

ESSA

Boot Camp

July 28-29, 2016

Hyatt Regency Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Goals for today

- Discuss why what states choose to measure matters
- Talk about things to keep in mind as you're thinking about indicators, and some questions to ask
- Share resources you can use in your advocacy
- Talk with two of our partners about why this work is so important



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION



DEMOCRATS
for EDUCATION REFORM



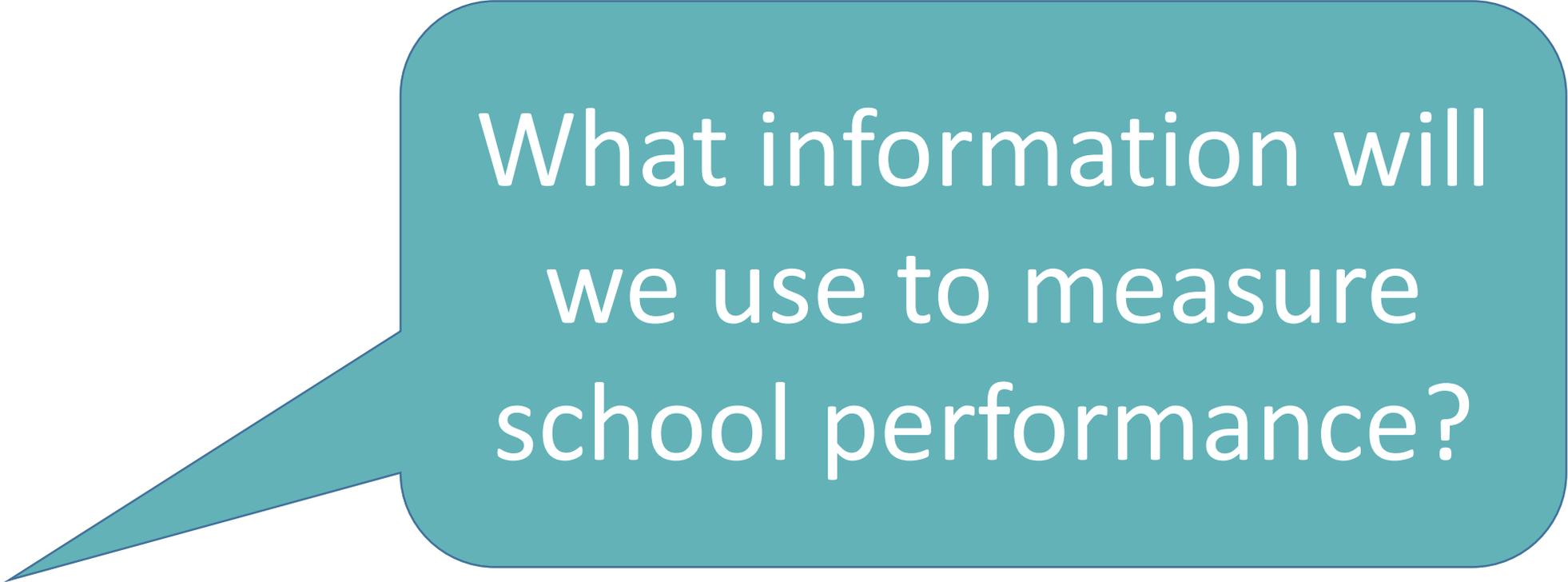
In designing their accountability systems, states will have to wrestle with many big questions...

What goals will we set for our schools?

How will states and districts support struggling schools?

How do we decide which schools are doing well and which ones aren't?

The very first question that states will have to answer, however, is...



What information will we use to measure school performance?

There's a lot of excitement right now about the possibility of including more measures in school ratings.

But as with a lot of things in ESSA, where there is opportunity, there is also peril.

Decisions about what to measure
matter, a lot.

States have the opportunity to select measures that really matter for student success – and that would incentivize schools to improve achievement for all groups of students.

One of the most important things that accountability systems can do is set expectations

- If we measure the wrong things, we risk setting the wrong expectations;
- If we measure too many things, we risk setting too many expectations – and so having none of them matter;
- And, if we put pressure on measures that are weak, we risk letting schools look like they are meeting expectations, even when they're not serving their students.

