

**Above and Beyond:
How SREB States
Prioritize College and
Career Readiness in ESSA
Accountability Plans**

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This presentation provides a regional perspective on the five ways SREB states prioritize readiness in their accountability systems. SREB based this presentation on an analysis of the state ESSA plans approved by the U. S. Department of Education.

The presentation is best read in conjunction with a companion set of state profiles. Each profile describes the state's accountability system under ESSA:

- How the system addresses college and career readiness
- Long-term state goals
- Indicators of school performance
- System for differentiating and reporting on school performance
- Supports for struggling schools

Above & beyond readiness

SREB has placed a high priority on college and career readiness as a goal for students upon high school graduation. Students need to be ready for their chosen path after high school, whether it is college, technical education, the military or the workforce.

If K-12 schools align their policies and programs to the goal of readiness for all, more students will be ready for freshman courses and able to complete postsecondary education. More students will be successful in their first jobs and throughout their careers.

The newest reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), addresses some elements of this readiness priority, but does not require a comprehensive approach within state accountability systems.

Many SREB states went **above and beyond** the basic requirements for school accountability systems in ESSA, using the flexibility in the law to prioritize college and career readiness in five ways.

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

In their ESSA plans approved by the U.S. Department of Education, SREB states prioritize readiness in **five** ways:

- 1 GOALS** → Set goals to establish a long-term focus on college and career readiness.
- 2 INDICATORS** → Shape indicators of school performance to track progress toward readiness year to year.
- 3 WEIGHTS** → Assign weights to indicators to prioritize readiness.
- 4 DATA** → Include data on student groups in determinations of school ratings, to spotlight readiness for each student.
- 5 SUPPORT SYSTEMS** → Establish support systems for struggling schools and districts to focus on readiness for all students.

1. Goals

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

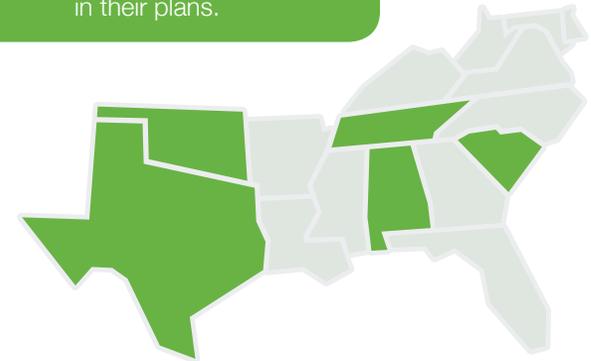
ESSA requires states to establish long-term, statewide goals for academic achievement in English language arts (ELA) and math, high school graduation rates, and English language proficiency.

Five states exceeded ESSA's goals requirement.

In addition to the required goals, these five states established goals for college and career readiness.

States to Watch

Alabama, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas went beyond ESSA's requirements and **established goals** for college and career readiness in their plans.



The next slide shows the readiness goals set by these five states

Goals

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Alabama

- By 2030, 94% of high school graduates will be identified as college and career ready, by meeting at least one college- or career-readiness milestone.

Oklahoma

- By 2025, the state's postsecondary remediation rate in math and English language arts will decline by 50%.
- By 2025, 100% of students in grades six through 12 will develop an Individual Career Academic Plan.

