

Your Question:

You asked about accountability system requirements under ESSA. Specifically, you wanted to know more about the weights of indicators.

Our Response:

This response is composed of several parts:

- ESSA Accountability Requirements – p.1
- State Examples of Accountability Systems based on State ESSA Plans – p.2
 - Arizona
 - Illinois
 - Louisiana
 - Tennessee
- ESSA's Non-Academic Indicator Requirements – p.3
- State Examples of ESSA's Non-Academic Indicator – p.4

ESSA Accountability Requirements

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires state accountability plans to include five indicators. These indicators are:

- Proficiency on assessments, which may include growth in proficiency in high school;
- Growth in proficiency in grades below high school or another academic indicator;
- High school graduation rates;
- Progress of English language learners toward proficiency and
- A non-academic indicator/indicator of school quality or student success (SQSS) (see p.3 for more information).

All accountability system indicators, including the measure of SQSS, must be:

- Measured annually for all students and for each subgroup
- Able to provide meaningful differentiation between schools
- Where appropriate, based on the long-term goals in the state plan
- Included in state and district report cards

In the aggregate, the four required academic indicators must be given “*much greater weight*” than the measure of SQSS. For information on state accountability systems for all 50 states as of December 2013, see ECS’s [school accountability report cards database](#), which includes information on each state’s school grade [formula](#). For examples of measures that could be used to determine academic and non-academic performance, please see the **attachment** titled “Accountability Measures – Examples.”

State Examples – Accountability Systems

Few states have released draft state plans to the public, and many states do not plan to make drastic changes to the state’s existing accountability system. Substantial changes will likely require agreement across multiple policy actors

in the states as well as stakeholder engagement and may not be cost-effective. States may also plan to make more significant changes over time as the law and regulations are clarified and states are able to pilot different approaches. Below are three states that have publicized information about their accountability systems under ESSA.

Arizona

Arizona's draft [state plan](#) currently provides little detail. The plan states:

"The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) intends to include explicitly required indicators as outlined in [ESSA] as well as a measure of well-rounded education and course access to indicate school quality. To ensure a single system of accountability for all Arizona public schools and LEAs, the final methodology may reflect policy decisions adopted by the SBE for the A-F Letter Grade Accountability System.

Specific to the weighting of each indicator, the plan states:

"To ensure a single system of accountability for all Arizona public schools and LEAs, the final methodology may reflect policy decisions adopted by the State Board of Education for the A-F Letter Grade Accountability System."

Illinois

Illinois' draft [state plan](#) states:

"Illinois is considering using four indicators for the elementary/middle level and five indicators at the high school level. The academic indicators specified in ESSA must be given significantly more weight than the school quality/student success indicator. Workgroup participants expressed concern about schools that may not have one or more of the indicators; for example, an EL subgroup subject to the EL proficiency indicator. What follows are two examples of weighting.

(Please Note: The following examples are summaries created from the work of the Accountability Workgroup. These examples are provided in order to elicit comments and questions from the field. At this time, ISBE has not made any determination on the accountability system.)

EXAMPLE ONE:

- a. Academic achievement - 20 points (10 ELA/10 math)
- b. Elementary/middle growth -30 points
- c. High school adjusted grad / HS extended grad rate – 25 points
- d. EL proficiency – 20 points – Elem/Middle; 15 - HS
Subtotal = 70 academic points-Elem/Middle; 60 - HS
- e. Student Success/School Quality
 - i. 8th/9th grade on track (K-12 indicator) – 10 points
 - ii. Chronic absenteeism and/or attendance (K-12 indicator) – 10 points
 - iii. HS curricular measure AP/IB/dual/CTE (9-12 indicator) - 10 points
 - iv. PreK-2 indicator (K-8 indicator) (may not be ready 2017-18) – no points at this time until indicator is developed

EXAMPLE TWO:

