LEADERS and LAGGARDS

A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Innovation

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What Is Educational Innovation?

In our view, educational innovation means discarding policies and practices that no longer serve students while creating opportunities for smart, entrepreneurial problem-solvers to help children learn.

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Overview

Two years ago, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Center for American Progress, and Frederick M. Hess of the American Enterprise Institute came together to grade the states on school performance. In that first *Leaders and Laggards* report, we found much to applaud but even more that requires urgent improvement. In this follow-up report, we turn our attention to the future, looking not at how states are performing today, but at what they are doing to prepare themselves for the challenges that lie ahead. Thus, some states with positive academic results receive poor grades on our measures of innovation, while others with lackluster scholarly achievement nevertheless earn high marks for policies that are creating an entrepreneurial culture in their schools. We chose this focus because, regardless of current academic accomplishment in each state, we believe innovative educational practices are vital to laying the groundwork for continuous and transformational change.

And change is essential. Put bluntly, we believe our education system needs to be reinvented. After decades of political inaction and ineffective reforms, our schools consistently produce students unready for the rigors of the modern workplace. The lack of preparedness is staggering. Roughly one in three eighth graders is proficient in reading. Most high schools graduate little more than two-thirds of their students on time. And even the students who do receive a high school diploma lack adequate skills: More than 33% of first-year college students require remediation in either math or English.

But we also believe that reinvention will never be accomplished with silver bullets. Our school system needs far-reaching innovation. It is archaic and broken, a relic of a time when high school graduates could expect to live prosperous lives, when steel and auto factories formed the backbone of the American economy, and when laptop computers and the Internet were the preserve of science fiction writers. And while the challenges are many—inflexible regulations, excessive bureaucracy, a dearth of fresh thinking—the bottom line is that most education institutions simply lack the tools, incentives, and opportunities to reinvent themselves in profoundly more effective ways.

By "innovation" we do *not* mean blindly celebrating every nifty-sounding reform. If anything, we have had too much of such educational innovation over the years, as evidenced by the sequential embrace of fads and the hurried cycling from one new "best practice" to another that so often characterizes K–12 schooling. States and school systems, in other words, have too long confused the novel with the useful. Rather, we believe innovation to be the process of leveraging new tools, talent, and management strategies to craft solutions that were not possible or necessary in an earlier era.

Our aim is to encourage states to embrace policies that make it easier to design smart solutions that serve 21st century students and address 21st century challenges. The impulse to either dictate one-size-fits-all solutions from the top or simply to do something—anything—differently will not address our pressing needs. Instead, this report seeks to foster a flexible, performance-oriented culture that will help our schools meet educational challenges.

Today, various organizations are addressing stubborn challenges by pursuing familiar notions of good teaching and effective schooling in impressively coherent, disciplined, and strategic ways. Some are public school districts, such as Long Beach Unified School District in California and Aldine Independent School District in Texas. An array of charter school entrepreneurs are also working within the public school system and seeing encouraging results, such as the KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) Academies, YES Prep, Aspire Public Schools, Green Dot Public Schools, and Achievement First. Other independent ventures have also devised promising approaches to important challenges, including Citizen Schools, EdisonLearning, The New Teacher Project, K12 Inc., Blackboard Inc., Wireless Generation, Teach for America, and New Leaders for New Schools.

Even these marquee reformers, however, struggle to sidestep entrenched practices, raise funds, find talent, and secure support. Moreover, these highly successful ventures often pale when viewed beside the larger K–12 enterprise. The 80-odd KIPP schools, approximately 130 school leaders trained annually by New Leaders for New Schools, and 2,200 teachers trained each year by The New Teacher Project are dwarfed by the nation's 14,000 school districts, 100,000 schools, and 3.2 million teachers. The challenge is to boost the chance that creative problem solvers will ultimately make a real, lasting difference for our nation and our children.

Fortunately, our report comes at a time when national attention to educational innovation is on the upswing. The new federal Race to the Top Fund has brought additional attention to the need to rethink our system, for instance, while numerous other efforts are under way at the state and local levels. It is far too early to endorse any particular plan or to say which ones will be effective. But now is the time for state leaders to show the political will to pursue reform.

Along the way, high standards, accountability, and sensible progress measures are essential. But care must be taken not to allow familiar modes of measurement to smother reform. Too often, reformers tend to embrace only those advances that we can conveniently measure with today's crude tools, such as grades three-to-eight reading and math scores. The principal virtue of the No Child Left Behind Act, for example—a much-needed focus on outcomes and transparency—has been coupled with a bureaucratic impulse and an inflexible, cookie-cutter approach to gauging teacher and school quality. We must not retreat from the promise of high standards and accountability. But we should also embrace what might be called smart quality control. That means measuring the value of various providers and solutions in terms of what they are intended to do—whether that is recruiting teachers or tutoring foreign languages—rather than merely on whether they affect the rate at which students improve their performance on middle school reading and math tests.

Improved accountability and flexibility, while vital, will not be enough to achieve the changes we seek: Capacity building is also crucial. We define this overused term to mean the need for a variety of new providers that deliver additional support to educators in answering classroom and schoolwide challenges. More broadly, however, this effort must be complemented by giving new providers the freedom and encouragement they need to promote high-quality research and development, and to develop innovative "green shoot" reform ventures that pioneer more effective tools and strategies.

Ultimately, though, the key to improving results will be to help schools not only to avoid mistakes, but to position themselves better to adopt imaginative solutions. In brief, for reform to take hold our states and schools must practice purposeful innovation.

To examine the degree to which states have developed such a culture, we focused on eight areas:

- **School Management** (including the strength of charter school laws and the percentage of teachers who like the way their schools are run)
- **Finance** (including the accessibility of state financial data)
- **Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation** (including alternative certification for teachers)
- **Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers** (including the percentage of principals who report barriers to the removal of poor-performing teachers)
- **Data** (including such measures as state-collected college student remediation data)
- **Technology** (including students per Internet-connected computer)
- **Pipeline to Postsecondary** (including the percentage of schools reporting dual-enrollment programs)
- **State Reform Environment** (an ungraded category that includes data on the presence of reform groups and participation in international assessments)

Our data come from a wide variety of sources, from federal education databases to our own 50-state surveys. We should note that the data limitations we encountered were a significant hindrance to our efforts, even more so than when we prepared our first *Leaders and Laggards* report.

We received invaluable assistance from an outside panel of academic experts. We shared our methodology with Jack Buckley, professor of applied statistics at New York University; Dan Goldhaber, research professor at the University of Washington; Paul Herdman, president of the Rodel Foundation of Delaware; Monica Higgins, professor of education at Harvard University; and Richard Ingersoll, professor of education and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. The panel reviewed our approach and results, and provided helpful feedback. However, our research team takes full responsibility for the methodology and resulting grades.

In many respects the recent troubles of the auto and newspaper industries provide a cautionary tale for today's education policymakers. Analysts predicted structural challenges in both industries for decades. Outside consultants urged major change. Yet altering entrenched practices at businesses from General Motors to the

now-defunct *Rocky Mountain News* proved enormously difficult. And the results of inaction for both organizations were disastrous. The same must not happen to our nation's education system. The stakes are just too high.

The findings and recommendations detailed in the following section cover everything from the need for more thoughtful use of technology to the overarching importance of giving educators flexibility in meeting shared student-achievement goals. In particular, we believe that reform requires a nondoctrinaire emphasis on overhauling the status quo and replacing it, not with some imagined one best system, but with a new performance-oriented culture that may take many forms. In the end, we think of educational innovation not as a fad but as the prerequisite for deep, systematic change, the kind of change that is necessary—and long overdue.

We think of educational innovation not as a fad but as the prerequisite for deep, systematic change, the kind of change that is necessary—and long overdue.

As we observed two years ago in our first *Leaders and Laggards* report, even as businesses have revolutionized their practices, "student achievement has remained stagnant and our K–12 schools have stayed remarkably unchanged—preserving, as if in amber, the routines, culture, and operations of a 1930s manufacturing plant." Now, as we look forward, our aim is nothing less than to crush the amber. That is the challenge before us.

Major Findings

We set out in this report to evaluate the innovation gap in American education, identifying key problem areas and seeking promising solutions. The results were deeply troubling. From weak data capacity to anachronistic finance systems, schools just do not have the ability to respond to 21st century educational challenges. And our nation has not done nearly enough to help.

To be sure, there are some bright spots on the educational landscape. Most states now have charter schools, for example, and almost every state has some sort of alternative teacher certification program. But for the most part, the delivery of education remains hidebound: across our categories, not a single state earned As in more than one or two areas, and most received a host of Cs and Ds. Perhaps most disheartening, we were not able to document the full extent of the innovation problem. We simply could not find enough reliable information to evaluate important questions such as the flexibility of the state reform environment, the effectiveness of state and district policies for hiring school leaders, and whether investments in educational technology are paying off.

