



Accountability in State ESSA Plans

Methodology

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all 50 states and the District of Columbia are required to submit state plans to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) detailing their accountability systems, long-term goals for achievement, and planned use of federal funds. Statutory requirements of ESSA, and the consolidated state plan template issued by USED, provide a framework of five high-level indicators for accountability that states must include in their systems: 1) Academic Achievement, 2) Indicator for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools (Other Academic Indicator), 3) Graduation Rate, 4) Progress Toward Achieving English Language Proficiency, and 5) School Quality or Student Success. States are also required to set long-term goals for student performance in three key areas: 1) Academic Achievement, 2) Graduation Rate, and 3) English Language Proficiency.

Achieve reviewed state plans submitted in either April or September of 2017 for the following components: 1) states' long-term goals for student performance, including Academic Achievement for English language arts/literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics, Graduation Rate, and Progress Toward English Language Proficiency (ELP); and 2) the indicators states are including in their accountability systems, including how these indicators are weighted for annual meaningful differentiation and summative classifications of schools. This methodology document provides an overview of Achieve's data collection process, business rules for categorizing data, and assumptions that have been applied in the development and population of this tracking tool.

State Plan Submission and Approval

Achieve reviewed state plans submitted to the USED in April and September of 2017. States' plans currently have one of three statuses: 1) approved; 2) revised from original submission, but not yet approved; or 3) submitted, awaiting approval. If a state's plan was approved, the tracker reflects the final version approved by USED. If the state submitted a plan and made revisions, the tracker reflects the most recently revised, publicly available version of the plan. If a state submitted a plan in September, the tracker reflects the submitted plan with no revisions at this point. Information in the tracker will be updated as plans are revised by the state and/or approved by the USED. At the end of each state page, the status of the state plan is provided along with a link to the version of the plan reviewed.

Indicators Included in State Plans for Accountability Systems

Achieve's tracking tool represents the composition of states' accountability indicators based on the five indicators outlined above.

For each indicator, we identify the grade level (elementary/middle, or high school), composition of the indicator, the weighting toward the total accountability score or determination, and any additional notes.

Indicator Business Rules

- **Overall:**
 - Indicators were categorized as they fall into these five categories unless otherwise expressly specified by the state.



- In some cases, states proposed a set of accountability indicators without referencing the framework. In such cases, Achieve categorized states' indicators along the framework to the extent possible.
- If elementary and middle school weighting structures were presented separately in a state's plan, these were combined to the extent possible. If weighting varied by elementary and middle school, these differences are noted in the tracker.
- All indicators relating to grades 9-12 (e.g., a grade 9 growth indicator) were categorized under the high school system, unless otherwise expressly noted by the state.
- If a school has a missing indicator due to lack of applicability or insufficient n-size, states have taken one of two approaches: 1) either to reduce the point value of the entire system, or 2) to redistribute the point value of the missing indicator across other indicators.
- If a state has proposed an alternate weighting system for schools that do not have an EL population, the accountability weighting structure that is the most inclusive and contains all indicators is presented. Users may reference the state plan for alternate weighting.
- If the state has proposed an alternate weighting system during a transitional or baseline year, then the states' proposal for the ultimate accountability structure is presented. The existence of a transitional system is noted in the weighting summary.
- If a state has proposed an indicator for inclusion in a future year, and noted the proposed year for inclusion, then we have made a note of this. If a state referenced the eventual inclusion of additional indicators with no timeline, these potential additions were not included.
- Academic Achievement:
 - This indicator captures student performance on state ELA and math assessments.
 - The statewide assessment that is being used for accountability is identified.
 - Some states have included alternate assessment results toward the academic achievement and/or growth indicator. However, for purposes of this tracker we have limited the review to states' regular summative assessments.
 - If a state includes any other indicator beyond performance on an assessment, those have been included along with the differentiated weighting, if available.
 - For example, a high school indicator for Academic Achievement may include both proficiency on an assessment (20%), and academic growth (15%).
- Other Academic Indicator:
 - This indicator typically captures academic growth for elementary and middle schools.
 - States may choose to include an academic indicator that is not growth under this – e.g., academic achievement in science or a gap-closing indicator.
 - In the tracker, this indicator is often blank for high schools since it is not a required high school indicator. States may not be able to, or may choose not to, calculate growth in high school.



- Graduation Rate:
 - States must include the federally-required 4-year graduation rate as a part of this indicator for high schools. This indicator will always be blank for elementary/middle schools.
 - If a state included extended-year graduation rates – i.e., 5-, 6-, or 7-year – or other measures based on cohort graduation rates, those measures are reflected in the tracker.
 - The weighting column reflects the adjusted cohort graduation rate indicators. If a state is using a different measure, such as an alternative index or GED completion, this will be accounted for in the weighting summary and not in the graduate rate weighting summary.

