



EDUCATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATES
Your education policy team.

Supporting Low-Performing Schools

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Education Commission of the States



Who we are

The **essential, indispensable** member of any team addressing education policy.



What we do

We believe in the power of **learning from experience** and we know informed policymakers create **better education policy.**



How we do it



ECS Resources: ESSA

- ESSA Quick Guides
- Emerging State Turnaround Strategies
- Well-Rounded Education
- Stakeholder Engagement
- State Education Policy Checklist

Changes from NCLB

■ NCLB

- ◆ Scientifically-based technical assistance
- ◆ Intervention models
- ◆ School Improvement Grants & Race to the Top

■ ESSA

- ◆ Evidence-based
- ◆ Not tied to a particular model
- ◆ No grants or separate funding stream

Transitions for Waiver States

- **2016-17:** 2015-16 priority & focus schools must continue interventions
 - ◆ U.S. Dep't of Ed. provides some flexibility
- **Options for Identifying Schools:**
 - ◆ Freeze existing priority & focus school lists as of Dec. 2015 for 2016-17 school year
 - ◆ Refresh list by March 2016



Funding School Improvement under ESSA

- **States must reserve:**
 - ◆ Up to 7% of Title I funds, **OR**
 - ◆ The amount the state previously received for SIGs, whichever is greater.
- **At least 95% of reserved funds for LEA grants**
- **Grant priorities:**
 - ◆ Serve high numbers/percentage of schools with comprehensive improvement plans
 - ◆ Demonstrate greatest need
 - ◆ Demonstrate strongest commitment to improving achievement & outcomes

Levels of Support

- Comprehensive support and improvement plans
- Targeted support and improvement plans
- Consistently underperforming subgroups

Comprehensive Support and Improvement

- **Lowest performing 5% of all Title I schools**
 - ◆ Regs: Based on summative school performance over no more than 3 years
- **All schools graduating < 2/3 students**
 - ◆ Regs: Schools may set a higher requirement
- **All schools with chronically low-performing subgroups**
 - ◆ Regs: Identified on no more than 2 years' data

Roles for Comprehensive Support

■ Districts

- ◆ Develop and implement plans
- ◆ Engage stakeholders
- ◆ School-level needs assessment
- ◆ ID resource inequities

■ Districts and state

- ◆ Determine timeline
 - ▶ At least once every three years
- ◆ Monitor plans

■ Schools, districts, and state

- ◆ Approve plans

■ States

- ◆ Provide technical assistance
- ◆ Establish exit criteria
- ◆ Determine “more rigorous” action

Targeted Support and Improvement

- **At least one consistently underperforming subgroup**
 - ◆ If subgroup performance = lowest 5% schools in the state
 - ▶ Identify and address resource inequities
 - ◆ Regs: Identify at least once every 3 years

Roles for Targeted (Subgroup) Support

- **Schools:**
 - ◆ Engage stakeholders in development & implementation

- **Districts:**
 - ◆ Approve plan
 - ◆ Monitor plan
 - ◆ Determine timeline before action

- **State:**
 - ◆ Identify and inform districts of schools needing targeted support
 - ▶ Regs: Identify annually beginning 2018-19

Key Considerations

- How will the state support districts?
- How will the school improvement strategies used effect parents, teachers, students?
- How is the state engaging stakeholders?
- What is the current state policy?
 - ◆ Why hasn't the existing policy solved the problem?
 - ◆ Do existing policies contradict the goal of solving the problem?
- What research has been done in the state?
 - ◆ Impact analysis?
 - ◆ Cost/benefit analysis?

Emerging State Strategies

- **Turnaround strategy:** Comprehensive reform efforts that might include those already overseeing or teaching in a low-performing school.
- **Takeover strategy:** Comprehensive reform efforts in which the state removes control of a district or school(s) from a LEA and turns it over to the SEA or receiver.

State Examples

- **Innovation zones (turnaround)**
 - ◆ A “safe space” or “zone to innovate”
 - ◆ Indiana, Tennessee and Massachusetts
- **Recovery districts (takeover)**
 - ◆ SEAs gain legal authority to take over and assume the LEA functions for their lowest performing schools
 - ◆ Louisiana, Tennessee and Michigan
- **Receiverships (takeover)**
 - ◆ Pennsylvania and New York

Results and their limitations

- Some evidence of success:
 - ◆ Student growth and achievement
 - ◆ Student/parent satisfaction rates
 - ◆ High school graduation and college attendance rates
- But some caveats:
 - ◆ Skewed data or biased data analysis
 - ◆ Negative effects on the community

Political and Structural Supports

- Permissibility, state constitutions and statutes
- Access to multiple and sustained funding streams
- SEA capacity
- Local buy-in
- Data collection and evaluation

SEAs Managing Reform

- Commit to sustained funding
- Consistently inform and engage stakeholders/communities
- Empower teachers/administrators and retain quality, devoted incumbent staff
- Understand the complexity, and expect and plan for controversy and problems
- Commit to long-term response
- Create meaningful goals
- Consider exit strategies

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