South Carolina

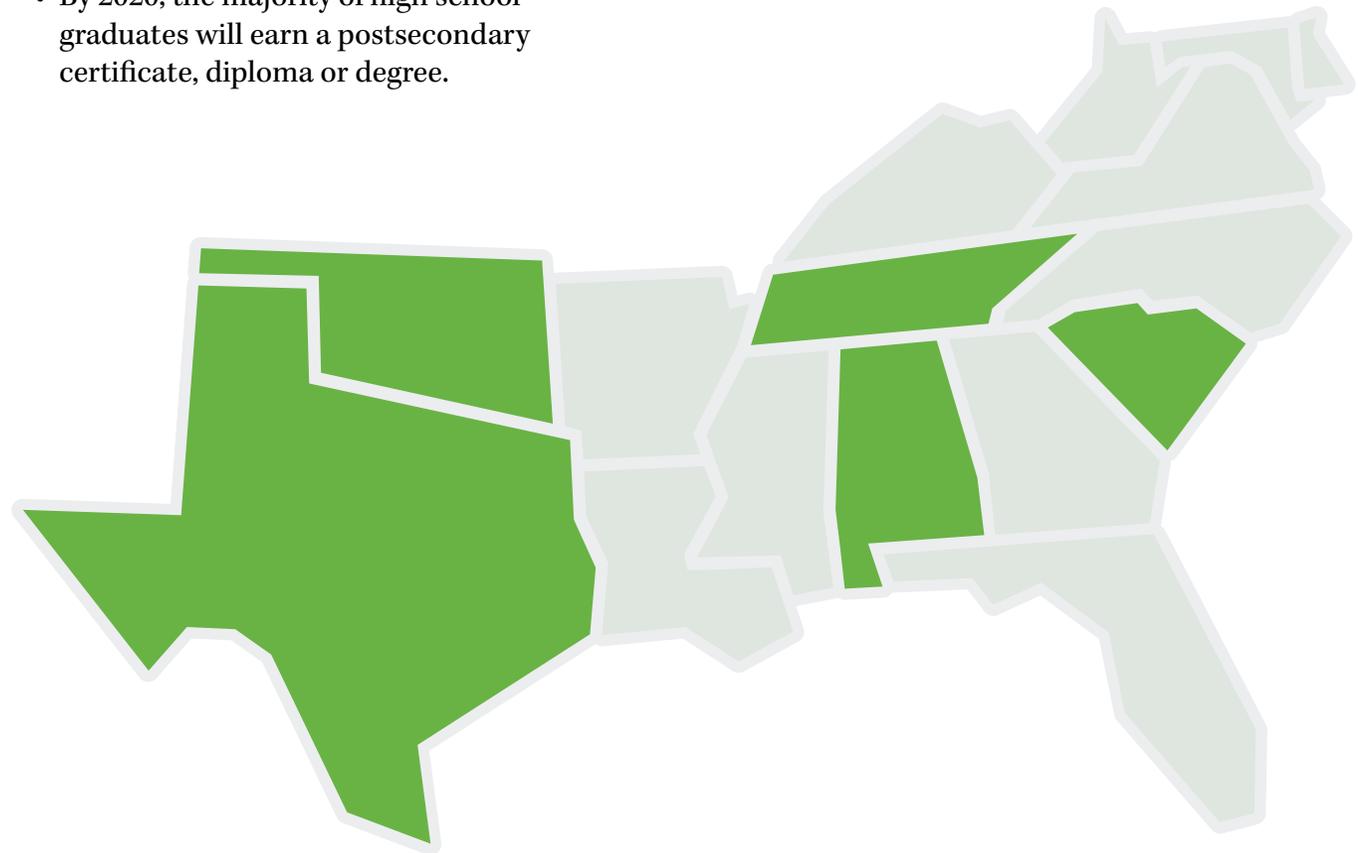
- By 2035, 90% of students will graduate college, career, and citizenship ready, as outlined by South Carolina.
- Between 2020 and 2035, the percentage of high school students graduating ready to enter postsecondary education without the need for remediation in English language arts or math will increase annually by 5%.

Tennessee

- By 2020, the state's average ACT composite score will be 21.
- By 2020, the majority of high school graduates will earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree.

Texas

- By 2030, 60% of Texans, ages 25 to 34, will have a postsecondary credential.



2. Indicators

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

ESSA requires states to establish five types of indicators of school performance to measure progress year to year.

1. Academic achievement on state assessments of ELA and math
2. Progress toward English language proficiency for English learners
3. School quality or student success
4. Another academic indicator, such as student growth, for elementary and middle grades schools
5. Graduation rate indicator for high schools

States can track readiness indicators along the education continuum:

- A. Progress towards readiness at graduation
- B. Demonstrated readiness at graduation
- C. Transitions to postsecondary education and employment after graduation

Fifteen states include at least one type of readiness measure in their school performance indicators.

Four states stand out for including measures to track readiness throughout the education continuum:

Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland and Texas.

States to Watch

Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland and Texas measure **all three** aspects of readiness.



The next four slides detail how SREB states track readiness indicators

Indicators

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Fourteen states shaped at least one required indicator to include at least one measure of readiness.

Fourteen states shaped their *school quality or student success indicator* to include measures of readiness.

- All fourteen include a measure for high schools.
- Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana and Maryland also include a measure for elementary and middle grades schools.

Ten of these states also shaped their *academic achievement indicators* to include readiness measures.

- Alabama, Delaware, Oklahoma and Tennessee use results on the ACT or SAT exam for high schools.
- Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia established college- and career-readiness performance levels on their content area assessments.

Two states developed a unique indicator to track readiness.

- Florida created an acceleration indicator for middle grades schools and high schools.
- Maryland created an indicator for high school called Readiness for Postsecondary Success.

Indicators

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

A. Progress toward readiness at graduation – 13 states

Rigorous coursework, including participation or credit earned in advanced courses or career pathways

Arkansas
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Mississippi
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Tennessee
Texas
West Virginia

Attainment of college- and career- readiness performance levels on the state ELA and math assessments

Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
West Virginia

Co-curricular experiences such as work-based or service learning, internships and apprenticeships

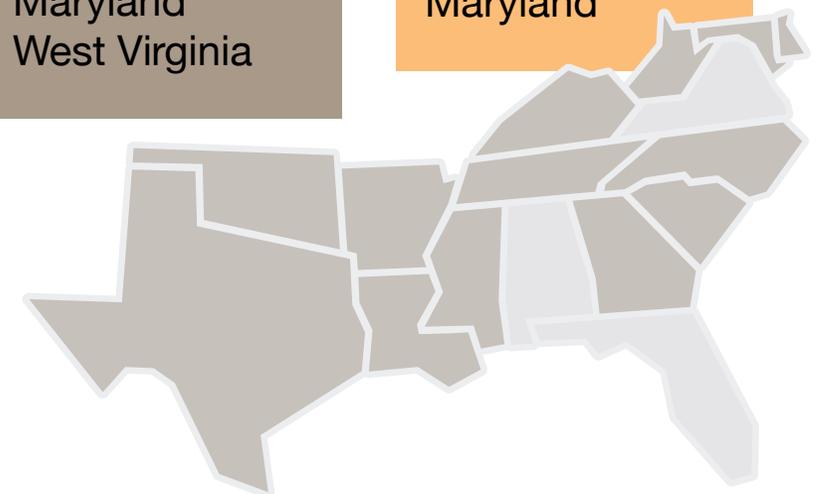
Arkansas
Delaware
Georgia
Kentucky
Maryland
Oklahoma
South Carolina