What we did uncover raises disturbing concerns about the future of our nation's education system. It should inspire not just another round of political handwringing, but real and focused action.

Among our major findings:

Rigid education bureaucracies impede quality schooling. Ninety percent of teachers say that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, according to our analysis of the 2007–2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of teachers and principals administered every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics. Only about one-third of teachers approve of how their schools are run. Throughout our educational system, a traditionalist school culture limits autonomy and innovation.

State finance systems are opaque, inefficient, and undermine innovation. The jumbled patchwork of spending programs in each state provides schools almost no room to spend resources in more effective ways. Our survey of the 50 states and the District of Columbia found that there are 23 states that each have more than 40 different school funding programs. These programs operate not only with little flexibility, but also little transparency. Only about half of the states make basic data easily available on the Internet, making it difficult for the public to hold schools accountable for how they spend their money.

The teacher pipeline fails to provide a diverse pool of high-quality educators. In some states, such as Iowa and Nebraska, almost no teachers enter the profession through alternative certification programs, which make it easier for talented liberal arts graduates and midcareer professionals to enter the classroom without conventional teaching preparation. At the same time, school leaders lack the authority to recruit the best candidates: Fewer than half of the principals in states, such as Oklahoma and North Dakota, report having a major degree of influence over teacher hiring.

Teacher evaluations are not based on performance. State systems for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers are focused almost entirely on inputs such as training and years of experience, even though these factors have been shown to have little impact on student achievement. By contrast, only four states require evidence of student learning to be the major factor in teacher evaluations.

Major barriers exist to the removal of poor-performing teachers. Seventy-two percent of principals say that tenure policies are a barrier to firing ineffective teachers, according to our analysis of federal SASS data. Another 61% say that teacher unions are an obstacle. Without the ability to remove ineffective teachers from the classroom, school leaders cannot build a cohesive school culture, create an environment of accountability, and ensure that all students will learn.

The outcome of state technology spending is unknown. Despite a systematic effort to examine the Web-based materials available from every state department of education, we found no evidence that any state had conducted a large-scale technology return-on-investment study. Instead, states collect data largely on student access to computers and the Internet. While technology has the potential to reinvent education delivery, without information on outcomes states will not know whether their investment in technology is well spent.

State data systems provide limited information on school operations and outcomes. States have made substantial improvements to their education data systems, but they still barely skim the surface of school operations, failing to answer basic capacity questions such as the degree to which professional development improves student outcomes. To foster entrepreneurial schools that can respond to new challenges, states must provide educators, policymakers, and the public with better information.

Schools provide too little access to college-level coursework. In most cases, dual-enrollment programs (in which students attend high school while enrolling in select collegiate courses) are a win-win educational strategy. They allow high school students to take advanced coursework and gain college credit while boosting college readiness and breaking down the often meaningless boundaries between high school and college. But our research shows that fewer than two-thirds of schools report having such programs. In Delaware, for example, only about a quarter of schools have dual-enrollment programs.

Only one state, Hawaii, has created a student-based funding system. In almost every state, education dollars do not follow students to the schools they attend according to their needs. Instead, funds are distributed based on factors that have little to do with students, such as the number of teachers in a school or the kind of educational programs that a school provides. Such financial practices make it nearly impossible for principals to allocate resources in new and innovative ways. While some districts have adopted student-based funding schemes, so far no state has emulated Hawaii's effort to ensure that education dollars truly follow the child.

States lack a culture of education advocacy. Innovation-focused reform will require deep reserves of political capital because entrenched interests will fight meaningful changes. But few leaders have stepped forward to create the political conditions for reform. In 2009, for instance, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce conducted a survey of chambers of commerce and other state and local business leaders. It found that many business leaders believed that there was little support in their state for key reforms. Only 12% thought there was a great deal of support from elected state officials for charter schools, while just 7% believed there was a good deal of support from state officials for bonuses for effective teachers.

Recommendations

Our call for educational innovation is intended to be both philosophical and practical. Philosophical because we do not wish to dictate specific policies, but rather to see a dramatic change in how we approach educational challenges. Practical because we recognize that, along with broad principles, educators need concrete examples of reforms that are working. Thus, we propose a framework for change intended to address the structural problems facing our nation's education systems, while at the same time providing real-world examples of practices that have the potential to significantly improve student learning.

The hallmark of the approach we advocate is responsible flexibility. Educators should have the opportunity to assess challenges, to devise smarter, more effective solutions—and then to be held accountable for the results they deliver. Essential here are the same principles that have historically undergirded American success in any endeavor: a respect for individual initiative, creative problem solving, the dynamic use of technology, and the power of sensibly configured markets. Applying these values implies the need for fresh thinking, whether the issue is teacher compensation, teacher certification, charter schooling, or the creation of new schools.

At the same time, we wish to avoid romanticism regarding school choice, markets, and the for-profit sector. As the world has learned repeatedly in the past decade, markets are far from flawless. Thoughtful market champions have long made clear that markets are merely a tool for channeling human ingenuity, so it matters immensely how those markets are designed and what they reward. The key is to find appropriate measures of whether schools, teachers, and policymakers are promoting quality teaching and learning, then to create systems that encourage and reward success.

Our analysis of the innovation gap in American education leads us to recommend the following reforms.

More Flexibility

States and districts must—

Empower schools and principals. To take one example, 65% of principals report that undue documentation is a barrier to firing ineffective teachers. That is an unacceptably high figure at a time when evidence is mounting that good teachers are crucial to boosting student achievement.

Develop student-based funding policies and other more flexible approaches to school funding. When money follows students based on their needs, school funds will be spent more effectively and achievement is likely to improve.

Reinvent education management. State systems of schooling are broken and outdated. This problem may sound familiar, but that only underscores its severity. Reinvention calls for nothing less than a seismic shift on the part of states, from micromanaging districts through bureaucratic and irrelevant funding schemes, program initiatives, and policies to creating a flexible, performance-focused management system that is loose on inputs and strict on school outcomes.

Rethink the school day and calendar. Right now some students simply do not have enough time in the classroom to make the academic progress they sorely need. More time by itself is by no means a panacea, of course. But rethinking the school day or year can provide more opportunity and flexibility to support world-class teaching and learning.

Better Accountability

States and districts must—

Hold individuals and organizations responsible for performance. Innovation should not take place in a vacuum. States must develop better accountability measures, insisting on transparency, measuring outcomes, and taking action based on those results. Policymakers must make sure that low-performing districts and schools—including charter schools—face strong sanctions.

Reform teacher pay and reward teachers whose performance improves student achievement. Such plans are not easy to design or implement, but they are vital. States should look to models such as Minnesota's Q Comp program, a pay-for-performance model that gives teachers detailed evaluations while also measuring their students' academic performance.

Develop statewide longitudinal data systems and provide better information to schools, teachers, and the public. Until we understand the nature and extent of our educational problems, we will not be able to fix them.

More Capacity

States and districts must—

Provide teachers with focused professional development on key topics such as use of data and technology. High-tech tools are of little use unless teachers in the trenches can take advantage of them.

Research and develop promising instructional practices and school models. Industry has come to recognize the huge importance of research and development to its future success; educators must do the same.

Support innovative schools and programs through capacity-building organizations. The potential of great schools often remains untapped without help building internal resources, refining workable models, and expanding. A small but growing number of capacity-building groups, including The Mind Trust, the Charter School Growth Fund, and New Schools for New Orleans, help schools do just that—and these organizations themselves need support as they expand.

An End to Monopolies

States and districts must—

Support charter schools and other forms of public school choice.* Choice does not ensure success. But by permitting experimentation and providing alternatives for students and families, choice creates opportunities for creative problem solving and customized approaches to meeting student needs. Thus, it is an essential proving ground for innovation.

Bring down the barriers between high school and college by developing dual-enrollment and early college programs. The distinction between 12th grade and the first year of college is artificial, the product of historic norms that are no longer relevant to today's learners. This divide leaves some students unchallenged in high school, unready for college, or both. There is growing evidence that early college and dual-enrollment programs, by bridging this gap, can strengthen the educational pipeline at a crucial junction. We need more of them.

Broaden the pool of potential teachers and support alternative certification programs. If teachers are the single most important determinant of student learning, it is increasingly important to cast a wide net and allow the best candidates to enter the profession, whether or not they have conventional education-school credentials.

A Stronger Reform Environment

States and districts must—

Support state efforts to create common academic standards linked to rigorous assessments. While federal educational standards have long been controversial, we heartily endorse the growing movement to establish shared benchmarks among states to allow apples-to-apples comparisons of student achievement. These common academic standards should be aligned with international assessments to allow for cross-national comparisons.

Support state reform organizations. State-level nonprofits, many working closely with the business community, have been instrumental to the success of many forward-looking education initiatives. They should be expanded.

