

8. TAKE ACTION

Implementation Action IV

Transition Accountability and Data Reporting System

Part of **IMPLEMENTING
Common Core**
State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

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8. Implementation Action IV: Transition Accountability and Data Reporting System

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- What is your state's aspiration for improving student achievement and educational attainment **outcomes** as you implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and transition to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment system? How is this aspiration shared among state leaders, including the governor, policymakers, educators, parents, students and the public? How is it communicated throughout the state?
- How will your state's implementation of the CCSS and transition to PARCC change your aspiration for the state's **accountability system**? What new purposes will it need to serve to drive college and career readiness? To what extent has your state advanced planning for such a system through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver process?
- What are the most critical **indicators** of student performance within such a system? How are they defined? Do state leaders, policymakers, educators, parents, students and others understand what these indicators are and how their actions have an impact on them? What other indicators are needed to fully understand students' readiness for college and career? How will the transition to the CCSS and PARCC change how these indicators are measured?
- How well is your state doing now as measured by these indicators? What is your state's target level of performance, and is it **on track** to reaching it? If not, what is it doing to **adjust course**? What kind of evidence are you using to assess progress?
- How does your state **differentiate and classify** districts and schools based on students' level of college and career readiness? How will CCSS and PARCC implementation change the measures included in this system, including measures of growth and status?
- How do these classifications connect to the intensity and kind of **support and intervention** that the state provides? How will the statewide system of support and intervention connect to your state's overall strategy to implement the CCSS and PARCC?
- How do you, state leaders, policymakers, educators, parents, students and the public find **information** about student preparation for and success in postsecondary education and the workforce, and is it easy to find, interpret and use this information to take action? How will the shift to the CCSS and PARCC change the way your state presents data to each of these groups?

Getting Started

The purpose of this chapter is to help you think through the purpose, design and implementation of your state's accountability systems as your state transitions to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment system. The new accountability systems should look significantly different from those most states developed in response to the No Child Left Behind Act. While most states centered those systems around the need to ensure that all students meet a minimal level of proficiency, these new systems will center around the need to make **ambitious but achievable progress in student performance at a much higher level linked to college and career readiness.**

The chapter is organized around the following sections:

- **Vision for Accountability that Drives College and Career Readiness;**
- **Overview of Core Systems;**
- **Statewide Student Performance Goals;**
- **Differentiation and Classification System;**
- **System of Supports and Interventions;**
- **Data Reporting Systems; and**
- **Resources.**

Feel free to move about the chapter in the way that makes the most sense given your state's position, particularly in light of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waivers. A critical assumption underlying the chapter, however, is that even with progress through waivers, most states will find that their accountability systems are farther behind their standards, assessments and data systems in the capacity to drive college and career readiness. For instance, if your state has already adopted statewide student performance goals but has not made significant changes to its accountability formula, you may want to go directly to the section on differentiation and classification systems. If the statewide student performance goals do not incorporate college- and career-ready indicators, or if they do not roll down to the district and school levels, that section may still be applicable to your state.

Throughout the chapter you will see illustrative examples from states as well as key questions and exercises for you and your colleagues to consider. There are also references to Deliverology 101 and links to external resources to provide further information and guidance. In particular, you should consult the Council of Chief State School Officers' [*Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems*](#) for a comprehensive guide to accountability systems. The intent is to draw on what is known and what states are learning about driving performance.

Vision for Accountability That Drives College and Career Readiness

Implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments will require states to advance toward an accountability approach that truly drives toward college and career readiness for all students. Three major changes should result from the implementation:

- A change in accountability **systems** from those that focus on improving rates of minimal proficiency toward those that are geared toward improvement in college and career readiness;
- A change in accountability **measures** — including new measures that harness longitudinal P–20 data as well as status and growth measures from new CCSS-aligned assessments such as PARCC; and
- A change in actual **outcomes** for students resulting from heightened instructional capacity brought about through effective professional learning, instructional tools, data systems and other implementation efforts. The anticipated improvement in student outcomes should be a driving force behind states' work to set performance goals and benchmarks within accountability systems based on college and career readiness measures.

Fortunately, several factors are creating a landscape shift in which such change can occur:

- An **evolving federal-state relationship** through ESEA flexibility;
- A **growing state commitment to** advance the state-district relationship from one based on compliance and sanctions to one focused on **delivery of results for students**; and
- **Enhanced state data systems** with the ability to link data from early childhood through postsecondary education and the workforce.

These shifts have given states the opening to move toward accountability systems that serve as critical levers to improve student preparation for postsecondary success — to firmly sync accountability with the right goals for kids.

In doing so, states can move toward a far broader approach to accountability. In the past, these systems have often been defined only by an accountability formula in which assessment and other student data go into one side of an equation and accountability determinations appear on the other side. A broader definition encompasses statewide performance goals; differentiation and classification systems for districts and schools; systems of supports and interventions; and compelling systems to report data to educators, policymakers, parents and the public. It also encompasses the routines and conversations among leaders, educators and stakeholders. For example, the simple act of asking questions — what are you trying to accomplish, how are you going to accomplish it, what are your major challenges, what are you doing about them — and following up can support a more positive, goal-oriented and accountable culture across the education system. A broader definition also brings more people into the process, building engagement and understanding through transparency from development to data reporting to continuous improvement of the system. It may also encompass other forms of accountability that are out of the scope of this chapter but nevertheless may be critical parts of states' overall theory of action about improving student outcomes:

- **Student accountability**, such as requiring students to attain a certain assessment score for promotion or graduation decisions, for placement into credit-bearing courses, or for postsecondary scholarships.
- **Educator accountability**, such as tying results of educator evaluations to decisions about placement, retention, tenure and compensation.
- **Organizational accountability**, such as holding officials accountable for meeting an organization's goals or project deliverables.
- **Peer-to peer-accountability**. In contrast to more vertical or hierarchical forms of accountability, this horizontal form takes place in a culture in which colleagues hold each other accountable for performance — such as teachers within a professional learning community. (See McKinsey & Co., *[How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better](#)*.)
- **Shared community accountability**. In this form of accountability, actors across a community hold each other accountable for student outcomes — a central tenant of the Promise Neighborhood and STRIVE approaches. (See Education Sector, *[Striving for Student Success: A Model of Shared Accountability](#)*.)

This broader notion of accountability moves the system beyond the kind of top-down, compliance-driven, punitive approach that has had only limited returns to student performance and into the realm of a system that is continuously improving its effectiveness at building capacity to deliver results for kids.

Overview of Core Systems

The primary scope of this chapter is the purpose, design and implementation of the first two of the major core systems that are critical for a college- and career-ready accountability approach. The major core systems include:

- ▶ **Statewide student performance goals** for educational achievement and attainment that are tied to college and career readiness aspirations; developed, shared and communicated by state leaders, including the governor; translated into meaningful district and school goals; and linked to policies, practices and resources to meet the goals.
- ▶ A system to **differentiate and classify districts and schools** based on student performance outcomes tied to college and career readiness; to identify the districts and schools in greatest need of supports and interventions to build their capacity to prepare students to this level; and to suggest both the intensity and kinds of interventions that districts and schools across the spectrum should pursue to lift student performance toward and beyond readiness.
- ▶ A system of **supports and interventions** for all districts and schools, but particularly for the lowest-performing schools, that prescribes and delivers the appropriate level and type of assistance to build capacity following deeper diagnostic review and is closely linked with the state's overall system of instructional support for implementing the CCSS.
- ▶ Data reporting systems to share **actionable, meaningful data** on college and career readiness with educators, policymakers, parents and the public to predict future outcomes, identify needs to adjust course and suggest solutions.