So what do you need to keep in mind as your state works to decide what to measure – and especially, what to include in school ratings?

What does ESSA require?

Under ESSA, states have to continue to measure proficiency rates on state assessments and graduation rates.

But the law also requires some new indicators.

The law requires states to rate schools each year based on the following measures, all of which (except for progress toward English language proficiency) have to be disaggregated by student group:

- **Academic achievement:** How proficiency rates in reading/language arts and math for all students and each student group compare with state-set goals. For high schools, states can also include student growth as part of this indicator.
- **Another academic indicator:**
 - **For high schools,** a measure of how graduation rates for all students and each student group compare with state-set goals.
 - **For elementary and middle schools,** this measure may include individual student growth or another statewide, valid, and reliable indicator of student learning.
- **English-language proficiency:** A measure of the progress that a school's English learners are making toward English proficiency.
- **Additional indicator of school quality or academic success:** Another valid, reliable, and statewide indicator of school quality or student success.

Additional indicator of school quality or student success.

Note how nothing, NOTHING,
in the law says that this
indicator has to be “non-
academic”

Stress Reduction Kit



Directions:

1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

All indicators have to...

Be measurable
by student group

Meaningfully
differentiate
between schools

What school ratings can do... and what they can't

School ratings can do some really important things. They can:

- **Communicate expectations** for preparing all groups of students for college or a meaningful career;
- Communicate to educators, parents, and the public **how schools are performing against these expectations**, both overall and for each group of students; and
- They **signal that improvement is needed** whenever outcomes for any group consistently do not meet expectations.

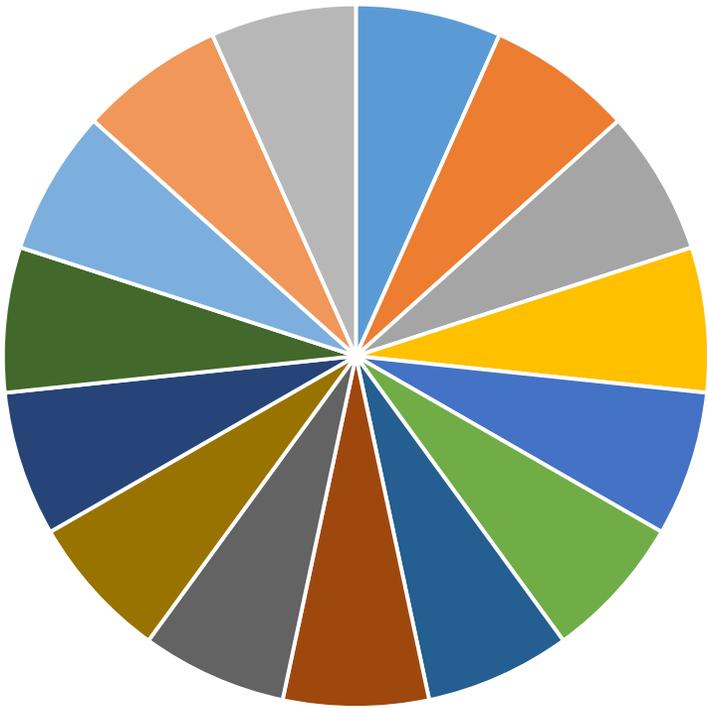
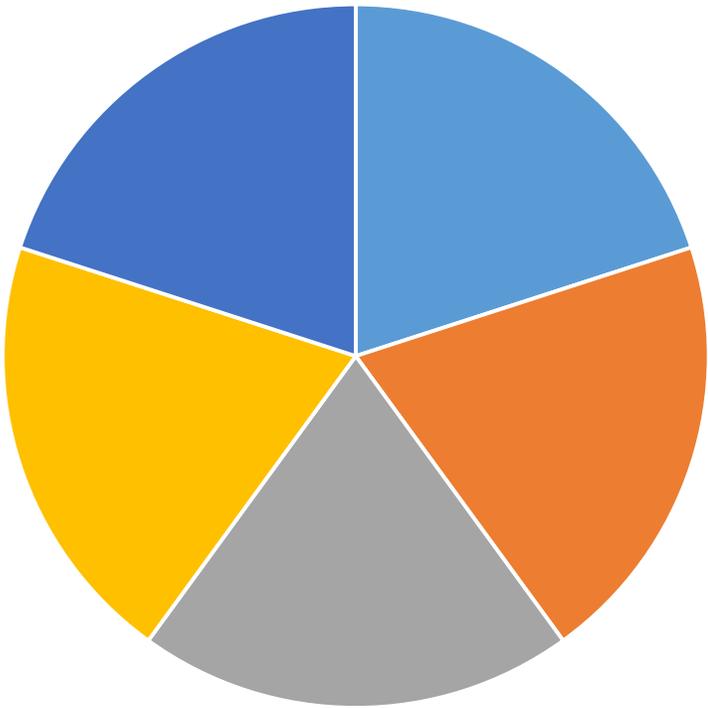
But what school ratings CAN'T do is just as important.