Encourage entrepreneurial organizations such as Teach for America and Wireless Generation. These mold-breaking ventures have changed the terms of the education debate in a very short time. Even as they go to scale, many more such experiments are needed.

In conclusion, we reiterate that we have no illusions that some idealized, top-down package of reforms should be substituted for today's failing system. Quite the contrary. But the status quo needs to be disrupted for purposeful innovation to thrive. Only then will our nation's students receive the kind of education that they deserve.

* While the co-authors of this report firmly agree about the importance of public school choice, they have a good-faith disagreement about the merits of other forms of school choice, such as school vouchers and tuition tax credits. For more information, please see page 16.

State of the Nation

This section describes the eight areas in which we evaluated the states. Each category is framed around a specific problem area within state education systems, accompanied by an explanation of which indicators we used to judge the states and a table comparing the performance of the states within that category.

For the most part, we graded the states based upon their performance against a set standard. There were two exceptions, however. In the Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers category, we graded the states on a curve because of the way the information was reported, and in the State Reform Environment category, we did not award any grades because of the lack of high-quality data. In some categories, we also awarded the states gold stars for having certain innovative policies or programs. We did not incorporate those distinctions into the grades. The gold stars are listed for informational purposes only.

Please also note that states earning a given letter grade in the following tables are not listed alphabetically in every category. Where relevant, the states are ranked from highest to lowest, depending on how well they performed on that measure.

A technical explanation of our methodology can be found at: www.uschamber.com/reportcard and www.americanprogress.org/reportcard.

Educational Innovation Across the States

State	School Management	Finance	Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	Data	Pipeline to Postsecondary	Technology	State Reform Environment
Alabama	C	D	B	D	C	C	D	?
Alaska	D	C	C	C	C	D	C	?
Arizona	B	A	C	B	C	C	C	?
Arkansas	D	B	C	D	A	C	C	?
California	B	C	C	F	C	B	D	?
Colorado	C	A	B	D	C	C	D	?
Connecticut	F	C	C	C	C	C	D	?
Delaware	C	C	B	D	B	D	D	?
District of Columbia	D	C	B	F	F	—	D	?
Florida	C	B	B	F	A	D	B	?
Georgia	C	C	B	A	A	B	B	?
Hawaii	D	C	B	F	C	C	D	?
Idaho	C	C	C	C	F	D	B	?
Illinois	C	C	C	B	C	C	B	?
Indiana	B	C	C	D	B	B	D	?
Iowa	D	B	D	C	B	C	B	?
Kansas	F	B	D	C	C	D	D	?
Kentucky	C	C	C	F	B	B	B	?
Louisiana	C	C	B	B	A	D	A	?
Maine	D	C	B	C	D	B	D	?
Maryland	C	C	B	F	C	C	A	?
Massachusetts	B	C	B	D	B	C	D	?
Michigan	C	B	C	C	D	B	C	?
Minnesota	D	B	C	B	B	C	C	?
Mississippi	D	C	B	A	C	D	B	?
Missouri	D	C	B	B	A	D	C	?
Montana	D	C	D	C	B	F	D	?
Nebraska	F	B	D	A	D	F	D	?
Nevada	D	C	B	F	B	C	F	?
New Hampshire	D	C	B	C	C	C	C	?
New Jersey	C	D	B	A	D	D	D	?
New Mexico	C	C	B	F	B	C	B	?
New York	B	C	B	A	C	B	C	?
North Carolina	C	D	B	B	B	B	B	?
North Dakota	D	A	D	A	D	D	C	?
Ohio	C	C	C	D	B	B	C	?
Oklahoma	B	C	B	B	B	C	A	?
Oregon	D	B	C	C	C	C	B	?
Pennsylvania	C	C	C	A	C	D	C	?
Rhode Island	C	D	D	C	B	D	D	?
South Carolina	C	B	B	B	B	C	C	?
South Dakota	D	B	C	B	C	F	A	?
Tennessee	C	B	A	D	B	B	D	?
Texas	C	B	A	A	C	B	C	?
Utah	D	B	C	D	A	D	D	?
Vermont	C	B	C	A	C	C	C	?
Virginia	C	B	B	A	C	C	A	?
Washington	D	C	B	D	B	B	D	?
West Virginia	C	D	C	F	B	D	A	?
Wisconsin	D	C	C	F	C	C	B	?
Wyoming	D	B	D	B	A	C	B	?

— State did not receive a grade in this category.
NOTE: States did not receive a grade in the State Reform Environment category because of a lack of high-quality data.

School Management

For years, America's schools have relied on management practices imported from industrial factories in the early 20th century. The creation of school districts, the organization of the school calendar, the structuring of the curriculum—all got underway in a march toward efficiency and greater economies of scale, mimicking the "scientific management" techniques that came into vogue 100 years ago. While these practices may have made sense at one time, demands on schools have changed dramatically: lackluster achievement, soaring student populations, and changing demographics have created a new set of challenges.

Today, educators across the country struggle with outdated administrative structures that do little to support the delivery of a quality education. Restrictive bureaucracies, inflexible regulations, excessive red tape, and a dearth of fresh thinking together create a culture of risk aversion rather than one focused on solutions. Even when reformers do create promising new models, the traditional school management system does little to nurture or build upon their successes, slowing their ability to grow or develop. For example, in only a few communities do we see new entities—such as the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence—that have been designed with an eye to incubating, supporting, and clearing the runway for select new ventures.

Our educational system must shift from one driven by inputs to one that loosens restrictions on providers in exchange for results. Only this change will give schools a management environment marked by flexibility, accountability, and the capacity to solve problems effectively. We are well aware that no single solution will fix all of the nation's education problems. Nor do we need more faddism or piecemeal initiatives. Rather, our schools need a new mind-set that is dedicated to dynamic problem solving, to creating a flexible environment that helps schools and systems experiment with new approaches to delivering education. At the same time, in offering schools additional flexibility, states should also have clear and strong systems of quality control that make educational success the highest priority.

Just how to design such a system has been a source of much conflict. While there is broad support among most reformers for charter schools, public school choice, and giving principals more authority over hiring, other ideas have provoked heated debate. In particular, proposals for school vouchers, which allow parents to use public funds to send their children to private schools, and tax credits, which provide individuals and corporations the ability to make tax-exempt donations to private-school scholarships, often prove divisive among those who generally agree on the need to promote flexibility. Proponents of such measures, such as co-author Frederick M. Hess, regard them as potentially powerful ways to promote operational flexibility, inject competition into the sector, and create more room for effective providers. Skeptics, such as co-author the Center for American Progress, believe that these reforms undermine the virtues of public schooling, divert attention from promising areas of reform where there is consensus, and are unlikely to improve educational equity and student achievement. In light of such disagreement, we have opted not to incorporate these policies into the grading criteria.

With the goal of rewarding policies that offer flexibility in exchange for improved outcomes, we graded the states on the following indicators:

High Standards. Clear and well-designed standards are a fundamental part of a more-flexible school management system. However, many states have yet to rigorously detail what students should know and be able to do in order to succeed in college and a career. To evaluate the states on the strength of their academic standards, we relied on research from a 2006 study by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, the most recent data available.

School Sanctions. Too many states rely on the traditional school management model, which presumes that school districts have the capacity to effectively track school performance and hold schools accountable for outcomes. In reality, states frequently allow failing schools to limp along indefinitely. We therefore graded states on whether they impose sanctions on low-performing schools, giving high marks to states with policies that provide for school closures and reconstitution. This information is based on 2008 data collected by Editorial Projects in Education.

Rewards for Effective Schools. The traditional model of schooling in the United States typically fails to reward success and presumes that all schools are working as effectively as they can to prepare students. But this approach signals an acceptance of mediocrity. It can repel talent and fail to steer resources to more effective problem solvers. We therefore gave credit to states that reward high-performing schools. We relied on 2008 data from Editorial Projects in Education.