Earning high school credits at a pace to allow on-time graduation

Arkansas
Delaware
Louisiana
Maryland
West Virginia

Access to a well-rounded curriculum, beyond ELA and math

Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland

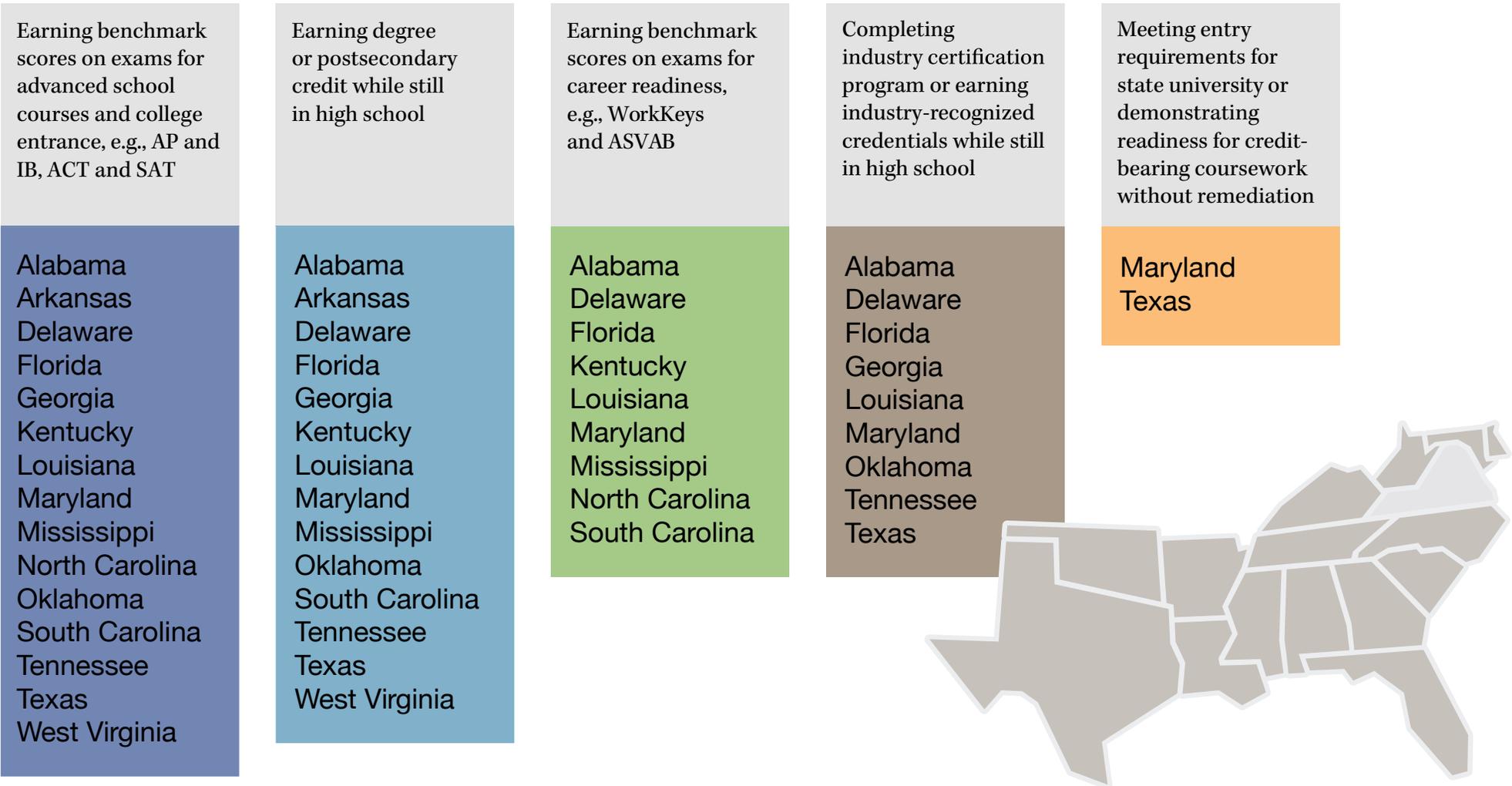


Indicators

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

B. Demonstrated readiness at graduation – 15 states

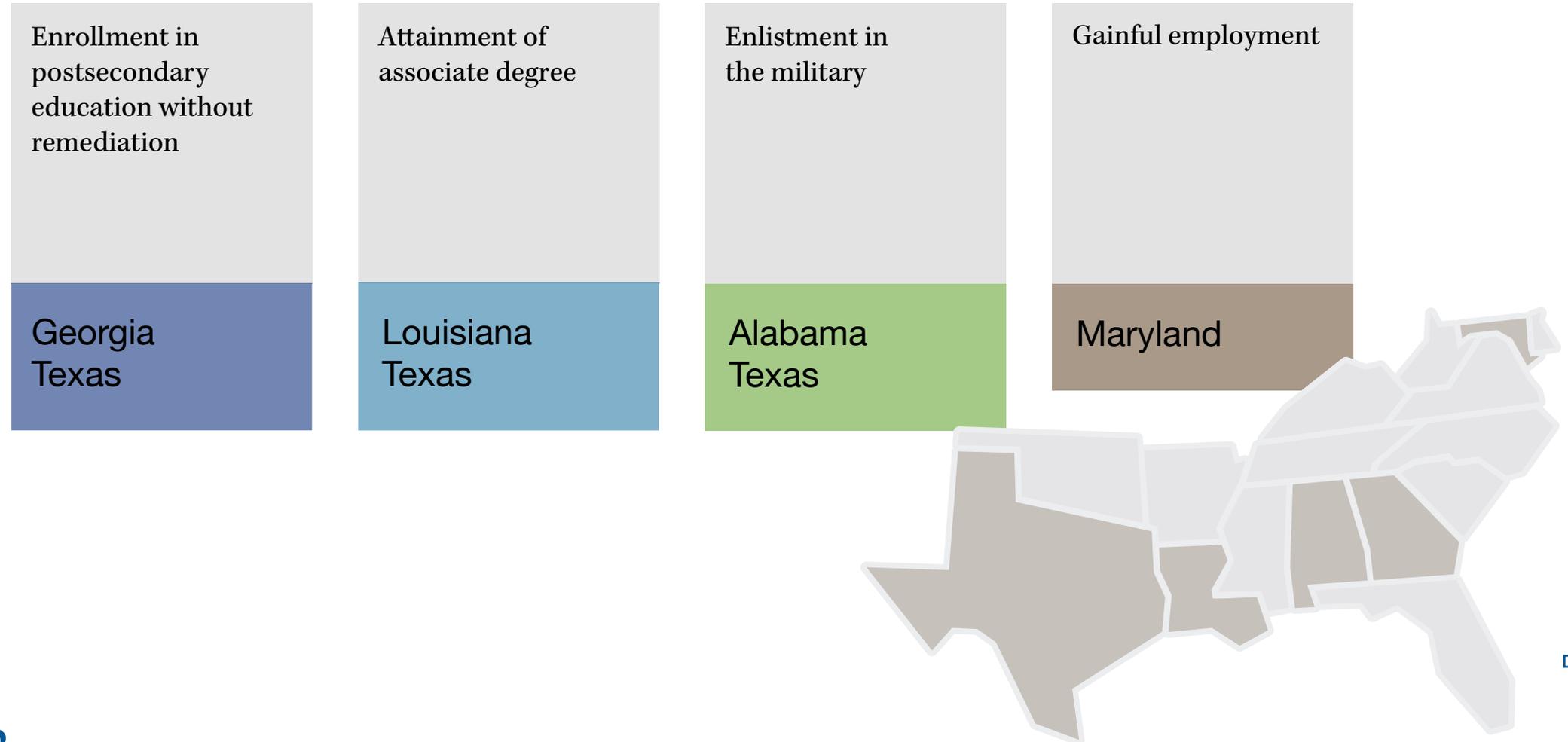


Indicators

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

C. Transitions from high school to postsecondary education and careers – 5 states



3. Weights

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS **WEIGHTS** DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

ESSA gives states flexibility to assign relative values, or weights, to their indicators to differentiate school performance. The relative weight given to indicators, including those measuring college and career readiness, signals their importance to the states.

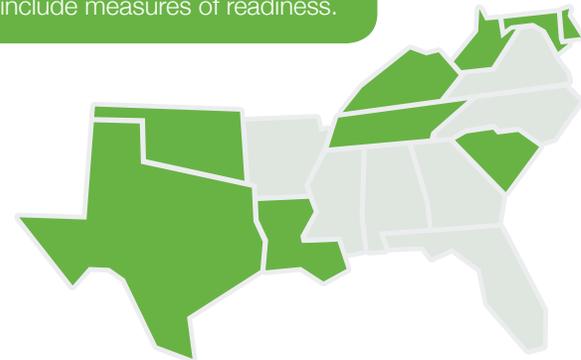
Schools that serve elementary and middle grades:

Ten states include indicators with readiness measures. These indicators (one or multiple, combined) contribute between 11 and 90 percent of the total weight to the school ratings in Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia.

High schools:

Nine states assign the most weight to indicators that include readiness measures. These indicators (one or multiple, combined) contribute between 58 and 80 percent of the total weight to the school ratings in Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia.

States to Watch
Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia assign the most weight to their indicators of high school performance that include measures of readiness.



