EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)
IMPLICATIONS FOR STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS
WEDNESDAY WEBINAR #2, MAY 2016
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>Goals / School Designation</th>
<th>Reporting / Dashboards</th>
<th>Supports and Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College and career aligned standards</td>
<td>Valid and reliable measures of student performance.</td>
<td>Identify schools using the most important student outcome indicators and clear designations.</td>
<td>Multiple measures helping to inform the public, guide practice, and identify the right interventions.</td>
<td>Menu of student supports and interventions to improve low performing schools.</td>
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## Shifts in Accountability Policy: Who is Responsible?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NCLB</th>
<th>ESSA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards</strong></td>
<td>State but, under waivers, Feds required Common Core or sign off by higher ed.</td>
<td>State must demonstrate alignment to college coursework</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assessments</strong></td>
<td>State with Federal review and approval</td>
<td>State with Federal review and approval</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Designation</strong></td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>State</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>State must incorporate certain indicators for each subgroup</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supports and Interventions</strong></td>
<td>Federal Cascading set of Federal consequences, states choose amongst SIG options</td>
<td>States and Districts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Components of an Accountability System

Requirements for Standards under ESSA

States must adopt challenging academic standards in reading, math and science.
- Standards must apply to all students with the exception of alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- States must demonstrate that their standards are aligned with college entrance requirements and relevant career and technical education standards.

Limits on Secretarial review.
- As under NCLB, the Secretary may not require states to submit their standards for review or mandate, direct or exercise any control over states’ standards.
Components of an Accountability System

Characteristics of a high-quality assessment system

- Assessments are high quality and produce **meaningful, timely, and accurate data**.

- State assessments are **aligned** to state college and career standards, measure higher order thinking skills, and provide results that are **comparable** with other states.

- **Parents should know the purpose** of an assessment, when the results will be provided, and how the results will be used to help their child.

- States and districts should strive to provide **the best possible information using the fewest possible assessments** and the least possible amount of total testing time.

- Assessment outcomes are used to **strengthen instruction** and **better target interventions** to struggling students.
Assessment Requirements under ESSA

Assessments

Annual assessments.
- Reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school; science at least once in each grade span.
- With state permission, districts can use a locally-selected, nationally recognized high school assessment. These assessments must:
  - be aligned to state standards;
  - provide comparable, valid and reliable data; and
  - be administered in multiple states + used by higher ed for entrance or placement (SAT, ACT, PARCC, Smarter Balanced, AP, IB, others?) (definition developed by Negotiated Rulemaking committee).

English learners.
- States must have one statewide test for English language proficiency.
- States must “make every effort” to develop tests in other languages that are present in the state “to a significant state.”
Assessment Requirements under ESSA

Clarifying the Opt Out Rules

- States must test at least 95 percent of students overall and within each subgroup.

- States determine whether individual parents are legally permitted to opt their students out of assessments.

- States determine the consequences for schools that fail to meet the 95 percent requirement.

- When calculating proficiency rates, states must use as a denominator the greater of:
  - 95 percent of all students (or all students in the subgroup), or
  - the number of students actually participating in the assessment.
Assessment Opportunities under ESSA

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**Assessment audits.** The Secretary can make grants to states to audit their assessment systems.
- Grants of up to $200K are available under this year’s Enhanced Assessment Grants.

**New delivery options.**
- Assessments may be administered as a single test or as a set of interim tests rolled up into a single annual result.
- Assessments can be partially delivered using portfolios, projects, or performance tasks
- Computer adaptive assessments are explicitly allowed.

**Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority.** The Secretary can run a pilot for up to 7 states to experiment with new, innovative assessment and accountability systems.
# Fewer, Better Tests

## Taking Advantage of Opportunities Under ESSA

Streamline assessment systems
- Apply for a federal grant to fund assessment audit.

Transition to innovative assessment models.

## Additional Policy Recommendations

Provide more time for instruction.
- Move statewide testing dates to the end of the school year.

Empower teachers with usable, timely information.
- Require student score reports be provided to the current year and incoming teacher. Require results of formative tests to be provided to teachers within a useful timeframe.

Provide better information to parents.
- Ensure parents understand student expectations, how students will reach them, and how summative assessments will measure them.
- Provide parents with easy-to-understand score reports that include actionable steps on how parents can help their child improve.
- Ensure statewide tests provide results that are comparable with other states.
Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority

Summary

- Up to 7 states (including those in consortia) to participate.
- States **must** demonstrate validity, reliability, comparability, and accessibility of new system and plan to scale statewide.
- States **may** choose to no longer continue the use of the statewide academic assessments otherwise required if not used in proposed accountability system.
- Examples: Competency-based assessments; interim assessments; cumulative year-end assessment; or performance-based assessments that combine into an annual summative determination for a student.

Recommendations

**Understand the far-reaching commitment.**
- Developing and validating new assessments will require substantial time and costs as well as input from key stakeholders.

**Begin by authorizing an Innovation Schools program.**
- Interested states should pilot new models or identify districts that have begun the transition to competency-based education.

Resources

- **Competency-Based Education Policy Summary**
- **Competency-Based Education Model Legislation**
- **Council of Chief State School Officers: Innovation Lab Network Roadmap to Competency-Based Education**

States to Watch

- The ESEA waiver for NH’s Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) system helped to inspire this pilot.
- OH state law established Innovation Lab Network assessment waivers as well as a competency-based education pilot program.

**CCSSO Innovation Lab Network:** The Innovation Lab Network (ILN) is a group of states taking action to identify, test, and implement student-centered approaches to learning.

Current states in the ILN include CA, CO, IA, KY, ME, NH, OH, OR, VA, VT, WV and WI.
How ExcelinEd Can Help

ExcelinEd is available to help state policymakers deepen their understanding of ESSA, set the stage for new opportunities and prepare to tackle new challenges.

- **Provide technical assistance** related to accountability system design.
- **Identify ways new federal funds can support state reforms** in areas including K-3 reading, college and career readiness and digital learning.
- **Support state efforts to participate in the U.S. Department of Education’s rulemaking**
- **Provide advocacy support for states** to preserve rigorous standards and assessments and strong accountability systems during the transition to the new law.

Next Week’s Webinar:

What Does ESSA Mean for School Identification and Interventions?  
**Wednesday, May 18th at 3:00pm ET**

Expect an invitation in your inbox.

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