



# Lessons From “An Independent Review of ESSA State Plans”

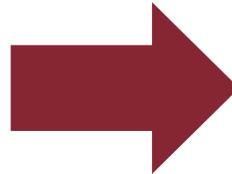
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# Our “theory of action” for the project

ESSA provides  
states  
opportunities  
on a number of  
fronts...



...But it also  
presents  
new risks.

We convened an independent peer review process of state plans in order to:

- Serve as an **independent** review apart from the federal process;
- Capture strengths and weaknesses of each state’s plan; and
- **Provide feedback** to parents, educators, and state policymakers, and advocates.

# Our guiding principles for the reviews

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- 1 Compliance with the law is **necessary** but offers an **incomplete** view of state plans
- 2 We're open to a **range of potential approaches** about how to drive positive change for students
- 3 The reviews should **inform the conversation** about school improvement in states
- 4 We have a **bias towards action**, and we favor **strong state-level systems** rooted in college- and career-readiness

# We created our own rubric to assess elements of high-quality plans

“States should seize ESSA as an opportunity to push for the state education improvements that matter most.”

“That call to action is important for all students, but especially for disadvantaged students, who rely on public schools the most and who have historically been under-served by them.”



GOALS



STANDARDS AND  
ASSESSMENTS



INDICATORS



ACADEMIC  
PROCESS



ALL  
STUDENTS



IDENTIFYING  
SCHOOLS



SUPPORTING  
SCHOOLS



EXITING  
IMPROVEMENT STATUS



CONTINUOUS  
IMPROVEMENT

# We recruited peers with a range of different viewpoints



## More than 40 education experts:

- Eight former chief state school officers, 27 with state credentials
- Range of political viewpoints, including representatives from **Bush and Obama** Administrations and **Trump** transition team
- **Civil rights, disability, and English language learner** communities

# Overall findings and results



## Overarching strengths

- Better measures of school quality
- More innovative college- and career-readiness indicators
- Most states included some measure of student growth
- States are continuing to place strong weight on academics



## A few troubling weaknesses

- Goals that are untethered to long-term visions or ignored in accountability system
- The shift to normative accountability systems – how a school compares to other schools, not an objective standard
- Lack of inclusion of student subgroups
- Lack of clarity on how many schools will be identified for improvement or what actions they will be required to take

# This project is in partnership with the Collaborative for Student Success



- ✓ Communicating around process, rubric, and peers
- ✓ Advocacy around strong and weak plans
- ✓ Promotion of comprehensive lessons learned
- ✓ Connecting willing peers to media with questions

# Check State Plans (checkstateplans.org)

- ✓ Best practices, searchable by state and rubric category
- ✓ Individual state plan analysis
- ✓ Commentary from peer reviewers
- ✓ Full report breakdown