- A school rating, on its own, can't tell schools how to improve student outcomes
- A school rating, on its own, can't tell parents everything they need to know about a school.
- And a rating, on its own, can't tell us everything we want to know about what students experience in school.

We have to keep what ratings can and can't do in mind – otherwise, it's tempting to try to put everything into a rating.

If we try to measure everything, we wind up measuring nothing.

The more things we try to measure, the less each one counts...

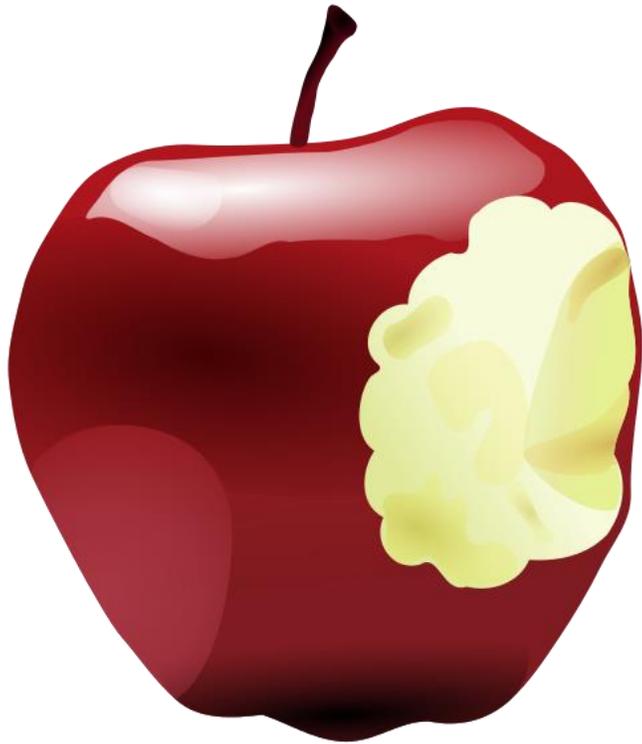


That's a concern in general...

But it's an even bigger concern if we care – as we all do – about how schools are doing on each thing we measure for each group of students that they serve.

School ratings are not the only “bite at the apple.”

There are other ways to measure and report on things we all care about...



Needs Assessment or
Diagnostic

School Report Card

Just because something is important doesn't mean it has to be part of a school's rating – and the fact that it's not in the rating doesn't mean it's not important.

There are things we all care about that just don't belong in a school rating...

- Measures that schools cannot control – like school funding or quality of facilities.
- Measures that cannot be disaggregated by student group, like teacher quality.
- Measures that could be easily gamed or corrupted – like incidence of violence, and potentially, survey results.

Minimum Parameters for Including an Indicator in School Ratings

When deciding whether to include an indicator in school ratings, ask yourself these five questions.

1. Is the indicator focused on students?

- A school's rating should reflect how schools are serving their students.
- While measures of staff satisfaction or teacher absenteeism may be important for a school's needs assessment, for example, they should not affect a school's rating.

2. Can it be measured by student group?

- Under ESSA, all indicators that go into a school rating have to be disaggregated by student group.

CANNOT be disaggregated:

Number of AP classes

CAN be disaggregated:

Percent of students enrolling in AP classes

- Indicators that cannot be disaggregated can be part of a school's needs assessment and/or report card, but cannot be part of its rating.

3. Is the indicator aligned with readiness for post high-school success?

- A key goal of accountability is to push schools to focus on preparing all students for success beyond high school, particularly readiness for college and/or a meaningful career.
- All states should be able to show that any indicator included in school ratings is aligned with that ultimate goal.