- a. Academic achievement - 20 points (10 ELA/10 math)
- b. Elementary/middle growth -20 points
- c. High school adjusted grad / HS extended grad rate – 25 points

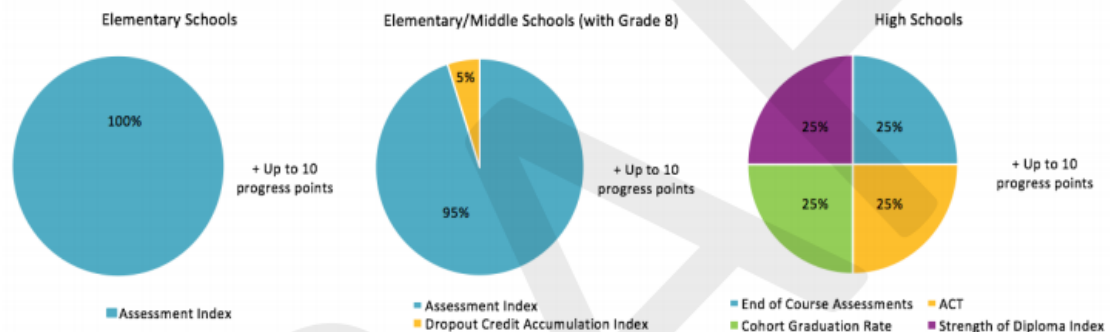
- d. EL proficiency – 20 points – Elem/Middle; 15 – HS
Subtotal = 60 academic points-Elem/Middle; 60 - HS
- e. Student Success/School Quality
 - v. 8th/9th grade on track (4 groups) (K-12 indicator) – 15 points
 - vi. Chronic absenteeism and/or attendance (4 groups) (K-12 indicator) – 10 points
 - vii. HS curricular measure AP/IB/dual/CTE (3 groups) (9-12 indicator) - 15 points
 - viii. PreK-2 indicator (2 groups) (K-8 indicator) (may not be ready 2017-18) – no points at this time until indicator is developed”

Louisiana

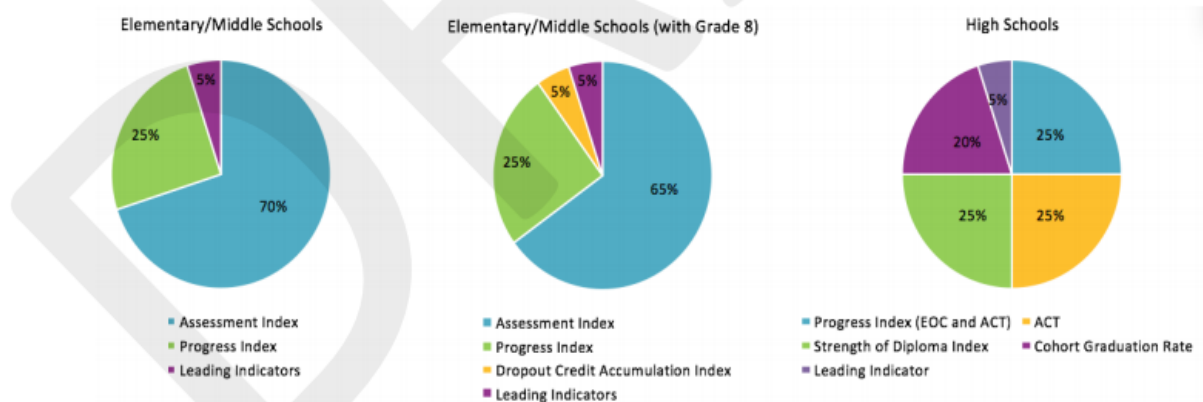
Louisiana has released an [ESSA framework](#) for public comment. That document explains some of the anticipated changes to the state’s accountability system:

“Louisiana’s ESSA draft framework proposes a few critical shifts in the design of the accountability system. Schools and systems, for example, will be rated based in large part – 25 percent of the score in this draft – on the rate of annual progress all individual students make in their fundamental academic skills, no matter how high or low their ultimate performance... Additionally, schools and districts will be able to earn smaller amounts of credit – up to 5 percent of a school’s score -- for demonstrating “leading indicators” of research-based practices likely to produce positive long-term results but not, themselves, measured through summative testing.”

