of Students in the Nation, Florida and Michigan Scoring Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced on NAEP 4th Grade Reading in 2003 and 2015



NAEP



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







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