All of these systems share similar characteristics — the measurement, analysis and reporting of data tied to college and career readiness expectations; transparency and clarity about the results and what they mean for student preparation for postsecondary pursuits; and joint aims to focus the education system on a set of priorities to achieve real progress. They also differ in important ways. For example, the intensity of stakes varies, from low to moderate (such as a tough conversation between a state and district leader) in the performance goal system to potentially very high (such as district and school turnaround and takeover) in the differentiation and classification system.

Finally, these systems interact at many points, and your state should aim to create a strong degree of coherence across them. The data reporting system, for example, will likely be focused on results from the performance goal and differentiation and classification systems. The differentiation system could be leveraged as a strategy to meet statewide performance goals (such as closing achievement gaps). Finally, the supports and interventions system can be a central delivery mechanism for meeting the statewide performance goals while drawing heavily on timely, actionable data to serve the lowest-performing schools and districts.

Purpose

States should be very clear about what they expect to achieve through each of the systems. This clarity of purpose is essential for strong design and implementation, including continuous improvement processes. For each system, you should think through the outcomes it should bring about overall and how it should be used by various actors.

EXERCISE: CLARIFY PURPOSE OF EACH CORE SYSTEM

Purpose: To identify the outcomes you expect to achieve through each accountability and data reporting system in your state, both overall and for specific actors.

Who should participate? State policy leaders; district and school leaders; teachers; students; parents; and representatives from business, community and student advocacy organizations should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. For each system, consider the overall outcomes you expect to achieve — e.g., clarify state college and career readiness aspirations, communicate progress, meet college and career readiness achievement gap performance goals, build capacity.
2. Repeat the exercise, thinking through what key actors from each level will get out of the system — e.g., forum to communicate priorities, data to more clearly target assistance, information for resource allocation. Key actors to consider include:
 - a. State — governor, chief/state education agency, state board, legislature
 - b. District — superintendent, school board
 - c. School — principal, teachers, students, parents
 - d. Community — business and community leaders, nonprofit organizations, advocacy organizations

	Overall purpose	State purposes	District purposes	School purposes	Community purposes
Statewide performance goals					
Differentiation and classification system					
System of supports and interventions					
Data reporting systems					

Basic Design Components

The purpose of each system should directly inform decisions about design. Most of these decisions will involve three major design components: indicators, metrics and determinations.

Indicators

Indicators are the measures of a goal or aspiration. A college and career readiness system will incorporate indicators that measure course participation and success, achievement, and attainment outcomes. To incentivize and support continuous improvement, you should design the indicators in a manner that reflects a continuum of whether students are progressing toward, achieving or exceeding college and career readiness. (See Achieve and The Education Trust, *Measures that Matter*.)

This continuum of indicators allows states to accomplish the dual goals of ensuring that students identified as off track receive the supports they need to get back on track while simultaneously avoiding a situation in which the floor becomes the ceiling for students who meet the college and career readiness requirements earlier in high school. The exceeding college and career readiness indicators, such as earning college credit through Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or dual enrollment courses while in high school, provide incentives for students and schools to strive for more. The table below suggests some indicators that states may incorporate into the accountability systems.

Possible Indicators (EXAMPLE)

	Progressing toward college and career readiness	Achieving college and career readiness	Exceeding college and career readiness
Course completion and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely credit accumulation Credit recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful completion of college- and career-ready course of study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in AP, IB or dual enrollment
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance on CCSS-aligned assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting standards on the college- and career-ready statewide anchor assessment Postsecondary remediation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College-level performance on AP and/or IB exams
Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earning the college- and career-ready diploma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earning credits in dual enrollment courses Application to and enrollment in postsecondary

It is important to note that this table focuses on high school-oriented indicators because many states now rely only on graduation rates and assessments at the 9th or 10th grade content level, while there are many opportunities to expand the range of indicators. College and career readiness, however, is an imperative for elementary and middle school students as well. States should consider what kind of indicators beyond assessment scores they can incorporate in these grades to signal that students are on track toward college and career readiness, including early warning indicators such as attendance and course completion. (See Data Quality Campaign, [*Measuring the Education Pipeline*](#).)

Your state may not currently collect all of the indicators you would like to include within the system (for a profile of your state's data system, see the Data Quality Campaign's 2011 [*State Analysis*](#).) For example, your state may not currently have student assessment data aligned to the CCSS. While planning to enhance your data collections, you can think about valid proxies for the indicator that might substitute in the interim — do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. For example, if your system does not collect student-level course-taking data in advanced mathematics, focus on the numbers of students participating in and earning college credit on AP/IB/dual enrollment courses. This presents a good opportunity to make the case for why the data are critical to release; otherwise, the education community will not have the necessary data to make informed decisions to drive improved student achievement. State data systems are most valuable when they can provide timely data to key education stakeholders to make meaningful changes in the preparation of students.

EXERCISE: PLAN FOR NEW DATA INDICATORS

Purpose: To clarify new indicators that will be needed in your state's accountability systems and the process for incorporating them into your systems.

Who should participate? State education agency accountability, assessment and data staff along with stakeholders from districts, schools and community should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Based on your state's aspirations for students, determine the indicators needed to measure progress toward meeting this aspiration. The resource from the Data Quality Campaign ([Measuring the Education Pipeline](#)) may be helpful in this process.
2. Of these indicators, identify those that your state currently does not use for accountability and reporting purposes and list them in the left-hand column.
3. For each of these new indicators:
 - a. Define the data that will be needed to construct the indicator;
 - b. Determine the data owner, data source/collection methodology and verification process;
 - c. Identify a proxy indicator that can be used in the interim; and
 - d. Identify any data that the state no longer needs to collect because of use of this indicator.

New indicator	Data needed for indicator	Data management • Owner • Collection • Verification	Proxy indicator for interim use	Data that no longer need to be collected

Metrics

This chapter uses the term “metric” to describe a measure of an indicator that can be used to assess progress. For example, an indicator within your state’s performance goal system might be the percentage of students who score proficient or advanced in 5th grade mathematics on an assessment aligned to the CCSS, where proficiency is tied to a level of performance that is on track to college and career readiness. The metric would be the comparison between the percentage of students who score proficient or advanced in 5th grade mathematics in 2012 and the expected percentage proficient or advanced in 2012 given your state’s trajectory.

In differentiation and classification systems, your state will likely use a combination of status metrics and growth metrics. For example, a status metric for elementary schools might be the percentage of students proficient or advanced in grades 3–5 compared to a target level of performance for that year. A growth metric for elementary schools would use individual students’ historical assessment data to estimate how much growth, on average, 4th and 5th grade students made in that year as well as the likelihood that this growth will lead to students scoring proficient or advanced within a few years. Assessing progress using status metrics to illuminate where students are currently performing is critical — an importance that increases as students get closer to high school graduation and opportunities for growth diminish. Assessing progress using growth metrics — particularly “growth to standard” metrics linked to college- and career-ready levels of performance — sends the clear signal that all students are expected to progress academically along the continuum of readiness.