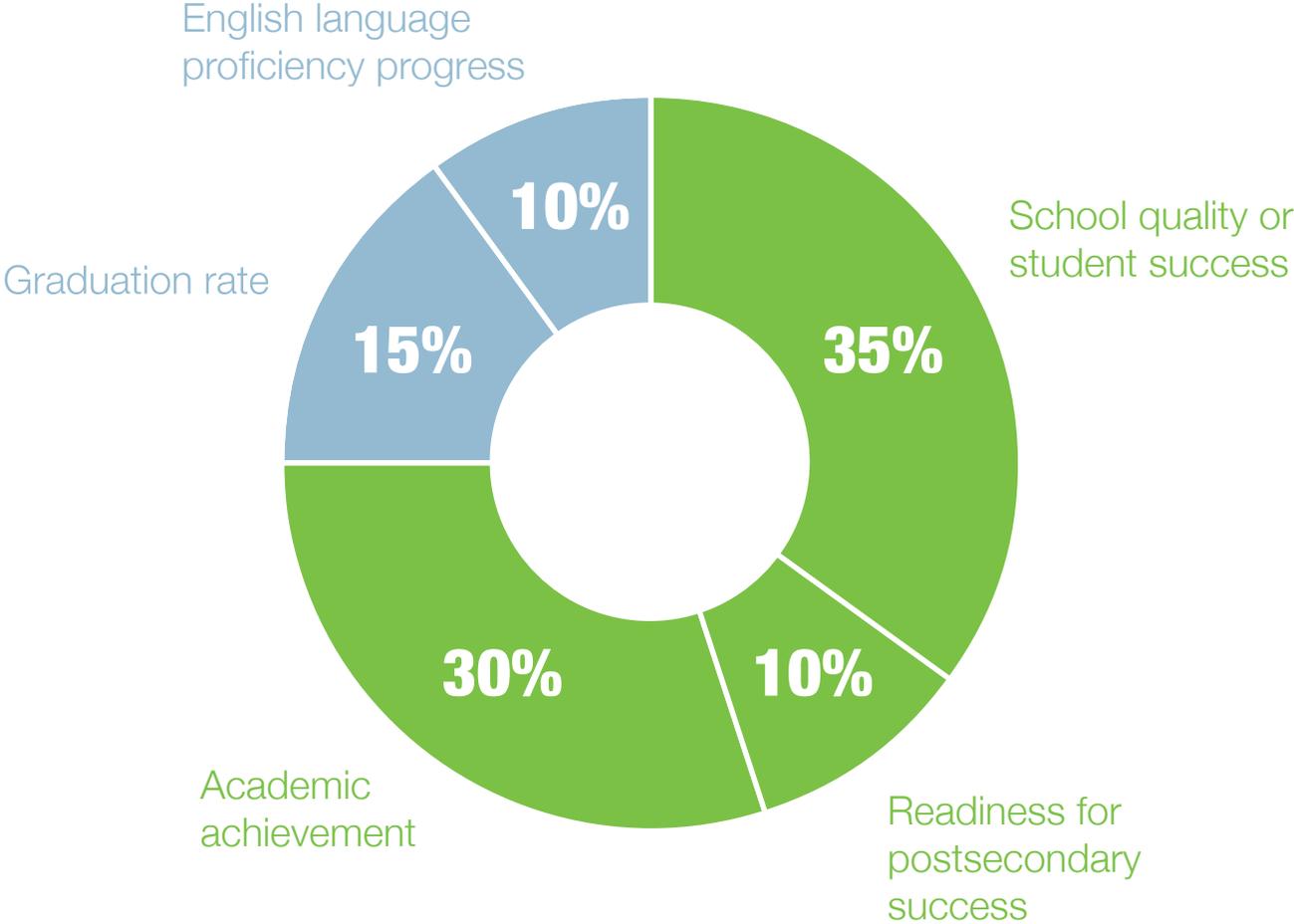
The next two slides provide more information about indicator weights

Weights

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS **WEIGHTS** DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Example: Maryland high school indicator weights



Indicators that account for **75%** of the weight in high school accountability ratings include measures of readiness