4. Does the indicator differentiate between schools?

- This means that an indicator can't make all schools look the same.

DOES NOT differentiate between schools

Average Daily Attendance

DOES differentiate between schools

Chronic absenteeism

5. Can the indicator hold the weight of accountability?

- When an indicator gets included in a school's rating, schools have a strong incentive to look good on that measure.
- That's generally a good thing – but some measures can be “improved” without making meaningful changes for students.
- To ensure that ratings reflect how well schools are serving their students, they should be based on indicators that are difficult to game.

Resources you can use in your advocacy

Indicators: What to include in school ratings

INDICATORS **CAN'T WAIT**

What to Include in School Ratings

Integrating their school accountability systems, state leaders will have to create a number of big questions, including: What goals do we want to set for our schools? How will we determine which schools are doing well, and which are struggling? How will state and district support struggling schools?

The way this question asks will have an impact, because, it, "What information will we want to measure school performance?"

The purpose of these five sheets is to provide advocates with some of the information they need to help make sure that state leaders select meaningful measures (and indicators) of how well schools are serving all students, especially low-income students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities.

- The purpose of this indicator and the requirements stated in accountability systems in the Every Student Succeeds Act, and identifies key areas to focus on when developing school measures (and indicators) as part of a school's rating.
- Good indicators provide both more contextual detail about schools and also tell us about an indicator, highlights the benefits of the indicator, and provides information about how to use the indicator, and what other indicators or data points are needed to understand the indicator in context.
- The indicator traffic light color (red, yellow, or green) indicates the level of confidence in an indicator, based on the indicator's ability to measure what it is intended to measure, and the indicator's ability to be used to identify schools that are struggling.

What does ESSA require when it comes to indicators?

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires states to conduct or measure something that is already part of most states' accountability systems -- for example, proficiency rates on state assessments and graduation rates. But the law also requires some new indicators.

Specifically, the law requires states to use schools each year based on the following measures, all of which (and progress toward English language proficiency) have to be disaggregated by student group:

- Student achievement** - a measure of how schools' proficiency rates in reading/language arts and math for all students and each student group compares with state targets. For high schools, states can also include student growth as part of this indicator.
- Another academic indicator**
 - For high schools, a measure of how graduation rates for all students and each student group compare with state targets.
 - For elementary and middle schools, this measure may be individual student growth in a single academic, math, and science indicator of student learning.
- English language proficiency** - a measure of the progress that a school's English learners are making toward English proficiency.
- Additional indicator of school quality or student success** - a valid, and reliable indicator of school quality, which may include measures of non-academic readiness or student engagement. (How this indicator is described by states is the "non-academic" measure, and one clearly permits measures of academic readiness.)

Indicator "Traffic Light" Table

INDICATOR "TRAFFIC LIGHT" TABLE

The table below lists a variety of measures that some states are considering for inclusion in their school accountability systems. While data quality matters for all indicators, some of these measures pose bigger accuracy concerns than others. Using the colors green, yellow and red, the table suggests the level of confidence -- or conversely, caution -- that advocates should have when thinking about whether to include each measure in school ratings, in a needs assessment that follows the rating (or a broader range of data to understand school-based causes of underperformance), and in public reporting, respectively.

GREEN means a relatively high level of confidence. While data quality is always a concern, it is less of an issue with these indicators.

YELLOW means a medium level of caution. It is beneficial to include these measures, advocates need to pay special attention to data quality.

RED means a high level of caution/low confidence.