Determinations

Determinations are the judgments made about performance that lead to an action. A state, for example, may determine that a school is in Priority status given its rating in the differentiation and classification system, which would trigger a specific set of interventions. Or a state may determine that a district did not meet its expected level of performance in 2012 on its performance goal trajectory, which would trigger a wider range of actions, such as a series of technical assistance sessions to reallocate resources toward strategies more likely to help the district meet the goal. As well, a state may determine that a school with one of the highest rates of improvement in the percentage of students scoring college and career ready on a statewide anchor assessment is eligible for reward status, which would trigger recognition and a financial award. States should think carefully about how they use metrics to differentiate and classify districts and schools. Decisions about how much growth is sufficient, how much weight is assigned to different metrics and the ways in which different metrics are combined send important signals to educators that have enormous implications for student instruction and support.

Implementation Considerations

For each system, your state should think through how it will approach the following implementation elements to ensure that the system meets its intended purpose:

- **Stakeholder engagement and communications:** Accountability systems cannot be designed and carried out by a small number of state education agency staff in isolation. Only by authentically engaging the full range of stakeholders in the process from development to implementation to continuous improvement can the system have the necessary transparency, clarity and understandability. Are there structures for stakeholder engagement and communications your state is using for CCSS implementation that can be used for an accountability conversation? (See [Chapter 4](#) of this workbook on stakeholder engagement and communication.)

- **Governance and management:** It needs to be clear what entity or person has the decisionmaking responsibility for overseeing the success of the system and what entity or person will manage it day to day. How does this fit in with the overall structure for governing CCSS implementation in your state? (See [pages 3.5–3.8](#) of this workbook on governance of CCSS.)
- **Data:** Each system will put pressure on data collections, management, quality improvement and analysis. It is necessary to plan carefully exactly how your state will access, verify and calculate data, particularly data needed for college and career readiness indicators that come from data sources outside your state’s assessment system.
- **Continuous improvement process:** A clear process for state leaders to evaluate the impact of the system and make adjustments to improve its impact will ensure that the accountability system continues to get better at driving college and career readiness throughout your state. It is often tempting to try to keep accountability systems constant to preserve reliability or comparability from year to year. However, as new data sources become available, more refined growth models are developed and new PARCC assessments come on line, adapting the system quickly will be critical. Putting into place the right processes from the beginning will help ensure that this continuous improvement becomes a reality. (See [Chapter 11](#) of this workbook on routines.)

Statewide Student Performance Goals

A clear, easily understood set of college and career readiness student performance goals, along with a system to manage against them, can serve as the central driver of not only your state’s accountability system but also your entire reform agenda. They can serve numerous critical purposes: They can clarify the state’s aspirations and priorities; they can focus policy, practice and resources on the most effective strategies to improve college and career readiness; and they can signal the need to adjust course along the way to ensure effective implementation toward results. More broadly, they can be used by your state’s leaders, including the governor, to rally support for reform; bring stakeholders together for a common purpose; and communicate that what matters the most is real, measurable improvement in student outcomes. (See National Governors Association, [Setting Statewide College- and Career-Ready Goals](#).) They can be a guiding force to ensure that your state’s implementation strategy for the CCSS and PARCC assessments brings about real results for students.

In the last few years, more and more states have begun to set these goals and use them to guide their college- and career-ready reforms. The eight states that participated in the College- and Career-Ready Policy Institute (CCRPI), a multistate collaborative sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support states in developing college and career readiness policy reform plans, began by developing performance goals. (See box on next page.)

Still more states developed them in response to Section A of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant application. Today, states that have been applying for waivers under the U.S. Department of Education’s ESEA Flexibility program have crafted them at the state, district and school levels under the Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO) requirements in Principle 2. As states develop and adjust their goals over time, they can consider a range of design components — aspirations; indicators; baselines, targets and trajectories; district- and school-level targets and trajectories; and routines to monitor and drive programs.

Louisiana Goals Developed through the College- and Career-Ready Policy Institute (EXAMPLE)

	Goal	Measure	2005–06 baseline	2009–10 target	2013–14 target
1	Reduce dropouts and increase high school graduation rates	Four-year cohort graduation rate ¹	64.8	67.0	80.0
2	Increase readiness for postsecondary education	% of students graduating with LA Core-4 ²	58.5	62.5	72.5
		% of graduating class with ACT score of 18 or higher in English and 19 or higher in math ³	46.1	51.1	58.1
3	Increase career readiness of students	# of National Career Readiness Certificates (WorkKeys Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze)	2,652	4,000	7,000
		# of industry-based certifications earned by high school students in high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations as approved by the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council and BESE	3,600	7,500	10,000
4	Increase participation and completion rate in postsecondary education	% of public school 11th graders enrolling in an LA public postsecondary institution within four years (includes dual enrollment) ⁴	51.4	54.4	63.4
		# of high school graduates enrolling in a technical college or two-year LA public postsecondary institution within two years of graduation	*	*	*
		# of public postsecondary ⁵ degrees and certificates awarded (one-year certificate, associate, bachelor's or higher)	32,416 (2007–08)	35,500	41,000
		# of public postsecondary degrees and certificates awarded (one-year certificate, associate, bachelor's or higher) in high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations as defined by the Louisiana Occupational Forecasting Conference	*	*	*
		# of credit hours enrolled in public postsecondary institutions by LA public high school students	*	*	*

*Historical data are currently being researched by the Board of Regents and Department of Education to determine the baseline and set targets.

¹ The percentage of students who entered the 9th grade and graduated four years later. Students who transfer from the LA public education system are not counted in this rate.

² Baseline for this measure is TOPS Core.

³ Baseline and targets provided by LA Board of Regents.

⁴ Baseline provided by LA Board of Regents using LDE 2002–03 grade 11 data file.

⁵ Baseline and target provided by LA Board of Regents.

Source: <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15403.pdf>

Aspirations

A state's student performance goals should strongly reflect the state's aspirations, both for its students and for the future of the state as a whole. Often, these aspirations reflect state goals for economic growth, improvements in quality of life for its citizens, or easing inequality based on race/ethnicity and income. These aspirations often inform a state's major education policy agenda and are often referenced in speeches and other communications by the governor, state chief, higher education officials, and business and community leaders. Articulating them can not only focus the system in a clear direction but also bring stakeholders together toward a common purpose. (See Chapter 1A of *Deliverology 101* on defining the aspiration.)

Indicators

Indicators are selected to best **measure** progress toward the state's aspirations. If the state has a goal to improve the quality of its science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workforce, for example, the state could select a variety of indicators that would show if progress toward the goal is being made. As mentioned earlier, states should select several indicators for course completion and success, achievement, and attainment along a continuum of progressing toward, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness standards. For example, a state could select the percentage of all students meeting an on track to college- and career-ready benchmark in 8th grade math (achievement/progressing toward), the percentage of high school students completing four years of math (course completion and success/meeting), and the percentage of students who earn postsecondary credit in STEM courses while in high school (attainment/exceeding). Some states may wish to expand the range of actors engaged in this goal by broadening the continuum of college and career readiness to encompass more cradle-to-career indicators, such as the percentage of entering kindergarten students scoring at a certain level on a math readiness assessment and the number of students completing STEM degrees in postsecondary institutions.

