



One of the most important strategies to boost outcomes for all students is to support low-performing schools with resources and training to improve.

Through ESSA, states are finding new and innovative ways of supporting all schools – from struggling schools to high-performing schools – to ensure they continually improve for all students in their communities.

This week's newsletter highlights states as they are taking the lead in designing effective systems that help schools and districts improve so that they can give all students the support they deserve.

Visit [StatesLeading.org](https://StatesLeading.org) and follow #StatesLeading on social media to learn more and join the conversation.

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## State Spotlights

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The **Iowa** Department of Education is increasing site visits and support to its highest priority school districts through its Differentiated Accountability (DA) program.

The DA program supports public districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and Area Education Agencies by providing insights around assessment and data-based decision-making, universal instruction, and intervention systems.

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# pennsylvania

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The **Pennsylvania** Department of Education's school improvement pilot program is a new plan to share state resources with districts that have the lowest-performing schools.

Take a look at the state's partnership with schools in Pittsburgh to see how the program develops best practices for assisting districts with schools that fall into the bottom 5 percent of performance statewide, as well as any high school with a graduation rate at or below 67 percent.

The program brings together the district's central administration and school leadership to look at performance data within the lowest-performing schools in the city and collaborate on that school's turnaround.

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# New York State

## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

The **New York** State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department used the flexibility of ESSA to develop a system where the schools that need the most support or are interested in replicating best practices across the state will receive the most attention.

New York's ESSA plan requires school-level improvement plans for the lowest-performing schools overall, as well as for schools with the lowest performance for certain student populations.

Strategies for improvement include revising New York's challenging standards and assessments, adjusting the approach to supporting schools and districts that are identified as low-performing to increase the focus on providing guidance, feedback, and recommendations, and implementing a new school accountability and assistance system.

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# NM PED

Public Education Department

The **New Mexico** Public Education Department recently partnered with Johns Hopkins University and 10 high schools across the state to launch New Mexico's first-ever High School Redesign Network.

This network will focus on redesigning curricula, targeted professional development for teachers, and ongoing high-impact support around the planning, implementation, and monitoring of individualized, evidence-based redesign plans.

This initiative is part of the Cross-State High School Collaborative, supported by CCSSO, that also includes **Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New York, and Ohio**. The goal of the Collaborative is to leverage ESSA to enable struggling high schools in high-needs communities to reinvent themselves to better support students.

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OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

States are working with stakeholders across their state to put into action new school improvement systems that will work to continuously improve all schools and support all students. States like **Louisiana, Connecticut, Oregon, Nevada** and **Colorado** provide examples of this work.

[The Louisiana Department of Education](#) has embraced a variety of programs that range from state-run recovery for low-performing schools as charter schools, creating public-private partnerships providing choice options, and partnering with a network of low-performing schools to support select schools through ambitious goal setting, community-based accountability, educator recruiting initiatives, intensive supports for teachers, and broad decision-making authority for principals.

The **Connecticut** State Department of Education [developed a series of evidence-based guides](#) that are designed to give low-performing district and school leaders access to a set of strategic practices tied to their statewide goals.

The **Oregon** Department of Education recently introduced a [new model of support aimed at strengthening district systems](#) to use local data and context to engage in a needs assessment process for all schools identified as low-performing. Under Oregon's ESSA accountability model, the Department identifies schools to receive Comprehensive Supports for Improvement and Targeted Supports for Improvement and partners with districts to implement tiered model of supports.

The **Nevada** Department of Education created [the Partnership Network](#) an integrated program to support the educators and families of low-performing schools to implement resources such as a Community Health Centers, data coaching, and extended learning, that improve student achievement. Funding for the network comes from an innovative approach of combining federal Title I, Title II, Title IV funds, and state funds.

The **Colorado** Department of Education [developed a single improvement plan](#) that meets all federal and state compliance requirements as well as a single application for funding. This unified approach to improvement planning enables districts and schools to focus and align their compliance measures.

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# OKLAHOMA

STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

———— JOY HOFMEISTER ————  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The **Oklahoma** State Department of Education's new accountability systems uses priority student groups to gain insights into achievement gaps, inequities, and trends in student performance.

By examining student group performance in addition to traditional subgrouping methodology, the system provides multiple lenses of student achievement through actionable data that allows more intentional, specific interventions for schools struggling to support students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and race/ethnicity groups.

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## Tools & Resources

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ExcelinEd provides resources to help states reinvent school report cards as easy-to-use tools that reflect state priorities, highlight the breadth of school data, and are parent-friendly.

This toolkit includes case studies, comprehensive instructions on building a data tool that enhances parent engagement, and a communications and implementation resource guide.

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COMMISSION  
OF THE STATES**

Your education policy team.

JUL 2018

# GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR STATE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

JULIE WOODS AND ALYSSA RAFA

While research and experience point to many strategies that may be effective in improving low-performing schools, the ultimate responsibility for supporting improvement falls on state, district, and community leaders.

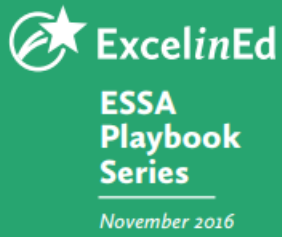
This Education Commission of the States brief, *Guiding Questions for State School Improvement Efforts*, highlights targeting questions and resources to help state leaders address and support low-performing schools.

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more](#)

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# A-F School Accountability

*With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)<sup>1</sup>, states must implement school accountability systems in compliance with the new law and regulations by the 2017-18 school year.*

ExcelinEd's ESSA Playbooks provide state policymakers clear recommendations, practical advice, and resources on four core areas of the Every Student Succeeds Act: school accountability, interventions, innovation, and weighted student funding pilot.

This Playbook can help states maintain the simplicity, transparency and rigor found in A-F school grading—and strengthen their commitment to those principles—as they transition to ESSA.

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States can capitalize on the added flexibility under ESSA and approaches already adopted in many states and districts to help struggling schools.

This issue of NASBE's *The State Education Standard* showcases a variety of these approaches for state boards of education and state education agencies to consider as they address low-performing schools.

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**We want to hear from you!**  
Send your state's stories or organization's resources to [communications@ccsso.org](mailto:communications@ccsso.org)





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The States Leading campaign celebrates the progress states are making toward providing equitable education for all students through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and innovative policies in other key areas of education, such as early childhood education, teacher preparation, and career readiness, among others.

**Thank you to our proud partners:**

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