See these indicators to be added.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Rating	Notes	Added	Removed	
Academic measures	Percent of students meeting state academic standards (math or English annual/long-term or aggregate annual)	Green			Kept	Kept
	Graduation rates	Green			Kept	Kept
	English language proficiency	Green			Kept	Kept
	Mathematics proficiency	Green			Kept	Kept
	Reading/language arts proficiency	Green			Kept	Kept
	College/career readiness	Yellow		Some states require to include this measure in school ratings to provide a more complete picture of school quality. However, it is not clear how this measure will be used to identify schools that are struggling.	Kept	Kept
	Postsecondary enrollment	Yellow		Some states require to include this measure in school ratings to provide a more complete picture of school quality. However, it is not clear how this measure will be used to identify schools that are struggling.	Kept	Kept
	Postsecondary enrollment	Yellow		Some states require to include this measure in school ratings to provide a more complete picture of school quality. However, it is not clear how this measure will be used to identify schools that are struggling.	Kept	Kept
	Postsecondary enrollment	Yellow		Some states require to include this measure in school ratings to provide a more complete picture of school quality. However, it is not clear how this measure will be used to identify schools that are struggling.	Kept	Kept
	Postsecondary enrollment	Yellow		Some states require to include this measure in school ratings to provide a more complete picture of school quality. However, it is not clear how this measure will be used to identify schools that are struggling.	Kept	Kept
School climate	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
Other	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Teacher effectiveness	Yellow			Kept	Kept
	Student engagement	Yellow			Kept	Kept

Indicator-Specific Factsheets

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE **CAN'T WAIT**

An Overview

School discipline indicators measure the percentage of students subjected to different types of disciplinary actions, such as suspensions or expulsions.

Research shows that disciplinary actions have a negative impact on students' academic achievement, social skills, and self-esteem. Schools that use suspension and expulsion frequently are more likely to have higher rates of student discipline, and these rates are higher for students of color and students with disabilities.

How is it measured?

- The percentage of students experiencing one or more disciplinary actions (e.g., number of students suspended or expelled) divided by the total number of students in the school.
- The number of disciplinary incidents (e.g., the total number of suspensions or expulsions in the school). This measure is also often reported as the number of suspensions or expulsions per 100 students.

All school districts are required to report certain discipline data to the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) for each school. The CRDC collects data on the number of students by race and disability status, as well as the English learning status, in school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsions with and without educational services, regional punishment, and referrals to law enforcement, respectively. For most of school suspension only, districts are required to report counts of students who were disciplined only once, and the number of students disciplined more than once, separately. Under IDEA, this information must also appear on school report cards.

What do the necessary data tell us?

- Research shows that some groups of students -- especially African American students and students with disabilities -- are more likely to be subjected to disciplinary actions than other groups.
- On average, schools with higher disciplinary rates have lower proficiency rates, and vice versa. This is especially true for high schools, and holds for students racial and for each group of students. But there are exceptions to this pattern -- there are schools that have high achievement and high discipline rates, and others that have low achievement and low discipline rates. In other words, knowing a school's proficiency rate does not necessarily tell us whether the school is suspending lots of students.
- Suspension and expulsion rates are much lower in elementary school than in secondary school. At the elementary level, discipline rates may vary little or not at all between the elementary level -- the measure may not meet the "meaningful differentiation" requirements in IDEA law. Therefore, it may be difficult to include in school ratings.

*The number of discipline incidents (such as suspensions or expulsions) is not the same as the number of students disciplined. For example, a student who is suspended multiple times in a year would be counted multiple times in the number of discipline incidents. The number of students disciplined is the number of students who were suspended or expelled at least once in a year.

Indicator-specific factsheets...

Summarize what research and data tell us about an indicator, and highlight benefits and considerations related to rating schools on that indicator

Raise questions to ask if your state is considering including the indicator in school ratings

**Students
CAN'T
WAIT**

COLLEGE-PREP COURSE SEQUENCE COMPLETION

An Overview

A college-prep course sequence is a set of high school courses designed to prepare students for college. Historically, these courses have been more rigorous than the standard course of study, though what is "standard" is changing in an era where schools aspire to get all of their children college and career ready.

Research shows that students who complete a rigorous sequence of high school courses are much more likely to succeed in college. But though the overwhelming majority of high school students now aspire to attend college, more than half are "meandering toward graduation" — taking a random, undefined set of courses instead of a coherent sequence.¹

How is it measured?

There are two things that are important to measure when it comes to course sequences:

1. **Participation:** The percent of students enrolled in the course sequence, and
2. **Success:** The percent of students successfully completing required courses.

What do the research/data tell us?

1. Nationally, students from high socioeconomic status families are substantially more likely to complete a college-prep course sequence than students from low socioeconomic status families. Only 47 percent of low-income graduates have achieved a college- or career-ready course sequence, compared with 56 percent of higher-income graduates.²
2. Not all course sequences are equally high-quality. A sequence of classes that's called "college prep" is not always aligned with actual entry requirements for the state's colleges.