Charter Schools. Charter schools are widely considered to be incubators of innovation. With greater flexibility,

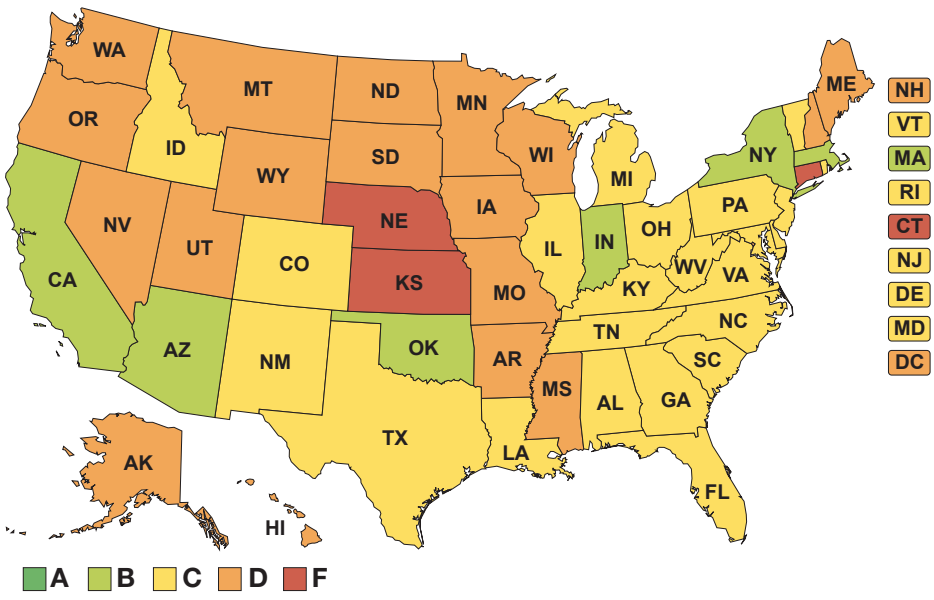
they are better able to experiment with everything from the school calendar to the curriculum. The data for this indicator came from a 2009 analysis by the Center for Education Reform. That analysis graded each state's charter school law based upon a variety of criteria, including the equity of charter school funding and the number of charters allowed. States automatically earned failing grades if they did not have a law authorizing charter schools.

Routine Duties and Paperwork. Until recently, school systems and states lacked strong measures to genuinely monitor school performance. As a result, they tended to track arbitrary inputs such as minutes per class and the frequency with which textbooks are replaced. The legacy of such overregulation is that efforts to track these meaningless measures all too often limit performance-focused solutions. To reward greater flexibility in this area, we tracked the percentage of teachers in each state who strongly disagree with the following statement: Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching. To obtain the data, we conducted a special analysis of the 2007–2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of teachers and principals administered every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Teachers' Perspectives on the Management of Their Schools. Too often schools are hindered by a culture and practice of leadership that is unimaginative and routine. Teachers frequently feel stifled and uninspired. We sought to reward states where this was not the norm. We graded states on the percentage of teachers who strongly agree with the following statement: I like the way things are run at this school. We gave credit to states with higher percentages. Again, we obtained the data from an analysis of the 2007–2008 SASS.

Expanded Learning Time. The 180 day calendar was the product of an earlier era, when schooling mattered less and when our expectations were lower. Much has changed since those days, but the calendar has barely altered, despite the need for new approaches to schooling. We therefore awarded gold stars to states that encourage schools to rethink the school day or year as part of a plan to improve the delivery of instruction. The National Center on Time & Learning provided us with these data in August 2009.

Charter School Accountability. Holding charter schools accountable for outcomes is as important, or arguably more so, than simply fostering their creation and growth. We therefore gave gold stars to states that have an aggressive charter school accountability environment, based on 2009 data from the Center for Education Reform. We awarded a state a gold star if it met two criteria: It had more than 250 charter schools, and more than 15% of its charter schools had been closed. To be sure, not all of the charter schools were shut down by authorizers for poor academic performance. Many were closed, or closed by themselves, for fiscal or management issues. But we believe it to be appropriate to highlight the states that have both created the conditions for a vibrant charter sector and taken care to create an environment in which failing or mismanaged schools shut their doors. Of course, shuttering more schools is not ipso facto a good thing, and quality control can certainly reach a point where it is squelching the charter sector. However, it is our judgment that no state is anywhere close to that point, and thus it is worth acknowledging those states where quality control is being taken seriously.



School Management

State	Grade	Strength of state standards	State sanctions low-performing schools	State provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools	Strength of charter school law	Percentage of teachers who say that routine duties and paperwork do not interfere with their teaching	Percentage of teachers who like the way things are run at their schools	State has expanded learning time policy	Charter school accountability
Massachusetts	B	A	Yes	Yes	C	12%	31%	★	
California	B	A	Yes	Yes	A	10	31		
New York	B	B	Yes	Yes	B	13	27		
Arizona	B	B	Yes	Yes	B	11	31		★
Indiana	B	A	Yes	Yes	B	8	30		
Oklahoma	B	C	Yes	Yes	D	14	38		
Ohio	C	D	Yes	Yes	C	11	29		★
Michigan	C	D	Yes	Yes	B	11	31		
Louisiana	C	C	Yes	Yes	C	10	38		
Colorado	C	C	Yes	Yes	B	8	37	★	
Texas	C	C	Yes	Yes	D	11	35		
Maryland	C	C	Yes	Yes	D	11	35		
Florida	C	D	Yes	Yes	B	10	34		★
Virginia	C	B	Yes	Yes	F	11	30		
South Carolina	C	B	Yes	Yes	C	8	34		
Georgia	C	B	Yes	Yes	C	7	39		
Rhode Island	C	D	Yes	Yes	D	12	27	★	
Tennessee	C	C	Yes	Yes	D	9	39		
West Virginia	C	C	Yes	Yes	F	10	33		
Alabama	C	B	Yes	Yes	F	10	32		
Pennsylvania	C	D	Yes	Yes	B	8	34		
New Mexico	C	C	Yes	Yes	B	8	24		
Delaware	C	C	Yes		B	11	26		
New Jersey	C	C		Yes	C	14	35		
Illinois	C	C	Yes		D	12	31		
North Carolina	C	C	Yes	Yes	D	8	25		
Vermont	C	D	Yes	Yes	F	9	28		
Idaho	C	D	Yes		C	10	37		
Kentucky	C	D	Yes	Yes	F	8	31		
Mississippi	D	D	Yes		F	14	32		
Arkansas	D	D	Yes		D	11	31		
Nevada	D	C		Yes	C	7	34		
Wisconsin	D	D		Yes	C	9	26		
South Dakota	D	C		Yes	F	9	30		
Oregon	D	D		Yes	C	7	35		
Washington	D	D		Yes	F	9	34		
Missouri	D	D			B	11	35		
Minnesota	D	C			A	6	32		
New Hampshire	D	D		Yes	D	8	28		
Alaska	D	F		Yes	D	7	33		
Utah	D	D			B	8	42		
Montana	D	F			F	14	37		
Wyoming	D	F	Yes		D	7	29		
District of Columbia	D	D			A	8	20		
Maine	D	D		Yes	F	7	25		
Iowa	D	—		Yes	F	7	27		
Hawaii	D	F	Yes		D	6	22		
North Dakota	D	D			F	10	36		
Connecticut	F	D			D	9	29		
Nebraska	F	D			F	9	29		
Kansas	F	C			F	6	32		
U.S.			32	35		10	32	3	3

NOTE: If a column was shaded gray, it was not used to calculate the final grades.
— Iowa's state standards were not evaluated.
SOURCES: Chester E. Finn Jr., Michael J. Petrilli, and Liam Julian, *The State of State Standards*, The Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2006; Editorial Projects in Education, Education Counts, 2008; The Center for Education Reform, *Race to the Top for Charter Schools*, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey 2007-2008; National Center on Time & Learning, 2009; and The Center for Education Reform, *The Accountability Report*, 2009.

Innovation Highlight: Incubators of Talent

When Miller-McCoy Academy for Mathematics and Business opened its doors in New Orleans last fall, students at the all-boys college prep school soon learned that the road ahead would not be easy. Entering pupils at the 6th-through-12th-grade school must sign a covenant of commitment with their parents and the principal that gives them fair warning about the high expectations they face. Among other things, school starts at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. (a school day that is approximately 30% longer than average), students are given rigorous homework every night, and classroom lessons are aligned with the ACT college entrance exam.

Miller-McCoy Academy is one of nearly 100 public charter schools "incubated" by New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO), a charter start-up organization that assembles specialized school reform groups to tackle the numerous practical problems faced by education entrepreneurs. Part of a growing movement of charter school incubators around the nation, NSNO was established in 2006 to assist with the city's vigorous post-Katrina school reform efforts. It has joined a veritable "dream team" of entrepreneurial groups—Teach for America (TFA), New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS), and The New Teacher Project (TNTP)—to supply New Orleans schools with high-quality, innovative teachers and principals. The challenges they face are the same as those confronted by charter founders around the country, who must scramble to identify not only an appropriate physical home but also the best possible teachers and school leaders.

Matt Candler, the energetic then-chief executive officer (CEO) of NSNO, knew that top-notch leadership would be central to the success of Miller-McCoy. He recruited Tiffany Hardrick and Keith Sanders as co-principals, promising them the opportunity to fulfill their vision of an effective school for New Orleans students. Both had been trained by NLNS; Candler lured them away from their middle schools in Memphis to launch the new educational venture. "We had an idea we really thought would work," says Sanders.[1]

In exchange for developing and carrying out their vision, Hardrick and Sanders received start-up compensation packages that are handsome by the standards of public education. Just as important was the extensive support they received to make sure the school's infrastructure and human capital were ready from day one. In the year before the school opened, each received $10,000 per month to cover salary, benefits, taxes, and incidentals, as well as a $5,000 technology stipend for a laptop and a BlackBerry. An additional $50,000 covered their professional development and training and that of their board members, whom NSNO helped identify. They were also given office space at NSNO's headquarters until the first day of school in 2008.[2] Crucially, they started the school year with an energetic, high-caliber staff, thanks to the teachers and support provided by TFA and TNTP.