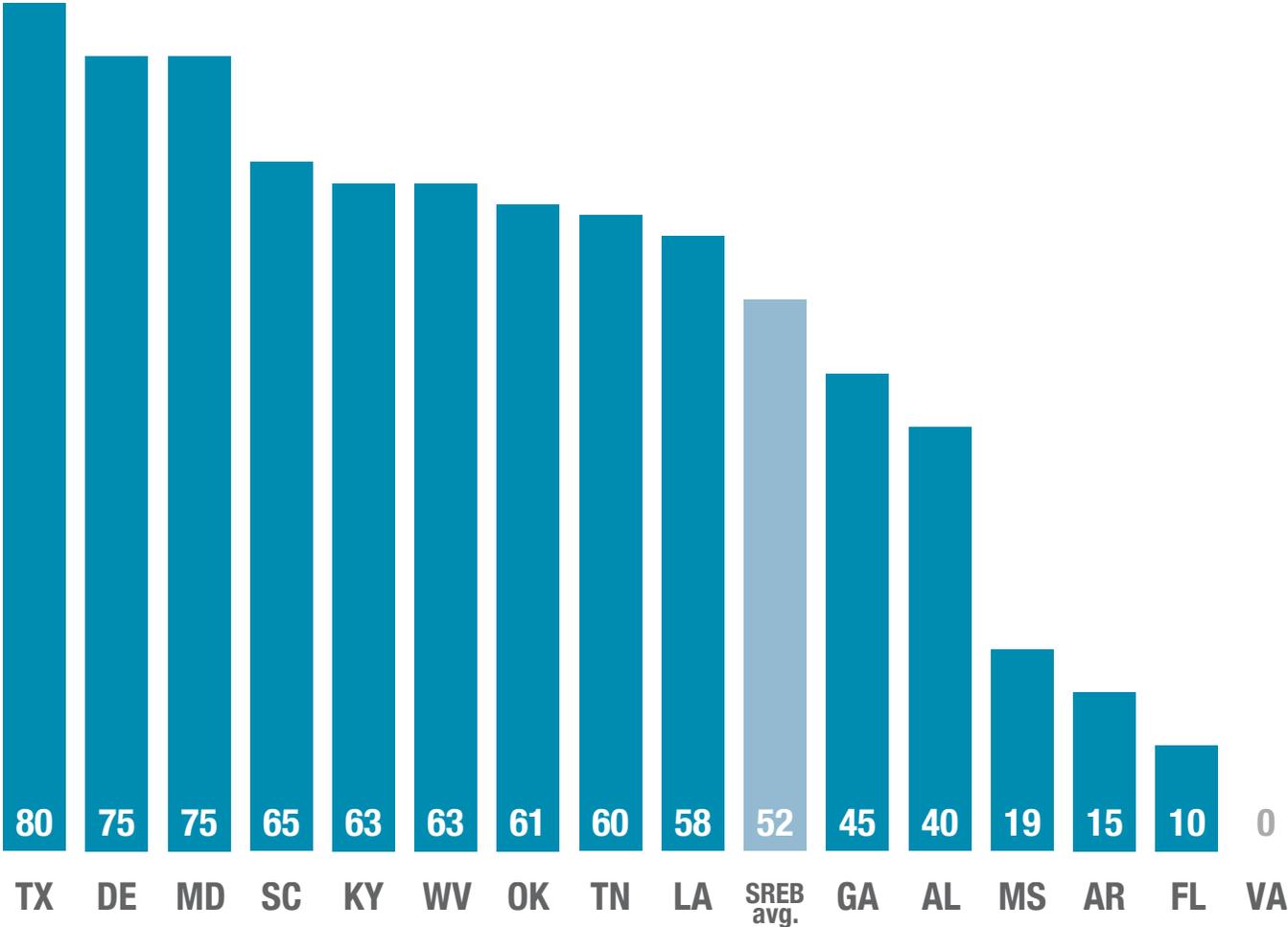
[Click here to learn about the measures in each indicator in Maryland's profile.](#)

Weights

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS **WEIGHTS** DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Percent of weight for state indicators that measure college and career readiness, high school



Note: North Carolina is omitted because it combines indicators such that weights for some could not be determined.

4. Data

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS **DATA** SUPPORT SYSTEMS

ESSA requires states to differentiate the performance of all schools annually. States must publicly identify, or rate, only struggling schools – those needing comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) or targeted support and improvement (TSI).

For these required ratings, TSI must be based on performance data for student groups (economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, English learners, and students from major racial and ethnic groups).

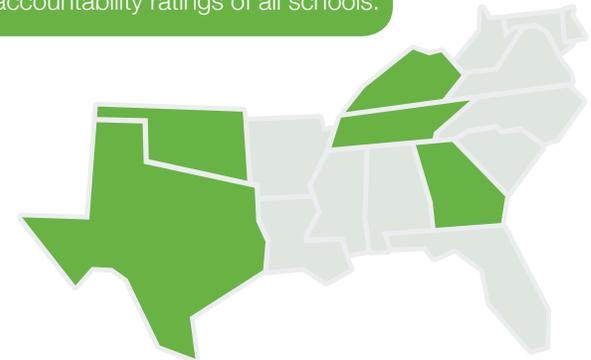
Thirteen states exceeded ESSA's school ratings requirement. These states will publicly assign all schools an overall rating, for example an A through F letter grade. Nine of these states will base the rating on data from all students as a whole.

Five of these states—Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas—will include performance data from each student group in determining the overall school ratings. They do this by including student group performance in the calculation of the academic achievement indicator, having a dedicated achievement gap indicator or lowering the ratings of schools with poor student group performance.

Including data from each student group in overall school ratings pushes stakeholders to consider every student's needs as they work to improve their school.

States to Watch

Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas stress the importance of each student by including data from student groups in overall accountability ratings of all schools.



5. Support systems

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

ESSA requires that states must support **districts** that have significant numbers or percentages of CSI and TSI schools.

ESSA requires states to begin reporting by December, 2018 which **schools** they identify as in need of support.

ESSA does not require states to provide services directly to schools, unless the schools remain in a CSI status for an extended period of time.

State plans

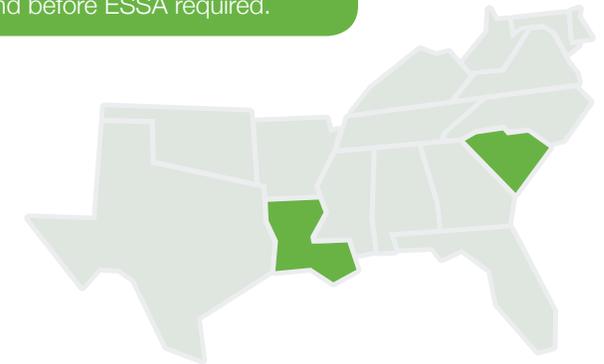
All states' ESSA plans list several types of support for districts, such as resource allocation reviews and liaisons to help with data analysis, needs assessment, planning and curriculum vetting. Louisiana's plan provides the most detail about support for districts.