What are the benefits and risks of including this measure in a school rating system?

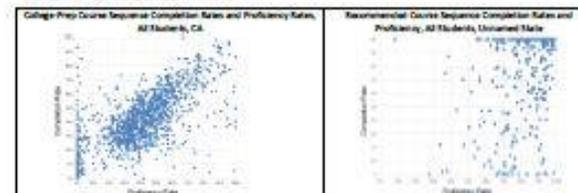
Benefits	Conditions/Warnings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including course sequence measures into the equation that all students should complete a coherent course sequence, which should lead to more children completing such sequences. • The measure is especially useful if the sequence is aligned to admission requirements for the state system of higher education. • The measure is an indicator that is highly relevant to students and parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not carefully matched with the actual courses that colleges require, the measure can be weak and not provide much information. • If the measure isn't fully aligned, students could mistakenly think they will meet the admission requirements for state systems of higher education. • There may be pushback from CTE and arts educators if those courses are not reflected in the sequence. • Including this indicator in accountability could incentivize reduction in rigor for the courses so as to increase participation and success rates.

State example: In California, the A-G course sequence is aligned with the admission requirements for the University of California and California State University systems. The courses are certified by state institutions of higher education, which confirm that high schools are providing the content necessary to succeed in college.

If your state is considering including course sequence completion measures in school ratings, what questions should you ask? What should you watch out for?

How will the state define "college-prep course sequence"?

How the state defines the sequence of classes that form a college-prep sequence is hugely important. A course of study that's called "college prep," but isn't actually, has little use as an accountability measure, and may actually cause harm to students who are led to believe they are being prepared for college when they aren't. At minimum, your state should be able to show that its college-prep course of study is aligned with admission requirements in its institutions of higher education. (Note: Advocates should ask how schools' course sequence completion rates compare with other indicators of academic success, such as proficiency on state assessments. If the sequence is rigorous, schools that show higher percentages of students completing a college-prep course of study, overall and by student group, should also show higher results on other measures of academic success.)³



Using college-prep course sequence in California, schools where more students complete a college-prep course of study also show higher results on state assessments. High completion rates show low results on state assessments, and vice versa.

How will the state measure participation and success in a course sequence?

If your state plans to hold schools accountable for college-prep course sequence completion, it must measure both participation and success rates. Measuring only participation will give schools an incentive to water down classes, while measuring only successful completion rates could incentivize schools to restrict access to only the prepared/highest performing.

How will your state calculate participation rates? Will a participant be any student who is taking courses in the sequence and is on track to complete all required classes? Or will it only be someone who completed the entire sequence by the end of 12th grade? And will the denominator be all students in the cohort, or just graduates?

Tip: Watch out for attempts to include only graduates in the participation rate denominator. Doing so could increase the incentive to push lower performing students out of school entirely.

Notes: If a college-prep course sequence is the default for all students in your state, it's still important to track participation (and completion) rates to make sure that some students aren't getting "left out" of the course sequence at higher rates. If there are gaps to participation between schools or between groups of students, school ratings should take that into account.

How will your state define successful completion? As passing grades? As grades required for admission into institutions of higher education? As passing a series of end-of-course exams?

Tip: To the extent possible, successful completion should be defined in a way that meaningfully aligns with higher education admission or placement requirements (for example, a specific grade or performance on a common end-of-course exam). And all students who count as participants should be in the success rate denominator.

How will the state ensure that the data are accurate? Is there a process for auditing districts to verify that data are correct? What does that process involve?

If states are planning to hold schools accountable for course sequence success, they need to have quality controls in place to make sure the data are accurate (that is, not just self-reported), and a means of protecting students from courses labeled "Algebra I" that only teach the content of eighth-grade math.

¹David Brandy and Daniela Terzites, "Meandering Toward Education: Temporal Outcomes of High School Graduates," Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Trust, April 2016.
²David Brandy and Daniela Terzites, "Meandering Toward Education: Temporal Outcomes of High School Graduates," Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Trust, April 2016.

³Based on preliminary Education Trust analysis of data from the California Department of Education and publisher data.

Our Panelists

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