It is too soon to assess the academic success of Miller-McCoy, but the overall impact of NSNO is promising. NSNO has provided financial support and vital entrepreneurial energy to many charter schools in the Recovery School District (RSD), a special district created in the wake of Katrina to transform underperforming schools. NSNO will soon have incubated more than a quarter of the RSD's charter schools, which have quickly distinguished themselves academically. In 2007–2008, students in the RSD demonstrated greater gains on Louisiana academic assessments than in previous years.[3] The percentage of RSD fourth graders who passed the test jumped 12 points from the previous year, and 4 percentage points among eighth graders.[4] Still, huge gaps between RSD schools and other Louisiana schools remain, a ready reminder that reformers' work is far from done.

Beyond New Orleans, many nascent charter schools throughout the country must overcome the tremendous financial challenges that are typical of any start-up venture. Numerous organizations have been able to help those educational entrepreneurs create innovative solutions. For example, Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit Building Hope, which works in several states, offers incubation services such as providing temporary facilities for new charter schools, training school leaders in how to approach loan service providers, and connecting school leaders to architects and real estate consultants to help them build their schools. Similarly, the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence offers planning funds, space, and services to help promising start-ups open their doors to New York City students.

Some reformers are looking beyond a school's four walls and focusing on a range of measures that create the kind of system in which educational innovation can thrive. That means connecting promising school providers with the mentoring, expertise, resources, and networks that can help remove obstacles to creative problem solving. Indianapolis's Mind Trust is one prominent organization that is trying to create those networks. David Harris, who previously led a successful charter initiative launched by former Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson, established The Mind Trust in 2006 because, he says, "We were limited in our ability to grow the charter sector because of the lack of available talent."[5]

To bridge this gap, Harris launched The Mind Trust Education Entrepreneurship Fellowship program, which serves as an incubator for education entrepreneurs to develop and launch transformative education initiatives. Fellows receive a $90,000 annual salary for two years, a full benefits package, training and mentorship, office space, and a $20,000 discretionary budget, which can be used for travel, training, and other purposes. Fellows have started a national research-based summer program and a one-year global service program for recent high school graduates. In addition, the organization's venture fund has invested $3 million to recruit education entrepreneurs such as TFA, College Summit, TNTP, and Diploma Plus into Indianapolis public schools.

Incubation for promising charter start-ups that would otherwise lack vital financial support has been essential in cities such as New Orleans, New York, and Washington, D.C. But many reformers have come to believe that "stimulating the supply"[6]—as Harris describes the new generation of school leaders, teachers, human resource staff, and education entrepreneurs who are needed to run new schools—is equally critical.

Innovation Highlight: Expanded Learning Time

The last school bell at Clarence R. Edwards Middle School in Charlestown, Massachusetts, used to ring at 1:30 p.m. But Edwards students have been staying in class at least two extra hours a day since 2006. That was the year Massachusetts launched the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative, which awarded 10 schools $1,300 per student to lengthen the school year by 300 hours or more. Today, 26 schools are participating in the initiative.

Edwards was certainly in need of drastic reform. Before ELT was introduced, the school was on the brink of closing, owing to the double whammy of low test scores and dwindling enrollment. School staff saw an expanded school schedule as an opportunity to turn Edwards around, and in just a few years, the additional time has served as a catalyst for innovation and school redesign. "ELT is a process for helping kids get ready for high school," says former principal Jeff Riley.[7] Initially, the school's low math scores persuaded teachers and administrators to target the additional time toward a Math League. However, rising math performance has enabled the school to use the time for other subjects, depending on individual student needs. More time means more attention, says eighth-grader Damien Pankam: "The teachers expect more, but they also explain more. There's also more time to ask questions. That makes the work easier for us."[8]

Edwards' expanded school day has also given students many more enrichment options. Under the old schedule, only 10% of students stayed after school to participate in electives. With more hours at school, Edwards students can choose from a range of nonacademic electives, including stepping, rock band, soccer, and musical theater. They can also take advantage of targeted academic assistance in mathematics, reading, and other core subjects.

So far, the results of the redesigned, expanded schedule are promising; Edwards is one of the Boston area's highest performing middle schools, and its enrollment is up. "ELT is giving us the time and space to address the achievement gap," says Ted Chambers, a Boston Teachers Union building representative and a social studies teacher at Edwards.[9]

Given the successes of ELT at Edwards and elsewhere, it is easy to see why reformers seeking ways to rethink the delivery of schooling are closely studying its benefits. It is now a staple of standout charter organizations such as the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) and Achievement First. For all the potential advantages of ELT, however, some observers have raised questions about the costs of the initiative, arguing that it is not needed in every school, and that it is no substitute for creative educational problem solving. Co-author Frederick M. Hess cautions, "With the same teachers, the same classrooms, the same materials, and the same techniques in place, it's unclear how we can be confident that this money will purchase something other than more of the same."[10]

Advocates do not necessarily disagree. Extra time in school should be viewed not as a miracle cure, they contend, but as a first step—a catalyst for reform. "Expanded time certainly isn't the only thing these charter schools are doing, but I don't think any of them could conceive of going forward without more time," says Chris Gabriele, co-founder and chairman of Mass2020, a critical player in brokering agreements with teacher unions and city officials during implementation of the state's ELT initiative.[11] Indeed, a thoughtfully redesigned schedule with added time, effective teachers, and strong school leaders who have ideas about how to take advantage of the time can be the linchpin of a successful school turnaround strategy.

While Massachusetts has been a pioneer in the ELT movement, many traditional public schools in other states have followed suit. At least 300 high-poverty and high-minority schools in 30 states have implemented a longer school day or year.[12] In Buffalo, New York, for instance, school superintendent Dr. James A. Williams has made a longer day and year his priority, focusing the additional time on struggling schools. Six schools with the longer schedule have moved off the state's list of schools in need of improvement, progress that Williams credits to a combination of the longer day, a focused curriculum, and better staff development. He plans to use stimulus dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support longer days for more schools in his district. "If you keep students with us for more hours every day, we will be able to better educate them," Williams says.[13]

No one should assume that more time is the solution for every troubled school or for every child. But the successes of expanding time in school show that rethinking educational conventions can do a lot to benefit kids.

Finance

The nation's system for financing schools is archaic and inflexible, hurting students, schools, and taxpayers. It has its roots in the 19th century, when schools were funded locally by towns and cities. Over the following decades, states increasingly took responsibility for education funding, and today the state proportion averages 48%. While finance systems vary widely, local communities typically now provide about 43% of funds, with the federal government making up about 9%.

But even as states have stepped up their funding responsibilities, they have done little to focus and streamline spending strategies. As a result, most state education finance systems are a patchwork of bureaucratic and inefficient spending initiatives. States, for instance, generally allocate the largest percentage of their education dollars through foundation funding programs, which are designed to cover the minimum cost of educating a student. But the programs often come with unnecessary layers of red tape. States typically send education dollars to districts rather than directly to schools, and districts in turn usually distribute the money based on the number of teachers or programs in each school rather than the actual needs of students.

Across the nation, education spending is divorced from results.

In addition to foundation funding, states typically have dozens of other funding initiatives—some states, such as Nevada and Connecticut, have more than 100 different supplementary funding streams. Also known as categorical programs, each of these targeted initiatives usually has its own set of rules and restrictions, often operating with little regard for local needs or wants. For example, California set aside more than $41 million in 2009 to hire additional gym teachers to combat childhood obesity. However, there is no shortage of gym teachers in the state, nor is there any evidence that increasing the number of gym instructors actually reduces obesity. On top of that, the grants are not even targeted at schools with large numbers of overweight students.

The problem goes well beyond byzantine state funding programs. Across the nation, education spending is divorced from results. State and local education systems lack a performance culture in which schools are motivated to provide the best for their students by maximizing human and operational resources. States and districts do not have ways to track what they are getting for their education dollars, and educators are largely unable to answer key questions such as whether spending x dollars on a new instructional model will yield y gains on important outcome measures.

State and local funding systems also give school leaders almost no influence over funding decisions, which means that educators at the school level often have very little ability to shift resources in ways that best serve students. In most areas, the district—not the school—administers the school's budget, making financial allocations and having the final say on spending decisions.[14]

Worse, the funding system typically operates with little transparency, which means that school administrators often have a hard time deciphering budget details. Indeed, until recently, districts rarely tracked school-level expenditures. And still today, most schools receive resources that are tracked at the district level and not within their own budgets.[15]

With these challenges in mind, we graded the states on the following indicators:

Improved Autonomy. Many states have minimum salary schedules, which establish salaries at the state level, preventing local districts from determining teacher compensation. Seeking to measure whether states are reforming such practices, we evaluated them on whether local districts have full authority over teacher pay. The National Council on Teacher Quality, a research group focused on improving the teaching profession, published these data in 2008.