Your state's priority indicators will change over time, particularly your mathematics and English language arts achievement indicators, as your state transitions to the CCSS and PARCC assessments. While recognizing this and communicating that indicators will shift over time is critical, selecting the best indicators your state has available now is imperative to maximize student progress through the transition process.

Student characteristics and program participation: All indicators should be disaggregated by student race/ethnicity, economic status, disability status and English language learner status. This disaggregation is critical for public reporting and to ensure that educators have the information they need to make clear ties between performance and systemic issues with instruction and support that affect particular subgroups. Your state may also have additional ways of grouping students, such as states that have "lowest quartile" types of subgroups following the ESEA waiver process.

Indicators defined as percentages: Many indicators will be rates with numerators and denominators. For college- and career-ready indicators, particularly at the meeting and exceeding areas of the continuum, being very careful about selecting the denominator is imperative. Denominators that include a select group of students can send an inaccurate picture of performance in a school. For example, the rate of students in a graduating cohort with scores of 3 or higher on an AP exam will appear far higher if the denominator is only those students who took an AP exam. It is advisable in this circumstance to include a denominator that includes all students in the 9th grade cohort as the denominator.

Indicators defined as numbers of students: In some cases, states may wish to define some indicators not only as percentages but also in numbers of students. This is particularly important in communicating the urgency of meeting the state’s aspiration and in sending a clear message about what it will take to meet the targets. It can also clarify the process of building the trajectory. (See next section.)

Leading indicators: Some states may select not only summative, or lagging, performance indicators but also a set of leading indicators to give early signals about the direction of progress. Ideally, leading indicators would be able to be measured more than once a year and would send clear early warning signals to those who can take action to improve performance. They are critical components of your state’s routines to monitor performance but can also serve as accountability metrics in their own right. Such an approach has been seen mostly at the district level, such as the high school freshmen on track measure that is reported by Chicago Public Schools to help meet graduation rate goals. (See [High School Freshmen On Track Rates by School](#) and [High School Freshmen On Track Rate Fact Sheet](#).)

Leading Indicators (EXAMPLE)

Performance Indicator: The percentage of high school students graduating high school in four years having completed a college- and career-ready curriculum. The state’s diploma requirements include:

- Successful completion of an Algebra II course and four years of math;
- Successful completion of four years of grade-level English; and
- Successful completion of three years of science, including a biology, chemistry and physics.

If your indicator is the percentage of high school students graduating having completed a college- and career-ready curriculum, **leading indicators** might include:

- The percentage of students enrolling in Algebra II by 11th grade, Geometry by 10th and Algebra I by 9th grade;
- The percentage of students who are enrolled in Algebra I in 9th grade with a grade of C or higher at the first grading period and an attendance rate above 89 percent; and
- The percentage of students completing Algebra II by 11th grade, Geometry by 10th and Algebra I by 9th grade.

Baselines, Targets and Trajectories

Once your state has selected a set of indicators, the next step is to understand where performance is now (baseline) and where it has been (historical progress), decide where your state wants student performance to be and by when (target), and clarify the expected path between the baseline and the target (trajectory). The targets and trajectories are used to gauge progress along the way. If your state has already completed this work through its waiver application, RTTT application or otherwise, you may wish to skip ahead or read through this section to see how your goals compare to the principles outlined here. (See Chapter 3B of *Deliverology 101* for more in-depth treatment of these steps.)

Baseline: The baseline level of performance can be thought of in two ways. A simple way is to think about it as the current level of performance, usually as indicated by the most recent year’s results. A more complex way is to think about it as the expected amount of future progress given the amount of progress over the previous several years. The second approach is preferable because it gives more information to help set an ambitious but achievable target.

In pursuing the second approach, your state should consider what the data patterns have been for the indicator historically, whether growth/decline has been predictable or nonlinear over time, and where the level of performance would be over time absent any interventions. As well, examine the factors that contributed to the metric's historical growth or decline.

It may be necessary to disaggregate the data by districts and schools and roll up these data in different ways to better understand what it will take to achieve your target at the state level. The more detail that can be accounted for early on in the process, the more accurate the estimations will be. You may also find that examining the data through different subgroup lenses allows for patterns to emerge that would otherwise be masked at an aggregate level. This might include breaking out the data by:

- **Individual comparisons** (e.g., students, teachers, schools, districts);
- **Characteristic** (e.g., special education, low income, English language learners, rural and urban schools, etc.); or
- **Performance band** (e.g., how do the top and bottom school quintiles compare along a metric, how do the top and bottom district quintiles compare?). (See pg. 98–99 for more information.)

Notice that in the example below, the state has chosen to use college- and career-ready diploma trend data from a performance band — its highest and lowest performing quintiles of schools — to better inform state target-setting.

Using Historical Data To Establish the Baseline (EXAMPLE)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Average yearly percentage point change
Percentage of high school students earning college- and career-ready diploma in MeasuredState	32%	36%	37%	40%	+3 annually
Schools in top quintile	45%	50%	55%	65%	+5 annually
Schools in bottom quintile	24%	25%	25%	26%	+1 annually

Equipped with this knowledge of historical data trends, your state is better positioned to set realistic and ambitious targets.

Target: The target level of performance is the number that defines your state's aspiration — it is your state communicating to all of the actors in the education system that student performance not only will improve but also will improve to this specific number by this specific time. It enhances the sense of urgency to reform, brings people together with a common cause, and shows that the state is serious about implementing the CCSS in a way that creates real change and real impact on students.

Targets should be set according to the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic and Time Bound. It is critical that the targets are ambitious enough to stretch and motivate actors throughout the education system but achievable enough to be legitimate and meaningful to all. The language used in RTTT and the ESEA Flexibility requirements has been “ambitious but achievable.”

The target-setting process can be carried out in a variety of ways depending on your state's context. The following represent three possible ways to set targets, and your state could choose to use any combination of these three:

- Your state may **have previously adopted targets** on one or more indicators through a strategic planning process, a grant application, its K–12 ESEA accountability system or a higher education accountability system. If so, your state can adopt these targets and use them to inform the target level of performance for other related indicators that you have selected.
- Your state may wish to **set targets based on aspirations** of state leaders, educators, parents and other stakeholders. If so, a process can be established in which you share baseline data with the group and have participants walk through guiding questions to reach targets that they can agree are ambitious but achievable.
- A third approach is to **use a data-rich benchmarking process** to determine the appropriate targets. There are four benchmarking techniques that can be helpful in target-setting, each with a set of questions that can be used to guide the process:
 - Historical comparisons: What have the data trend lines been at the state level, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools grew by a particular percentage over the historical average?
 - Internal peer comparisons: What have been the data trend lines been at the state level, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools achieved at the level of a higher-achieving group?
 - External peer comparisons: How do our data trend lines at the state level compare to other states, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools achieved at the level of a neighbor state? For example, a state looking to estimate the target and trajectory for the percentage of students earning a college- and career-ready diploma could look to the experience of a top-performing state that has seen growth in the percentages of its students earning a college- and career-ready diploma in the past.
 - International comparisons: How do our data trend lines at the state level compare to other countries, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools achieved at the level of a country of interest?