Eight SREB states plan to provide schools with services, including help with needs assessment, selecting interventions, progress monitoring, professional learning and on-site coaches. Tennessee's plan provides the most detail about state support for struggling schools.

Most states begin to identify struggling schools during 2018-19. Louisiana and South Carolina began in 2017-18.

States to Watch

Louisiana and South Carolina began to **identify struggling schools** in 2017-18 – ahead of other states and before ESSA required.



The next slide addresses challenges states face in taking plans into action

Support systems

How do states prioritize readiness within their ESSA plans?

GOALS INDICATORS WEIGHTS DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Moving from plan to action

Most state ESSA plans provide general lists of supports for schools and districts. In implementing their plans, state leaders who have committed their states to college and career readiness will need to ensure that everyone from the state to the local level focuses on helping every child progress on the indicators of readiness in the state's accountability system.

This task will be challenging, as in many states the readiness measures in school accountability indicators are new.

Other challenges in the state's work to serve struggling districts and school include:

- How many schools and districts are identified for support
- How many staff members the state education agency can dedicate to working directly with districts and schools
- The capacity of partners such as regional centers
- Budgets and other available resources

What's next for state leaders?

Engaging stakeholders

ESSA requires states to involve stakeholders in the development of their accountability plans. Stakeholders include the governor, members of the state legislature, the state board of education, districts, educators, school leaders, parents and community leaders.

States involved stakeholders in a variety of ways, from statewide meetings to local gatherings to online surveys.

As the new state accountability systems take effect, state leaders should continue to engage stakeholders. Continuing engagement will help state leaders ensure that their accountability systems support the efforts of all schools to meet state goals and help each student prepare for success after high school.

State to Watch

In Tennessee, the SEA launched the Education Research Alliance guided by Vanderbilt University faculty. SEA leaders, an advisory committee of stakeholders and the Alliance will **suggest ideas and track state efforts** to continuously improve implementation of the state ESSA plan and the state education agency's strategic plan.



The next slide details three ways state leaders can engage stakeholders

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What's next for state leaders?

Engaging stakeholders

State leaders can strengthen implementation of ESSA accountability by engaging stakeholders.

Report cards

Gather insights and suggestions from stakeholders to inform the design of school, district and state report cards that provide clear, accessible and actionable information for educators, parents and communities.

School improvement efforts

Involve stakeholders in school improvement so that efforts address the experiences, strengths and needs of each student.

Focus state and local leaders

Consider stakeholder feedback on how the new accountability system is working to help improve each child's achievement, ensuring that state leaders remain responsive to the needs of all students, families and educators.

What's next for state leaders?

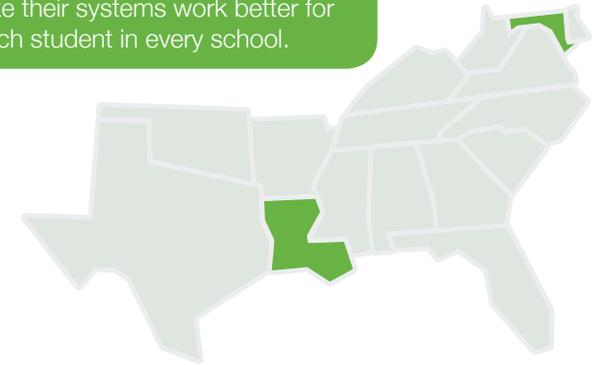
Continuous improvement of accountability systems for college and career readiness

ESSA allows states to modify their plans annually.

States can make their accountability systems dynamic drivers of change by **studying how their systems are working**. Data on the state's own efforts to implement the accountability system, together with data on school and district performance and local improvement efforts, can help state leaders understand how well the accountability system is working to improve local education systems.

Armed with this information, states can **adjust their accountability systems** so they better support educators and families in preparing students for success after high school.

States to Watch
Adding measures: Louisiana's and Maryland's plans call for **adding specific new measures** in the next two years. Other states' plans mention possible new measures in the coming years.
Refining measures and adjusting targets: All states can **refine** their measures and **adjust** their interim targets when needed, to make their systems work better for each student in every school.



The next slide details how states can continuously improve their systems

What's next for state leaders?

Continuous improvement of accountability systems for college and career readiness

States might make these updates:

Add or refine indicators

Some states' ESSA plans, for example Louisiana and Maryland, describe indicators that the states still need to finish developing. States may also decide to add new readiness measures to more fully address all three types of readiness expectations (see slides 8-10).

Refine policies

States could refine measures or policies to help students get the most value out of meeting state readiness expectations. For example, a state may modify their indicators to recognize only technical credentials earned in high-demand industries. Or states may align policies so credits that count toward a school accountability indicator (e.g., dual enrollment) may be transferred to any public postsecondary institution in the state.