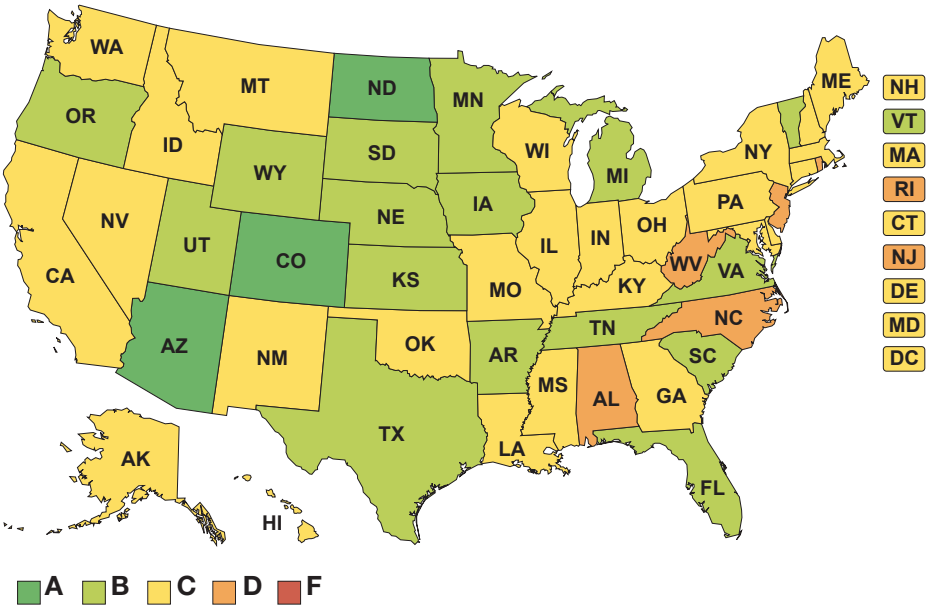
Rewarding Results. The culture of schooling in America has long encouraged leaders to treat finances separately from outcomes. But some states and districts have taken steps to break out of this mold and reward classroom teachers based on evidence of student achievement. We graded the states on whether they had such a pay-for-performance program. The National Council on Teacher Quality published these data in 2008.

Full Transparency. While states collect large amounts of financial data, few make those data easily available. But transparency improves reporting procedures and allows the public to evaluate how schools and districts spend their money. Thus, we evaluated the degree to which states made it easy to find finance data online. We visited the Web sites of all 50 states and the District of Columbia, checking to see whether they made basic finance data—such as district expenditures and average teacher salary—easily available. We conducted this research in June 2009.

Simplified Funding Streams. Given the way complex and confusing funding streams undermine school flexibility and performance, we graded each state on the simplicity of its funding mechanism. To do so, we examined the budgets of all 50 states and the District of Columbia and then graded each state on the number of line item expenditures in its education budget. Based on our research and that of others, we believe that line items serve as reliable proxies for the total number of state funding programs. States with the most line items received the lowest grades; states with the fewest line items received the highest grades. We conducted this research in June 2009.

Local Autonomy. State and local finance systems often prevent school leaders from tackling problems, or trying to deliver education, in cheaper, more efficient ways. In many areas, districts rather than schools have the final say over spending decisions. In light of the challenges facing schools today, these practices do not make much sense. Consequently, we graded the states on the percentage of principals who report a major amount of influence over their school budgets. To obtain the data, we conducted a special analysis of the 2007–2008 Schools and Staffing Survey, a nationally representative survey of principals and teachers administered every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Student-Based Funding. In this category we singled out Hawaii for a gold star because it is the only state with a student-based funding system. As described in the Innovation Highlight: Student-Based Funding, this method of funding can provide states with a flexible way to reduce financial inefficiency and inequity. In Hawaii, which has only one statewide district, education dollars follow students to their schools according to student needs. But even Hawaii's program needs improvement. Although a 2004 law mandated that 70% of the state Department of Education's operating budget be allocated through student-based funding, currently principals control less than 50% of these funds.[16]



Finance

State	Grade	Districts have full authority over teacher pay	Teacher performance pay program	Online accessibility of state finance data	Simplicity of state funding mechanism	Percentage of principals who report a major amount of influence over school budget	State has a school-based funding policy
Colorado	A	Yes		A	A	98%	
Arizona	A	Yes	Yes	C	B	95	
North Dakota	A	Yes		A	A	90	
Arkansas	B		Yes	A	A	86	
Florida	B	Yes	Yes	B	D	94	
Minnesota	B	Yes	Yes	B	D	93	
Oregon	B	Yes		B	A	95	
Utah	B	Yes	Yes	C	D	97	
South Dakota	B	Yes		C	A	95	
Tennessee	B		Yes	B	B	87	
Wyoming	B	Yes		F	A	97	
Texas	B		Yes	C	B	95	
Nebraska	B	Yes		C	B	94	
Virginia	B	Yes		C	B	93	
Kansas	B	Yes		B	C	92	
Vermont	B	Yes		D	B	97	
Michigan	B	Yes		F	A	88	
Iowa	B		Yes	D	B	95	
South Carolina	B		Yes	B	F	97	
Pennsylvania	C	Yes		A	F	78	
Maryland	C	Yes		B	D	85	
New Hampshire	C	Yes		C	F	100	
Hawaii	C			C	A	98	☆
Nevada	C	Yes		C	F	97	
Alaska	C	Yes		C	B	70	
Kentucky	C			A	C	94	
Missouri	C			A	C	93	
Louisiana	C			B	A	83	
New York	C	Yes		C	F	90	
Connecticut	C	Yes		C	F	88	
Oklahoma	C		Yes	D	D	91	
Wisconsin	C	Yes		D	D	88	
Idaho	C			B	C	98	
Washington	C			B	C	95	
Delaware	C			A	F	94	
Montana	C	Yes		F	D	87	
California	C	Yes		D	F	84	
Indiana	C			A	F	88	
Ohio	C			A	F	87	
Georgia	C			C	C	95	
Massachusetts	C			B	F	96	
Maine	C			D	B	89	
Mississippi	C			F	B	94	
District of Columbia	C	Yes		F	D	72	
New Mexico	C			D	C	94	
Illinois	C			C	F	97	
North Carolina	D			C	F	95	
New Jersey	D			C	D	89	
West Virginia	D			C	B	58	
Rhode Island	D			C	B	54	
Alabama	D			F	D	88	
U.S.		25	10			90	1

NOTE: If a column was shaded gray, it was not used to calculate the final grades.
SOURCES: National Council on Teacher Quality, *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, 2008; Authors, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey 2007-2008; and Michael Griffin, *State Education Funding Formulas and Grade Weighting*, Education Commission of the States, 2005.

Innovation Highlight: Student-Based Funding

It is no secret that school funding is complicated and confusing. School districts receive money from such a wide range of federal, state, and local sources that even some school administrators have a hard time figuring out their budgets. Nor is it a secret that this complex system features significant inequities. Decades of research have shown that there are large differences in spending per student both between and within districts.

The source of these problems is similar: Education funds do not follow students to the schools they attend according to student needs. Instead, dollars are allocated based on all sorts of other factors, from school politics to the demand for specialized programs such as music lessons. This fosters inefficiency (because funds are not properly targeted) and inequity (because students with more needs do not receive more money). The problem is compounded when states rely on locally generated dollars to cover education costs, a policy that often benefits wealthier districts that have stronger tax bases. Districts also systematically favor schools with fewer challenges by a resource apportionment system that allocates staff positions rather than actual dollars to each school. This has the unintended effect of giving more money to schools with more advantaged students, because those schools typically attract more experienced teachers who earn considerably higher salaries than their counterparts at disadvantaged schools.

In light of these challenges, states could benefit from a system of student-based funding under which a student's school would receive a certain amount of dollars based on the student's particular needs, and could then spend those funds flexibly. This policy has a number of other names, including results-based budgeting and weighted student funding. (It is very different from policy proposals that require a set amount of money per student to be spent in each classroom.)

A 2006 manifesto by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute expertly articulated how student-based funding could be put into practice. Many prominent education reformers signed onto the proposal, entitled *Fund the Child: Tackling Inequity & Antiquity in School Finance,* which outlined five funding principles:

1. Funding should follow the child to the public school that he or she attends.
2. Per-student funding should vary according to the child's need and other relevant circumstances.
3. Funds should arrive at the school as real dollars (i.e., not in the form of teaching positions) that can be spent flexibly.
4. These principles for allocating money to schools should apply to all levels of government (e.g., federal funds going to states, state funds going to districts, district funds going to schools).
5. Funding systems should be made simpler and more transparent.[17]

Such a system would give local educators far greater autonomy and allow them to allocate resources in ways that would best serve students. While state finance systems often distribute some funds on a per-pupil basis, few districts allocate money straight to students' schools based on their needs. But when dollars follow a child directly to the classroom, the people closest to the student—school leaders and community members—are empowered to make decisions that affect that child, as opposed to central district offices that have little to no interaction with pupils. This system would, of course, also increase clarity and transparency, helping to create a funding model in which parents and policymakers can easily judge how effectively educators use resources.