It is critical for your state to think about how it will establish baselines and targets once new assessment indicators are available under the PARCC assessments. For example, the state may be more likely to use internal peer or external peer comparisons to set targets at this point rather than historical comparisons. It may even be able to adjust targets based on international comparisons if that kind of information is available.

Subgroup-level targets: Your state should consider how to leverage targets to clarify state goals and drive strategy to close achievement gaps. There are several options for how your state could do this. Some states have decided to have the same target for all student subgroups, others have decided to apply the rate of improvement called for by the overall target to each subgroup so that each group has to make the same rate of progress, and others have had different targets for different subgroups but called on greater rates of progress for groups of students that start out farther behind (see example below). As you consider the options, it would be strongly advisable to consult with stakeholders about setting targets for individual groups of students with varying baseline levels of performance and historical rates of progress. Having this engagement from the beginning of the conversation will ensure that your state makes this difficult and complex decision with the support and guidance of those with the most insight into the drivers of performance for these groups of students.

Massachusetts Graduation Rate and MassCore Completion Baselines and Targets by Subgroup — Greater Improvement Expected from Subgroups with Lower Baselines (EXAMPLE)

MassCore Completion Rate, sorted by 2011 percent

	2011		2014		Percentage point change	Percent change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Asian	2,140	67.9	2,801	82.7	14.8	30.9
Black/African American	2,298	46.9	3,811	73.2	26.3	65.8
Hispanic	3,462	51.5	5,323	75.9	24.4	53.8
White	34,840	74.9	42,264	84.3	9.4	21.3
Low income	9,076	53.1	13,185	76.6	23.5	45.3
Students with disabilities	4,178	60.0	5,767	78.6	18.6	38.0
Limited English proficient	409	30.1	913	66.5	36.4	123.2
Female	22,459	71.0	28,145	82.9	11.9	25.3
Male	21,082	68.3	27,097	82.0	13.7	28.5
Overall	43,541	69.6	55,241	82.5	12.9	26.9

Five-Year Graduation Rate, sorted by 2010 percent

	2010		2014		Percentage point change	Percent change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Asian	3,216	89.4	3,294	92.4	3.0	2.4
Black/African American	5,110	73.5	5,445	79.9	6.4	6.6
Hispanic	6,898	65.9	7,390	72.5	6.6	7.1
White	48,169	89.5	49,836	92.1	2.6	3.5
Low income	21,257	72.3	22,668	77.9	5.6	6.6
Students with disabilities	10,091	68.6	11,173	76.3	7.7	10.7
Limited English proficient	2,755	63.7	3,475	71.4	7.7	26.2
Female	32,554	87.0	33,542	90.3	3.3	3.0
Male	32,049	82.4	33,585	86.4	4.0	4.8
Overall	64,603	84.7	67,127	88.3	3.6	3.9

Source: http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/0311/spec_item1_deliveryplan.pdf

Trajectories: The trajectory is the path that you expect performance will take from the current level of performance to the target. It is often made up of annual benchmarks from the current year to the target year. The trajectory is essential for monitoring progress and deciding where mid-course corrections need to be made. (See Chapter 3B in Deliverology 101.) For example, if one indicator is showing enough improvement to meet or exceed the trajectory, and another indicator has not shown enough improvement to meet the trajectory, the state will know that it needs to adjust its strategies for improvement on the second indicator.

Like baselines and targets, your state can develop trajectories in several different ways:

- **Develop a linear trajectory**, which is a straight line between the current level of performance and the target. The linear trajectory calls on steady, incremental progress each year.
- **Set annual benchmarks** based on what you know about historical progress following interventions. For example, if your state has just implemented a new assessment system with much lower scores in the first year, you may know that in the second and third years you can expect to see more improvement in scores than you will in years four and beyond.
- **Estimate the impact of future strategies and interventions** (see pages [5.4–5.5](#) and [6.5–6.6](#) of this workbook) using impact data from similar past interventions to help estimate the trajectory toward the target. It is critical in this case that states avoid trajectories that push the bulk of expected performance improvement toward the later years.

Establishing the Baseline (EXAMPLE)

If your state would like to estimate the trajectory by tying it to the strategies and interventions it is planning to implement to meet the target, the first step is to establish the baseline.

In this example, the baseline is 40 percent. With an average growth of 3 percentage points annually, we can expect the percentage of students earning a college- and career-ready diploma in 2018 to be 64 percent without any additional interventions. The state has set a target of graduating 80 percent of students with a college- and career-ready diploma by 2018, so there is a 16 percentage point gap to close.

	Baseline	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Percentage of high school students earning college- and career-ready diploma	40%	43%	46%	49%	52%	55%	58%	61%	64%

As a next step, states can ask themselves some key questions about their strategies or interventions:

- What has the impact been?
- On whom is/was the impact greatest?
- Are the outcomes in line with what was intended?
- What actions should be taken upon reviewing these impact data?
- What works and does not work?
- Where does it work, and where might a better intervention be employed?

States can also think through how their strategies will have an impact over time. Some will have a lagged effect, while others have a more immediate impact on your trajectory. For example, if your state was looking to develop a 12th year bridge course in mathematics, it would be reasonable to expect that there would be an immediate impact in the number of students scoring college- and career-ready on a state assessment. However, you will find that some interventions take additional time to phase in and produce results.

States can also consider the differentiated effects of a strategy by individual, characteristic or performance band. Once you have a comprehensive understanding of your state's historical data patterns and interventions and their potential to help reach your goals, you can better assess whether they are the best use of your limited resources or whether your state might be better served reallocating resources or focusing on a specific subgroup of students.

The state would close the gap by estimating the impact of each of its strategies on the level of performance each year. For example, the following table includes estimates of the impact (none/low/medium/high) of each intervention on the level of performance.

You can also assign values in numbers of students who will be affected by the interventions, as Kentucky has done with its trajectory toward its college and career readiness target (see example).

Impact of Each Intervention on the Level of Performance (EXAMPLE)

Intervention	Baseline	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
12th grade bridge courses	-	-	L	L	M	M	M	L	L
New math and science teachers	-	-	M	H	H	M	M	L	L
9th grade dropout prevention program	-	-	None	None	None	M	M	M	M
Total	-	-	L	M	M	M	M	L	L

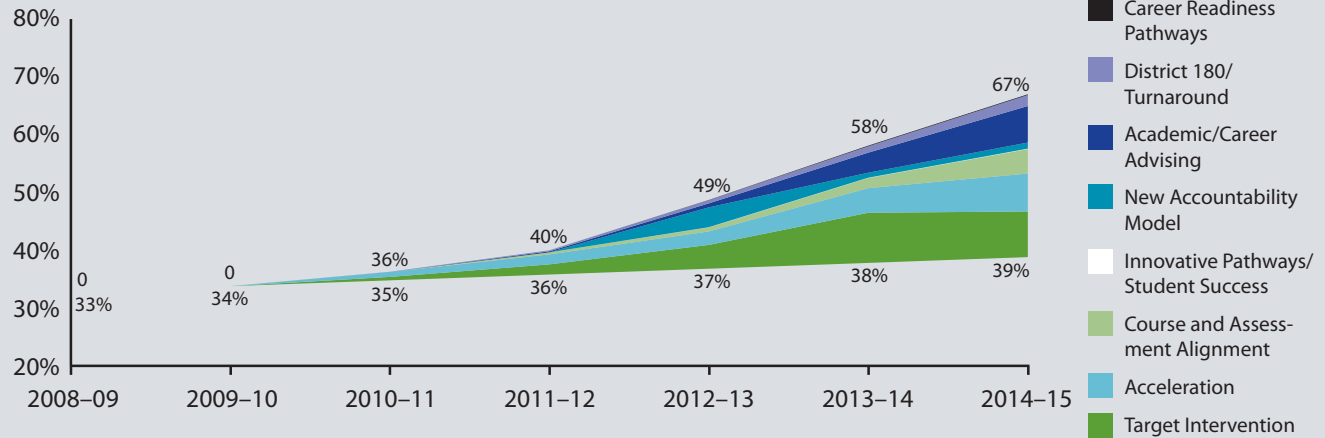
Impact of Each Intervention on the Level of Performance (EXAMPLE)