Therefore, the formula will shift from today:



To the following beginning in 2017-2018:



School Report Cards: Dashboard vs. Summative Ratings

As evident in ECS's [school accountability report cards database](#), states have chosen a variety of [school rating systems](#). While ESSA appears to require that schools are assigned a single summative rating, many policymakers and policy research organizations have proposed the use of “dashboard” systems that provide more nuanced information about schools but may be more difficult for parents and the public to interpret. For more information and expanded arguments for each approach, see the following resources:

- [Developing Strong Regulations for the Accountability Provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (The Education Trust)
- [States Eye Data Dashboard for Nuanced Accountability](#) (Education Week)
- [Identity crisis: Multiple measures and the identification of schools under ESSA](#) (Policy Analysis for California Education)
- [California and proposed federal regulations at odds on how to rate schools](#) (EdSource)
- [Idaho Moves Toward 'Dashboard' Accountability, Without School Rankings](#) (Education Week)

ESSA's Non-Academic Indicator/School Quality or Student Success Indicator Requirements

The new law requires the non-academic indicator to be a valid, reliable and comparable measure of school quality or student success (SQSS) within each state's accountability system. The SQSS indicator must allow for meaningful differentiation between schools and to be given less than “substantial weight” in accountability calculations. In the aggregate, the other four required indicators must be given “*much greater weight*” than the measure of SQSS.

States are allowed to choose their measure(s) of SQSS, although ESSA suggests possible measures:

- Student engagement (e.g., chronic absenteeism)
- Educator engagement
- Student access to and completion of advanced coursework (e.g., high school students enrolled in calculus)
- Postsecondary readiness (e.g., college enrollment following high school graduation)
- School climate and safety (e.g., student survey)

States will also have the flexibility to use a different SQSS indicator for different grade spans; however, grade spans are determined by each state. This flexibility could allow states to tailor the measure to the appropriate age group, such as using student surveys only for older students.

Proposed regulations also clarify that the measure of SQSS must:

- Be a separate indicator from other indicators the state uses in its accountability system
- Not be used to change the identity of schools that would otherwise be identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement, unless certain progress on another indicator has been made.
- Be “supported by research indicating that performance or progress on such measures is likely to increase student academic achievement or, at the high school level, graduation rates.”

State Examples – Non-Academic/SQSS Indicator

Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System

In 2012, the Connecticut legislature passed SB458, which required the Department of Education to develop a new method to classify schools into performance categories and identify districts in need of improvement. This new system uses 12 indicators to provide a holistic view of schools and districts.

In addition to assessment-based indicators (“performance index”), Connecticut also calculates its overall “accountability index” based on data related to:

- Chronic absenteeism.
- Preparation for postsecondary and career readiness based on coursework and exams.
- Postsecondary entrance rate for all students (college enrollment).
- Physical fitness.
- Arts access.

California’s CORE Districts

California’s CORE districts, an alliance of districts working together on several key education issues, received a federal waiver of ESEA accountability requirements in 2013. Like ESSA, this waiver provided the flexibility to create a new accountability system—the School Quality Improvement Index—that included measures of SQSS.

The index uses five social-emotional and culture-climate factors, each worth 8 percent of the total score: 1) chronic absenteeism; 2) culture-climate surveys; 3) the suspension/expulsion rate; 4) students’ self-reported social emotional skills (grades 5-12) and 5) the EL reclassification rate. Academic indicators account for 60 percent of the total score.

The California state Board of Education recently approved five new indicators for the state’s accountability system, including suspension rates by grade span.