The San Francisco Unified School District implemented student-based funding districtwide in the 2002–2003 school year and has subsequently seen improvement on the California Standards Test. In 2002 only 35% of students were proficient or advanced in English language arts. By 2007 this number rose to 49%. Similarly, 37% of students in grades two to seven were proficient in math in 2002, but by 2007, 58% scored proficient or advanced.[18] For the most part, school leaders credit the budgeting change for these academic improvements. "In the period after the weighted formula was implemented, San Francisco experienced six consecutive years of academic gains," says Arlene Ackerman, who was the superintendent of the district when the new funding system was launched.[19]

While the student-based funding movement remains small, it is beginning to grow. So far, 13 school districts in addition to San Francisco have implemented or begun to pilot some version of student-based funding.[20] Hawaii is the only state to use a student-based model, and its program has shown results. Because the state has just one statewide district, state funds flow directly to schools. Already this has improved transparency and equity. Principals, for example, now have almost total discretion over the purchase of any instructional product or good. The program is far from perfect, of course. One recent study found that schools have discretion over less than 50% of state funds allocated for school operations.[21] Hawaii also has a minimum teacher salary scale, which limits local control. Nevertheless, many educators view the state's new, student-focused approach to school funding as having great promise to provide schools both the money and the flexibility they need to be effective, efficient learning organizations.

Based on the success that has been seen in San Francisco, Hawaii, and elsewhere, other districts and some state legislatures are considering using student-based funding to get money to the students who need it most. By empowering school leaders and their teams to make smart decisions regarding how dollars are spent, student-based funding is helping equip schools to make smarter, more strategic decisions about how to best serve their students and promote high-quality teaching and learning.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation

The most important ingredient for any organization is talent. Good schools depend on good educators. Unfortunately, the systems and practices now used to bring talent into the classroom are largely antiquated.

The roots of today's teacher recruitment and retention problems go back to the mid-20th century, when the teaching force was dominated by women who often had few other options in the labor market. Today, with many more careers open to women, the pool of prospective teachers has changed considerably, with negative results. In just 36 years, from 1965 to 2000, there was a 50% decline in the likelihood that a new female teacher ranked in the top 10% on aptitude tests.[22] Unfortunately, while talent is now harder to find, recruitment and retention practices have changed little to reflect this new reality. So it is no surprise that traditional teacher hiring practices and systems have proven unsuitable for providing the hundreds of thousands of high-quality teachers we seek today.

Every year many school districts lose the opportunity to recruit thousands of well-qualified applicants because of outdated practices such as delaying hiring until a week or two before school begins.[23] To make matters worse, once educators enter the classroom, success is rarely rewarded. Teacher evaluations often do not require evidence of increased student achievement, and lockstep salary schedules benefit teachers who take more education classes rather than those who improve student learning.

Tinkering around the edges of the teacher-quality system will not be enough. To create a robust teacher workforce, fresh thinking and creative solutions are necessary. With this objective in mind, we graded the states in the following areas:

Entrance Exams. States too often emphasize the completion of costly credentialing programs that fail to ensure minimal content mastery. Such frail attempts at quality control have become ever-more problematic given our growing need to find new talent for the classroom, together with the development of more sophisticated measures of teacher effectiveness. While teachers' content knowledge in itself does not necessarily result in good instruction, teacher certification should ensure a minimal understanding of content. Using data collected by Editorial Projects in Education in 2008, we graded states on whether they require teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge entrance tests, giving credit to states that use such exams.

Teacher Evaluation Systems. In many states, teacher evaluations are little more than pro forma checklists that do little to distinguish effective or ineffective practitioners. This failure to identify excellence or address poor performance impedes the ability of schools and systems to recruit or recognize effective instructors. Consequently, we examined the strength of teacher evaluations in each state. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), a research group focused on improving the teaching profession, collected the teacher evaluation data in 2008, assessing the states on a number of criteria, including whether the state required evidence of student learning to be the preponderant criterion for a teacher's evaluation. We converted NCTQ's metrics into letter grades.

Alternative Certification Programs. Most states have established alternative route programs for teacher credentialing. While such programs do not necessarily ensure a greater supply of more effective teachers, robust alternative certification programs have the potential to attract much-needed new talent into the profession, often on an expedited basis. In this report card, we recognize states with high-quality alternative certification programs, using 2007 NCTQ data that evaluated the states based on a number of criteria, including the coursework required by alternative certification programs and the degree to which states hold such programs accountable.

In addition to examining the strength of state alternative certification programs, we examined the degree to which states tap alternative sources of teaching talent. Specifically, we examined the percentage of teachers who entered the profession through an alternative certification program. To obtain the data, we conducted a special analysis of the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of teachers and principals administered every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics. The survey asked teachers if they entered the profession through an alternative certification program.

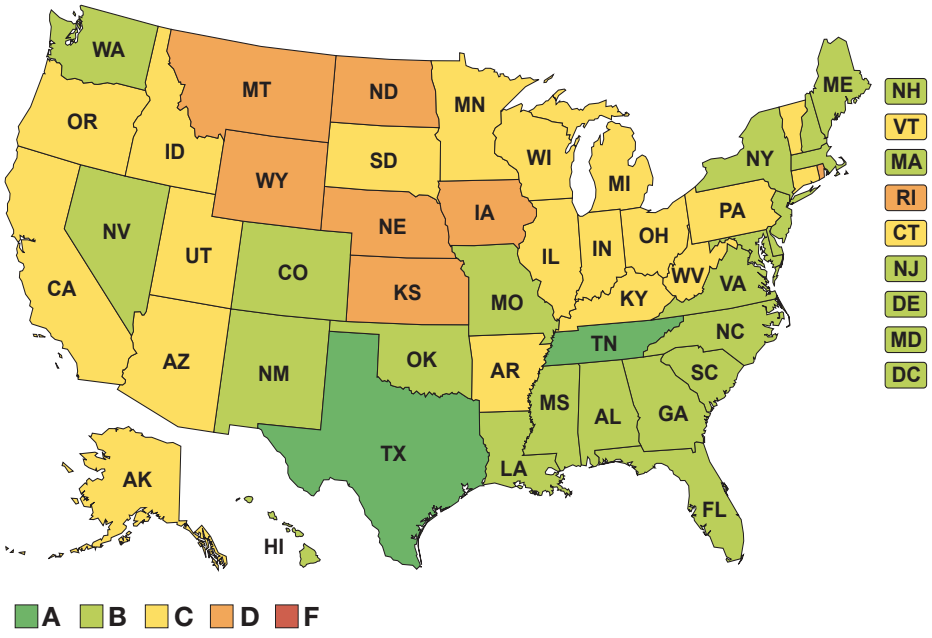
National Teacher Recruitment Programs. Organizations such as Teach for America (TFA), Troops to Teachers (TTT),

and The New Teacher Project (TNTP) have demonstrated a strong record, validated by independent research, of bringing nontraditional applicants into the classroom.[24] Certain states have created an environment conducive to working with these national recruitment programs, or have proactively sought to partner with them to improve their pool of teacher applicants and strengthen teacher hiring. We therefore gave credit to states that have partnered with TFA, TTT, and TNTP, or created the conditions that have allowed these programs to flourish. We gathered these data from the organizations in 2009.

Principal Influence in Teacher Hiring. Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap … and Others Don't*, found that CEOs of leading organizations "first got the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and *then* figure out where to drive it."[25] High-performing organizations need the flexibility to select and build their teams. Unfortunately, in many states principals have little freedom to decide which teachers they hire. We gave the highest grades to states with the largest percentage of principals who report a major amount of influence over teacher hiring. We obtained these data from the 2007–2008 SASS.

Interstate Portability. Too many states make it difficult for teachers moving from one state to another to obtain an equivalent teaching license. This restriction is a legacy of a time when each state was an independent labor market and teachers were likely to spend their entire careers in one state. Today's workforce is far more mobile, but the business of staffing schools has changed little. To evaluate the states on this measure, we assessed the restrictiveness of their interstate portability requirements. We used 2007 NCTQ data that evaluated the states on a number of criteria, including whether states are willing to license teachers who possess an out-of-state teaching certificate so long as they are able to pass teacher-testing standards. We converted the group's metrics into letter grades.