Kentucky currently has a graduation rate of 76 percent; however, only 34 percent of students are college and/or career ready as measured by the ACT benchmarks. To support the efforts of districts in ensuring that more graduates obtain 21st-century skills and are prepared to attend college, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is implementing several strategies focused on increasing the college and career readiness rate.

This example provides an estimated number of additional students needed each year for each priority strategy for Kentucky to reach its goal of 67 percent of students college and/or career ready by 2015. If Kentucky continues business as usual, only 39 percent of students will be college and/or career ready by 2015.

The trajectory was created with a focus on the current 8th grade cohort (class of 2015) and their exposure/participation in KDE's specific initiatives for increasing college and career readiness. The current 8th grade cohort has approximately 48,000 students, of which 16,320 ($48,000 \times 0.34$) are college and/or career ready. To meet the 2015 goal, Kentucky must have an additional 15,840 students college and career ready. The trajectory also assumes student gains will be maintained year over year (e.g., student impact from 2011 will be sustained in subsequent classes).

Finally, the major impact on students will be in years 2012–13 and 2013–14 due to the implementation of the new accountability model and the cumulative effect of all eight strategies.



College and Career Readiness Trajectory — Additional Number of Students

Strategy	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total
Target intervention	950	1,488	2,880	3,840	2,376	11,534
Acceleration	1,358	1,463	1,628	1,888	1,974	8,309
Course and assessment alignment	0	298	480	768	1,267	2,813
New accountability model	0	0	2,400	384	317	3,101
Innovative pathways/student success	0	0	34	30	30	93
Academic/career advising	0	149	480	1,536	1,901	4,066
District 180/turnaround	66	150	380	488	573	1,658
Career readiness definition	0	0	32	51	37	119
# of additional college- and career-ready students	2,374	3,548	8,313	8,984	8,475	31,693
# of unique college- and career-ready students *	1,187	1,774	4,157	4,492	4,237	15,847
Total # of college- and career-ready students*	17,507	19,281	23,437	27,929	32,167	
% of students college and career ready	36%	40%	49%	58%	67%	

* Due to the duplicated student participation in the above eight strategies, the total number of additional college- and career-ready students has been reduced by 50 percent.

Source: <http://www.education.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8FD9B030-078E-4874-AC12-C69A2B100762/0/CRRRateTrajectoryDetail.pdf>

District- and school-level targets and trajectories: States will not meet their student performance goals through actions taken only at the state level; rather, actions taken in districts and schools will far more directly affect student readiness for college and career. Taking state-level targets and trajectories to the district and school levels will go far in establishing the performance-driven relationships needed for truly transformational change. States may have set these through their AMO process, but if this process was geared toward setting minimal threshold targets, you may wish to consider setting stretch targets — those that require districts and schools to make greater progress.

Generally, there are three different approaches to managing the work of establishing district- and school-level targets and trajectories:

- A state might employ a **top-down** approach by mandating targets and trajectories for districts and schools.
- A state might employ a **bottom-up** approach in which districts and/or schools develop their own targets and trajectories and submit them to the state for consideration/approval.
- A **hybrid** approach features discussions between the state and districts/schools in an effort to build buy-in and understanding around the trajectories and targets, or a state might suggest targets and trajectories to districts and/or schools, which can then accept them, raise them or lower them based on their own goals.

Your state may decide to draw on these approaches in varying ways, depending on the indicator or on the state-district context. Regardless of the approach, your state should be clear about the connection between the district and school targets and the state's overall targets. For example, you should aim that if all districts meet their targets, the state as a whole will meet or exceed its target and that a district will meet or exceed its target if all of its schools meet their targets. This is not only mathematically necessary, but it reinforces the delivery relationship — how each district and school plays a role in the state's overall progress and how critical it is to the state that it support districts and schools in meeting their targets.

Furthermore, states should be thoughtful about the kind of improvement the targets would expect of districts and schools at various performance levels. For example, do you want districts and schools in the bottom half of performance to make tremendous improvement, and that this will lead to meeting the state goal? Or do you want all districts and schools to make improvement, and if so, do you want those that have lower performance to begin with to make more rapid progress?

Routines To Monitor and Adjust

While state performance goals can be powerful levers in their own right by communicating the state's aspirations and clarifying priorities, perhaps their greatest power arises from regular reviews of progress among those responsible for effectively executing the strategies to meet the goals. (See Deliverology 101, Chapter 4B.) For example, a state can use its trajectory work to frame a conversation about the impact of various strategies and interventions. If the state is not meeting its trajectory, it can dig into the impact data on strategies to determine where it needs to adjust course to have the expected impact. These routines can serve a role similar to the determinations in the differentiation and classification system — making clear where the state, districts and schools are against the targets and trajectories to which they have committed.

Some states are beginning to use their performance goals to frame routines between state chiefs, senior members of the state education agency and project managers that illuminate progress on key indicators and leading indicators, discuss the status of implementation efforts, and determine next steps to improve strategy and implementation.

Some states are also using the goals to frame conversations between state leaders and district leaders to reinforce the importance of the goals, clarify the key strategies for reaching them, decide whether adjustments need to be made given the rate of progress against expectations, determine needs for assistance and identify effective practices that can be shared more widely. (See example below.)

Rhode Island's Gap Analysis Meetings (EXAMPLE)

For the first part of the local education agency (LEA) RTTT Gap Analysis process, the Rhode Island Department of Education will populate LEA data into a Student Performance Outcomes Gap Analysis Template. An example from this template is shown below. These data will be used during the Gap Analysis meetings with the LEA leadership teams to monitor progress toward the student performance goals set by each LEA and to reinforce the frame of the RTTT work in the context of improving student academic outcomes.