- School Quality or Student Success:
 - This indicator includes other academic and non-academic measures included for elementary, middle, and high schools.
 - States may choose to include a menu of options for this indicator, this indicator may have both free-standing components that have discrete weighting or a composite indicator, where multiple indicators are combined, to produce one weight, i.e. a meta-indicator.
 - If a state is including a meta-indicator (i.e., an indicator that combines several measures where students can meet the state’s benchmark through a number of different ways), under this category, we have identified it as such, using a X++ for each measure that’s part of the meta-indicator. If a state’s CCR indicator includes components beyond those identified by Achieve, those indicators are incorporated under the ‘other indicators’ category.
 - States’ definitions of indicators included for School Quality or Student Success vary widely (e.g., the on-track to graduate indicator could be either a credit accumulation indicator or a credit deficiency indicator). We have provided definitions when the indicator name alone provides insufficient information about how that measure/indicator is constructed. We have provided clarity in such cases to the extent possible and users are directed to states’ plans for more information.
 - For example, a college- and career-ready measure could vary significantly from state to state based on the indicators each state may choose to include. As such, we have included the composition of the state's CCR measure where available.
 - The list of options under school quality or student success is not exhaustive of what states have included, but rather, reflects indicators that Achieve values as indicators of college and career readiness. If states are incorporating beyond those identified by Achieve, those indicators are incorporated under the ‘other indicators’ category.
 - CTE: This reflects indicators of career readiness, including both indicators that are course based and/or assessment based. For example, earning an industry credential or student performance on the ACT WorkKeys.
 - Access to rigorous coursework: This reflects indicators that incent rigorous course-taking, such as increasing access to courses of study aligned with postsecondary entry requirements. This indicator reflects measures of course



taking sequences and not the enrollment in or completion of single courses, such as AP, IB, or dual enrollment, which are captured discretely in the tracker.

- English Learner Progress
 - The statewide assessment for English Language Proficiency (ELP) and a description of the state's method to assess progress toward ELP is captured.

Long-Term Goals Included in State Plans

Achieve reviewed states' long-term goals for Academic Achievement, Graduation Rate, and English Language Proficiency (ELP). This information is presented in 3 discrete tables.

- A summary table for English Language Proficiency goals is presented on the indicators page and provides high-level descriptive data of how the state is approaching long-term goals for progress toward ELP.
- A long-term goals summary table is presented on the indicators page which provides high-level descriptive data of how the state is approaching long-term goals for achievement and graduation.
- A more detailed long-term goals table is presented on the long-term goals page, which lays out each state's goals for academic achievement and graduation rates.

Long-Term Goals – Summary Table

- The following details are included:
 - Interim Goals – States must set measures of interim progress for goals included in their plans.
 - Length of Long-Term Goals – This reflects states' timeline for meeting the long-term goals included in their plans.
 - Goals Differentiated by Grade Level/Grade Band – This reflects whether the state's long-term goals are differentiated by grade-band or grade level. Either approach would receive a "Yes" in that row. States that do not differentiate goals by grade-band or grade level, and thus would receive a "No" are setting the same goal for all students - i.e., 80% for K–12 whereas those who differentiate are setting goals that vary by grade - i.e., 80% for grade 1, 75% for grade 2.
 - Setting the Same Long-Term Goals for All Subgroups – This reflects whether states are setting the same long-term goal for all subgroups. If a state is setting a different end-goal for each student subgroup based on their baseline, then they would receive a 'No' in that row. For example, if the expectation is that all subgroups achieve the goal of 90% regardless of each subgroup's starting point, then the state has set the same long-term goal for all subgroups. If the expectation is that all subgroups close the gap by 50%, then the state has not set the same long-term goal for all subgroups as each subgroup's gap closing will yield a different final percentage.

English Language Proficiency – Summary Table



- Typically, states assess students upon entry into the system, and a student's trajectory/individual growth targets are often based upon both the grade of entry and the level of proficiency at which they enter the system.
- The *time to proficiency* field identifies the maximum window a state's system allows for a student to reach proficiency on its statewide measure. Each state's maximum time to proficiency window is presented.
- A description of the state's ELP goal is included, and where possible, includes the state's overall ELP goal and the target year.
 - For example; *by 2030, 70% of English learners will show progress toward proficiency by an increase in the percent of students that move at least one performance index level.*
- A second summary table on the indicators page presents a high-level description of states' ELP goals. The following details are included:
 - Assessment Measure – This row will identify the assessment the state is using for English language progress.
 - Time to Proficiency – This row reflects the maximum window a state is setting for a student to reach proficiency on the identified EL assessment.
 - Baseline Year – This row reflects the baseline year the state has selected for its ELP goal.
 - Goal Description – A detailed description of the state's ELP goal is provided.
 - The summary table includes a link to a more detailed long-term goals table providing a closer look at states' achievement and graduation goals for all students, including the baseline value, the baseline year, goal value, goal year, intervals for interim goals, and other contextual details.

Long-Term Goals -Detailed Table

- Long-term goals are presented for the all students group for Academic Achievement for ELA and mathematics, and Graduation Rate for 4-year cohort graduation rate. Extended-year graduation rate goals were collected where available. Goals for content areas besides ELA and mathematics, such as science and social studies, were not included.
- If a state differentiates goals by grade-level or grade-band, then the disaggregated values are presented in the detailed table and noted in the summary table.
- If the long-term goal end-point for each subgroup is different, then we have noted this as a differentiation of goals by subgroup.
- If a state differentiates goals by subgroup, then such disaggregation is noted at both the summary and the detailed levels.
- All states are required to set interim goals; the tool captures the intervals states have set for interim goals.
- While some states include a gap reduction goal—either in addition to or as justification for their proficiency goals—the only goal values captured in this table are proficiency goals. Thus, even if all subgroups share the same *gap reduction* goal, we indicate in this table whether or not they share the same *proficiency* goal.