Adjust targets

States may decide to change interim school performance targets for readiness measures based on data from early years of implementation. Especially for new readiness measures, states will need to pay attention to progress and adjust so the targets are aggressive and well-paced but also reasonable.

Measures of College and Career Readiness Within Indicators of School Performance

Measures listed on slides 8-10, according to whether they establish expectations for college or career readiness

State	Progress toward readiness at graduation		Demonstrated readiness		Successful transition after graduation	
	College ready	Career ready	College ready	Career ready	Postsecondary education	Military and careers
Alabama			√	√		√
Arkansas	√	√	√			
Delaware	√	√	√	√		
Florida			√	√		
Georgia	√	√	√	√	√	
Kentucky	√	√	√	√		
Louisiana	√	√	√	√	√	
Maryland	√	√	√	√		√
Mississippi	√	√	√	√		
North Carolina	√		√	√		
Oklahoma	√	√	√	√		
South Carolina	√	√	√	√		
Tennessee	√		√	√		
Texas	√		√	√	√	√
Virginia						
West Virginia	√	√	√			

Note:

As of August 2018, Florida's ESSA plan had not been approved. Information on Florida in this presentation is based on analysis of the plan Florida submitted to the US ED on April 20, 2018.

Appendix B

Weights of indicators <i>Percent weight or points of total</i>							
State	School level ¹	Academic achievement	Other academic achievement	ELP ²	Graduation rate	SQSS ³	Additional indicator
Alabama	E/M	40%	40%	5%		15%	
	H	20%	25%	5%	30%	20%	
Arkansas	E/M	35%	50%	*		15%	
	H	35%	35%	*	15%	15%	
Delaware	E/M	30%	40%	10%		20%	
	H	40%		10%	15%	35%	
Florida	E	200 of 700 points	400 of 700 points	**		100 of 700 points	
	M	200 of 900 points	400 of 900 points	**		200 of 900 points	100 of 900 points
	H	200 of 1,000 points	400 of 1,000 points	**	100 of 1,000 points	200 of 1,000 points	100 of 1,000 points
Georgia	E/M	30%	50%	*		20%	
	H	30%	30%	*	15%	25%	
Kentucky	E/M	25 of 135 points	48 of 135 points	*		62 of 135 points	
	H	40 of 150 points		***	15 of 150 points	95 of 150 points	

Notes:

1 E: elementary grades. M: middle grades. H: high school.

2 ELP: English Language Proficiency.

3 SQSS: School Quality and Student Success.

* This indicator is combined with another academic one.

** This indicator is not weighted.

*** This indicator is combined with SQSS.

As of August 2018, Florida's ESSA plan had not been approved. Information on Florida in this presentation is based on analysis of the plan Florida submitted to the US ED on April 20, 2018.

Appendix B

Weights of indicators Percent weight or points of total

State	School level ¹	Academic achievement	Other academic achievement	ELP ²	Graduation rate	SQSS ³	Additional indicator
Louisiana	E	50%	25%	*		25%	
	M	47%	25%	*		28%	
	H	21%		*	42%	38%	
Maryland	E/M	20%	35%	10%		35%	
	H	30%		10%	15%	35%	10%
Mississippi	E/M	190 of 700 points	380 of 700 points	35 of 700 points		95 of 700 points	
	H	190 of 1,000 points	380 of 1,000 points	50 of 1,000 points	190 of 1,000 points	190 of 1,000 points	
North Carolina	E/M	80%	NA ⁴	NA ⁴		20%	
	H	80%	20%	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	NA ⁴	
Oklahoma	E/M	35 of 90 points	30 of 90 points	15 of 90 points		10 of 90 points	
	H	45 of 90 points		15 of 90 points	10 of 90 points	20 of 90 points	
South Carolina	E/M	35%	35%	10%		20%	
	H	25%		10%	25%	40%	
Tennessee	E/M	45%	35%	10%		10%	
	H	30%	25%	10%	5%	30%	
Texas	E/M	40%	40%	10%		10%	
	H	50%		10%	10%	30%	
West Virginia	E/M	28%	28%	14%		29%	
	H	25%		13%	25%	38%	

Notes:

1 E: elementary grades. M: middle grades. H: high school.

2 ELP: English Language Proficiency.

3 SQSS: School Quality and Student Success.

4 NA: not available. North Carolina combines indicators such that weights for some indicators cannot be determined.

* This indicator is combined with another academic one.

Virginia is not listed in this table, as it does not assign weight to its indicators.

About this presentation

To develop this presentation, SREB's benchmarking readiness project staff reviewed state ESSA plans approved by the U.S. Department of Education (US ED) as of August 27, 2018: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

Staff also reviewed the plan that Florida submitted to the US ED on April 20, 2018. As of August 27, 2018, the plan had not been approved by the US ED.

Staff used structured protocols to gather consistent information from all the state plans.

Information in this presentation complements that in the state profiles that SREB's benchmarking readiness project staff developed. To ensure the accuracy of the profiles, staff consulted representatives in the state education agencies. Fourteen state education agencies sent feedback.

Policymakers, state education agencies, district and school leaders, and others can use this presentation and the state profiles to understand state accountability systems and priorities for college and career readiness. This information can inform efforts to continually improve state policy, local practice and student outcomes.

[Click here to read the profiles!](#)