District 1: Goals and performance measures	2009 actual	2010 actual	2011 goals	Difference 2009–10	Progress 2009–10	Gap between 2010 actual and 2011 goal
Students entering the 4th grade will be proficient in reading on NECAP	75%	72%	78%	-3%	▼	-6%
Students entering the 4th grade will be proficient in mathematics on NECAP	64%	63%	66%	-1%	▼	-3%
Students entering the 8th grade will be proficient in reading on NECAP	78%	79%	80%	1%	▲	-1%
Students entering the 8th grade will be proficient in mathematics on NECAP	59%	52%	60%	-7%	▼	-8%
85% of students who first entered 9th grade four years prior will graduate from high school	80%	81%	81%	1%	▲	0%
77% of students who graduate from high school will enroll in an institution of higher education within 16 months of receiving a diploma	75%	75%	76%	0%	◀▶	-1%
90% of students who enroll in an institution of higher education will complete at least one year's worth of credit within two years of enrollment	80%	88%	82%	8%	▲	6%

Source: http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/RaceToTheTop/docs/RIRTTT_Performance%20Monitoring%20Plan_Revised6.24.11.pdf

Differentiation and Classification System

Although your state performance goals and system to manage progress against them can go a long way in differentiating districts and schools based on the variation in student performance outcomes and in sending some real signals about the level of progress that needs to occur as well as areas that are progressing better than others, they likely don't have the ability to more finely distinguish overall school and district performance. To credibly evaluate the performance of institutions such as schools and districts at moving students toward and beyond college and career readiness, your state needs a more sophisticated set of metrics and more precise rules for determinations. It also must comply with federal requirements for accountability systems set through ESEA or, for states granted waivers, the requirements set through ESEA Flexibility.

The system to differentiate and classify schools and districts serves a number of purposes:

- It **identifies the districts and schools** in greatest need of state intervention and support;
- It **can rally community support** to improve districts and schools that are not making sufficient progress;
- It **can serve as a strategy for reaching state performance goals** such as those to close achievement gaps; and
- It **can provide strong incentives** for districts and schools to improve college and career readiness and receive rewards and recognition.

As your state thinks through the primary aims for its differentiation and classification system — given federal law, state policy and implementation context — and state priority goals, recognizing that the new system will be focused on driving ambitious but achievable progress in student college and career readiness is critical. The system will not be focused on improving rates of students meeting a minimal level of proficiency. The implications of this shift should be considered thoughtfully in the design and implementation of the system.

Indicators

The indicators chosen for the differentiation and classification system, like those for state performance goals, should reflect student performance in terms of course completion and success, attainment, and achievement. They should also flow along a continuum of progressing toward, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness. The indicators will be different — and there likely will be more of them — than those selected for use through the statewide performance goal system. For instance, states will have to include reading and math proficiency results in the 3rd–8th grades and once in high school in the differentiation and classification system, while they might have chosen to focus on reading in 4th grade and math in 8th grade for the performance goal system.

The indicators for the system will also be different from those in prior differentiation and classification systems. Achievement indicators will transition from state assessment results indicating minimal proficiency to state-developed and PARCC assessment results tied to college and career readiness. For example, some states have already implemented more rigorous academic standards and cut scores that reflect higher expectations for proficiency. Even as states work toward implementation of the PARCC assessments, some are beginning to incorporate the CCSS into current assessment systems. All states' achievement indicators will reflect college- and career-ready achievement once the consortia assessments are implemented in 2014–15.

States have traditionally included only one attainment measure in these systems — the high school graduation rate. College- and career-ready systems, however, will include a broader mix of attainment measures, including those showing that students have met college and career readiness expectations, such as graduation with a college- and career-ready diploma, and those showing exceeding college and career readiness, such as earning credit through dual enrollment.

As well, systems rooted in college and career readiness will include indicators of course completion and success, including those showing progress toward readiness, such as timely credit accumulation along a college- and career-ready course sequence, and those showing that students have exceeded readiness standards, such as completion of AP and IB courses.

Given that this system has potentially very high stakes for districts and schools, it is essential that all indicators maintain the highest standards for data quality and transparency. The incorporation of new college- and career-ready indicators for attainment and course completion and success, in particular, will likely require strong implementation planning to ensure high levels of data quality and to ensure that educators understand how indicators are defined and calculated. Partnering with data managers from higher education for indicators of dual enrollment, postsecondary enrollment and success, as well as providers of assessments such as AP and IB, will also be critical to obtain and use the right data.

Metrics

The kind of metrics used in the differentiation and classification system will be defined very precisely, encouraging schools to help more students reach an absolute level of college and career readiness as well as encouraging them to help all students make individual progress toward and beyond readiness. The system will include both status metrics, such as requiring a school's percentage of students proficient or advanced in English language arts to meet a school-specific or statewide benchmark (e.g., AMOs) or assigning points based on the percentage in an index system, and growth metrics, such as requiring that on average, students make enough progress from previous years to be on track to a performance level tied to college and career readiness within three years.

States are taking many different approaches to growth metrics within their differentiation and classification systems. Within a college and career readiness accountability system, it is absolutely critical that growth be incorporated in a way that drives all students forward to a clear standard of performance tied to college and career readiness. It is also important that the growth metrics provide more detailed information about how much growth individual students are making and their individual likelihood of reaching important college and career readiness measures. Given that PARCC states will transition their assessment system in 2014–15 as PARCC becomes operational, it is important to start planning now for how growth measures will be calculated and incorporated over this time. PARCC is planning to commission several research papers in coming months that will assist states in this planning process.

Determinations

Your state will then need clear and transparent business rules on how to combine the metrics to arrive at an ultimate determination of the district's or school's classification. Your state can choose to do so using a **conjunctive** approach, in which the school or district must meet acceptable performance on most or all metrics. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is an example of a conjunctive approach. It could also do so using a **compensatory** approach, such as an index, in which all metrics are assigned points based on the level of performance.

An index presents numerous benefits because it is very transparent and the values assigned to different levels of performance can easily reflect the priority goals of the state. It needs to be constructed carefully, however, because higher performance in one area — such as AP course completion — could compensate for lower performance in another area — such as high school graduation rates.

The conversation about weights to assign to different metrics has critical implications for the system's results and therefore the kinds of incentives it communicates to educators. States should determine, for example, how much weight to assign to status metrics versus growth metrics. States should provide enough weight on college and career readiness metrics to communicate the central importance of students reaching a level of performance tied to college and career readiness. (See example below.) This could become a more complex task once assessments transition to measuring college and career readiness against the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts, but not in science and social studies. It will be important for states to ensure that the aims of differentiation based on college- and career-ready level of performance are not dampened because of other assessments.

Florida's High School Accountability Weights (EXAMPLE)

Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Science	Acceleration	Graduation rate	College readiness
Performance (100) 6.25%	Performance (100) 6.25%	Performance (100) 6.25%	Performance (100) 6.25%	Participation (175) 10.94%	Overall (200) 12.5%	Reading (100) 6.25%
Learning Gains (100) 6.25%	Learning Gains (100) 6.25%			Performance (125) 7.18%	At-Risk (100) 6.25%	Math (100) 6.25%
Lowest-Performing 25% Gains (100) 6.25%	Lowest-Performing 25% Gains (100) 6.25%					
300 Points 18.75%	300 Points 18.75%	100 Points 6.25 %	100 Points 6.25 %	300 Points 18.75%	300 Points 18.75%	200 Points 12.5%

Source: <http://www.fldoe.org/pdf/FloridaProposal1-31-12.pdf>

Classifications

States send strong signals through the classifications they bestow on schools and districts. The strongest signals are typically reserved for the schools and districts that the metrics and determinations indicate are the lowest performing in the state. For example, though ESEA Flexibility, states commit to identifying the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools as Priority. Another 10 percent of Title I schools, such as those with the highest achievement gaps, are deemed Focus schools. The top 5 percent of schools, meanwhile, are classified as Reward schools.

To inform their system of supports and interventions and help clarify parent and public understanding of school and district performance, states should also develop classifications and determination rules for the other 80 percent of schools (as well as all districts). When the central driver is college and career readiness, all districts and schools will need support to continually improve student outcomes, particularly for students in greatest need. In addition, a continuum of classifications heightens the degree of incentives in the system — all but the very top schools and districts can aim to reach higher classifications and be rewarded and recognized for doing so.

Equity Aims

It is likely that one of the most critical purposes of your state's differentiation and classification system is to illuminate and incentivize districts and schools to address gaps in achievement, attainment, and course completion and success among groups of students based on race/ethnicity, income, disability status and English language learner status. Two broad principles are at play in meeting this intended purpose.

First, your system should ensure that student groups that start out farthest behind make the most progress toward meeting college and career readiness standards. For status metrics, you may decide to use different AMOs for different subgroups with a higher slope for lower-performing subgroups, and the ultimate target could be the same or result in substantial gap-closing. (See example on next page.) For growth metrics, you may decide to hold lower-performing subgroups to higher growth scores to close gaps. Again, as in the setting of targets and trajectories for your student performance goals (which may correspond with your AMOs), it is advisable to deeply involve stakeholders in making these decisions and monitoring their impact.

Indiana's Statewide AMO for the Hispanic Subgroup (EXAMPLE)

School year	Benchmark	Benchmark goal	Annual state assessment proficiency goal	Pass % English language arts (ELA)	Pass % math	Annual college and career readiness rate goal	College and career ready %	Annual graduation rate goal	Graduation rate %
2011–12	Baseline			68%	70%		11%		76%
2012–13			Increase by 4 percentage points in ELA and math	72%	74%	Increase by 3 percentage points	14%	Increase by 1 percentage point	77%
2013–14			Increase by 4 percentage points in ELA and math	76%	78%	Increase by 3 percentage points	17%	Increase by 2 percentage points	79%
2014–15	Three-Year Benchmark	Achieve and 'A' or improve by one letter grade from the 2012 baseline	Increase by 4 percentage points in ELA and math	80%	82%	Increase by 3 percentage points	20%	Increase by 2 percentage points	81%
2015–16			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	82%	84%	Increase by 1 percentage point	21%	Increase by 2 percentage points	82%
2016–17			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	84%	86%	Increase by 1 percentage point	22%	Increase by 2 percentage points	84%
2017–18			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	86%	88%	Increase by 2 percentage points	24%	Increase by 2 percentage points	86%
2018–19			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	88%	90%	Increase by 2 percentage points	26%	Increase by 2 percentage points	88%
2019–20			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and maintain 90% and continue to improve in math	90%	92%	Maintain 25% and continue to improve	28%	Increase by 1 percentage point	90%

Source: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/in.pdf>

Second, your system should be clear about how equity goals balance with overall student improvement goals in determinations and classifications. For states with systems that closely follow AYP, this balance is very clear — any subgroup that does not make AYP means that the school or district as a whole does not make AYP. For states with other types of systems, it is critical to think carefully to ensure that determinations are made in a way that singles out the most disadvantaged groups for focus and signals the types and intensity of needed interventions.

System of Supports and Interventions

With a shift to college and career readiness accountability systems, the statewide system of support and intervention also needs to shift its direction. It can no longer focus only on helping the state's lowest-performing schools and districts bring students up to minimal proficiency standards. Now, it needs to focus on connecting the full range of districts and schools with the right intensity and kind of interventions to move all students toward and beyond college and career readiness.

The system must be tightly integrated with your state's overall plan to implement the CCSS and PARCC assessments. How will diagnostic reviews uncover school and district capacity to help teachers implement the CCSS in their classrooms? How will schools and districts at various classifications participate in state and regional professional learning networks? How will technical assistance providers help schools and districts at various classifications use instructional tools and supports? While this chapter does not address the system of supports and interventions in detail, it is critical that your state think through these questions in its planning for CCSS implementation.

Data Reporting Systems

Data reporting is a critical piece of a broader approach to accountability tied to college and career readiness. Rather than accountability as a punitive system, strong presentation of data can support a culture of data use that drives continuous improvement and engagement at all levels. (See Data Quality Campaign, [The Next Step: Using Longitudinal Data to Improve Student Outcomes](#).) One of the most powerful levers to improve student performance is to simply report clear and meaningful data in such a way that they are used and understood by those who influence student achievement and attainment outcomes. A clear presentation of statewide student performance goals at the state, district and school levels can go a long way toward driving improvement through focusing decisionmakers at all levels on the priority goals. Likewise, thoughtful reports from your differentiation and classification system can ensure that the incentives built into the system are effective at creating the necessary responses throughout the system.

Although this chapter does not address data reporting systems in detail, your state should be very clear about how to leverage data reporting systems to improve the implementation of CCSS and common assessments:

- How will your state collect and report new data indicators that predict success on the CCSS?
- How will your state collect and report data that can illuminate specific areas of need for student performance aligned to the CCSS?
- How will your state collect and report data that could suggest solutions for improved strategy?

Your state can go beyond reporting by connecting data reports to clear actions. For example, your state's governor, chief or other system leader can engage in regular routines with accountable officials to review CCSS-aligned data indicators and metrics and make course adjustments to implementation strategy based on the data. Your state can connect the CCSS to student learning targets and instructional resources through a Learning Management System (LMS) made available to educators. It can also collect more data that can be used as leading indicators of progress toward college and career readiness, such as interim assessments and course grades. (See National Governors Association, [*Using Data to Guide State Education Policy and Practice*](#).)

Your state can think through how these shifts have implications for reporting to policymakers, such as state board of education and legislative committees; to educators through early warning data systems and other student and teacher performance management systems; to parents; to business and community leaders; and to the general public. Finally, your plan should think through how your state will engage each of these actors in the process of developing, releasing and publicizing data reports to further ensure clarity and use.

Resources

U.S. Education Delivery Institute: [*Deliverology 101: A Field Guide for Education Leaders*](#)

Council of Chief State School Officers: [*Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems*](#)

Achieve: [*On the Road to Implementation: Common Core State Standards and Accountability*](#)

Achieve/The Education Trust: [*Making College and Career Readiness the Mission for High Schools: A Guide for Policymakers*](#) and the full range of guides at [*Measures that Matter*](#)

National Governors Association: [*Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools*](#)

National Governors Association: [*Setting Statewide Performance Goals*](#)

National Governors Association: [*Using Data to Guide State Education Policy and Practice*](#)

Data Quality Campaign: [*Measuring the Education Pipeline*](#)

Data Quality Campaign: [*The Next Step: Using Longitudinal Data to Improve Student Success*](#)

Conclusion

You should now have a road map for how your state can develop an approach to accountability that will advance your state's success at improving student outcomes through the implementation of CCSS and PARCC assessments. The approach encompasses a system of statewide performance goals tied to the CCSS and other college and career readiness indicators, a system to differentiate and classify schools and districts based on progress on these indicators, a system to support and intervene in districts and schools based on their classification, and a system to report actionable data to a wide array of stakeholders. It is now time to consider how this success will be reinforced through effective engagement and partnership with higher education institutions in the implementation of CCSS.

NOTES