Nontraditional Administrators. Behind every high-performing school is an effective leader. Efforts to staff schools with good principals face many of the same barriers that come with recruiting and hiring teachers. Yet there are even fewer examples of innovative recruitment practices when it comes to principals. However, New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS)—a program that attracts, prepares, and supports individuals to become the next generation of school leaders—stands out for its efforts to attract high-quality applicants and to evaluate candidates based on performance instead of paper-based credentials. We awarded gold stars to states that have authorized NLNS to propose candidates for state certification. NLNS provided us with this information in July 2009.



Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation

State	Grade	State requires teachers to pass basic skills tests	State requires teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests	Strength of teacher evaluations	Strength of alternative certification	Percentage of alternatively certified teachers	National programs to recruit nontraditional teachers	Percentage of principals who report a major influence over teacher hiring	Strength of state's interstate portability requirements	National programs authorized to certify nontraditional administrators
Texas	A	Yes	Yes	A	C	27%	A	80%	A	
Tennessee	A	Yes	Yes	A	C	13	A	77	B	
Florida	B	Yes	Yes	A	C	19	B	75	C	
Georgia	B	Yes	Yes	C	B	16	A	84	C	
Mississippi	B	Yes	Yes	C	C	25	B	79	B	
Hawaii	B	Yes	Yes	D	F	17	B	95	A	
Alabama	B	Yes	Yes	C	C	18	D	81	A	
Louisiana	B	Yes	Yes	D	C	22	A	77	B	★
South Carolina	B	Yes	Yes	A	D	13	C	84	B	
Delaware	B	Yes	Yes	C	C	10	B	86	B	
District of Columbia	B	Yes	Yes	F	D	23	A	75	B	★
Maryland	B	Yes	Yes	D	B	11	B	82	C	★
Virginia	B	Yes	Yes	D	C	15	C	80	B	
New Hampshire	B	Yes	Yes	F	C	20	D	79	B	
Massachusetts	B	Yes	Yes	D	C	12	C	66	A	
New Jersey	B		Yes	C	B	21	B	72	C	
Washington	B	Yes	Yes	D	C	7	D	81	A	
New Mexico	B	Yes	Yes	C	D	16	B	74	D	
North Carolina	B	Yes		C	D	19	B	82	B	★
Missouri	B	Yes	Yes	C	C	8	C	68	B	
Colorado	B		Yes	D	C	11	A	82	B	
Nevada	B	Yes	Yes	D	F	16	B	79	D	
Oklahoma	B	Yes	Yes	C	C	12	B	47	B	
New York	B	Yes	Yes	F	D	10	B	68	B	
Maine	B	Yes	Yes	F	D	16	D	65	A	
Connecticut	C	Yes	Yes	C	C	8	C	69	D	
Arkansas	C	Yes	Yes	F	B	11	C	52	B	
Wisconsin	C	Yes	Yes	D	F	7	B	77	C	★
California	C	Yes		D	C	13	B	79	C	
Illinois	C	Yes	Yes	D	D	7	B	73	D	
Arizona	C		Yes	D	C	17	A	72	D	
Minnesota	C	Yes	Yes	D	F	6	B	71	C	
Pennsylvania	C	Yes	Yes	D	D	5	B	69	C	
Kentucky	C		Yes	D	B	10	C	80	C	
Vermont	C	Yes	Yes	F	D	15	F	78	D	
West Virginia	C	Yes	Yes	D	D	7	F	70	B	
Indiana	C	Yes	Yes	F	D	7	B	64	D	
Michigan	C	Yes	Yes	D	D	4	F	75	C	
Utah	C		Yes	D	D	8	D	87	C	
South Dakota	C		Yes	F	D	3	C	55	A	
Ohio	C		Yes	D	D	7	D	71	B	
Idaho	C		Yes	F	D	5	D	85	C	
Alaska	C	Yes		D	F	8	C	63	B	
Oregon	C	Yes		F	F	4	D	85	B	
North Dakota	D	Yes	Yes	F	F	2	D	39	D	
Kansas	D		Yes	D	D	4	D	66	D	
Iowa	D	Yes		C	F	1	F	62	D	
Rhode Island	D			F	F	10	C	56	B	
Wyoming	D			F	F	5	D	80	B	
Nebraska	D	Yes		D	F	3	D	54	D	
Montana	D			F	F	4	D	69	D	
U.S.		39	42			13		74		5

NOTE: If a column was shaded gray, it was not used to calculate the final grades.
SOURCES: Editorial Projects in Education, Education Counts, 2008; National Council on Teacher Quality, *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, 2008; National Council on Teacher Quality, *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey 2007-2008; Teach for America, 2009; The New Teacher Project, 2009; Troops to Teachers, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2007; National Council on Teacher Quality, *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, 2007; and New Leaders for New Schools, 2009.

Innovation Highlight: Performance Pay

Educational researchers and policymakers increasingly agree that high-quality teachers are the linchpin of effective schools. Yet one of the tools that has the greatest potential to attract and retain talented instructors—compensation—remains locked in a model that seems guaranteed to have the opposite effect. Most teachers are paid according to a so-called single salary schedule, which compensates them solely on the basis of their degrees and years of experience.

This is especially troubling given that a growing body of research shows that those two factors are weakly related to teachers' measurable classroom performance. Moreover, the single salary schedule does not reward teachers for what we care about most: their ability to improve student learning. And it fails to acknowledge that job structure and financial rewards are important motivators for employees, no matter what their profession. "It is astonishing to me that you could have a system that doesn't allow you to pay more for strong performance, or for teaching in a particular school," says Microsoft founder and philanthropist Bill Gates. "That's almost like saying 'Teacher performance doesn't matter'—and that's basically saying 'Students don't matter.'"[26]

The problems with lockstep teacher salaries are pervasive. By not offering competitive salaries that reward teachers for performance, school systems discourage talented candidates from entering or remaining in the profession. They also thwart innovation: If schools were not locked into rigid salary structures, they would have additional financial flexibility to test new and potentially more effective educational initiatives. Finally, the single salary schedule makes it difficult for high-poverty schools to attract the talented teachers their students badly need. Schools that serve large proportions of low-income children are perceived as less desirable workplaces; higher compensation or performance-based incentives could help these schools compete for teaching talent.

While political barriers and teacher union opposition can make reform of teacher compensation difficult, in the past decade a number of states and school districts, often in partnership with teacher representatives, have responded to the weaknesses of the single salary schedule by adopting pay-for-performance programs. These programs generally provide bonuses to teachers on the basis of some combination of their contribution to students' academic growth and an evaluation of their performance in the classroom. The programs are still relatively rare, but they are reaching a growing number of school districts. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality, 10 states have pay-for-performance programs that are open to all teachers and that connect pay to evidence of student achievement.

The growth in pay-for-performance programs has been driven in part by the federal government's Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF). Created in 2006, TIF makes grants to states, school districts, and nonprofit organizations that support "efforts to develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools."[27] TIF provided $99 million in funding in 2006 and $97 million in 2008 to support more than 30 five-year grants covering schools in 19 states and more than 35 districts. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 added $200 million in funding to support these programs.

What do these programs look like? One promising pay-for-performance model is Minnesota's Q Comp program. Q Comp is a comprehensive school reform model based on the Teacher Advancement Program pioneered by the Milken Family Foundation. Q Comp offers teachers opportunities for career advancement, ongoing professional development, a performance-based evaluation system, and performance pay. Teacher pay is based on two components: The first includes teacher evaluations by lead teachers and school administrators, plus measures of student achievement, including classroom-level measures and schoolwide gains (60%). The second incorporates measures such as cost of living and additional responsibilities (40%). Q Comp and other successful pay-for-performance programs are negotiated with unions or other teacher representatives.

Ron Wilke, the principal of a Q Comp school in La Crescent-Hokah School District, explains that the program has changed how the school operates. Teachers are collaborating more and keeping their eye on the school's central goal. "We rely heavily on student achievement data

and focusing on student need," Wilke says. "That's what really drives things."[28]

Many other successful models can be found in districts around the country. In Denver's Pro Comp system, for instance, the school system and local union agreed to performance pay incentives for teachers tied to four categories of inputs and outputs: knowledge and skills, professional evaluation, market incentives, and student growth. In Guilford County, North Carolina, the Mission Possible program includes ongoing professional development, collaborative support, smaller class sizes, recruitment or retention bonuses, and performance bonuses that range from $2,500 to $4,000. Bonuses are targeted at teachers in grade levels and subjects that are part of state and national accountability systems; the bonuses are awarded to those who improve student achievement.

These efforts are only the beginning. The nation has a long way to go in rethinking how teachers are rewarded for the vital work they do. But experiments like these show that new models can quickly prove their worth—and deserve to spread on a much wider scale.

Innovation Highlight: Alternative Recruitment and Preparation Programs for Principals

As deputy chancellor of the New York City Public Schools, Chris Cerf has learned one key lesson about school leadership: "Pick the right school leader, and great teachers will come and stay. Pick the wrong one and, over time, good teachers leave, mediocre ones stay, and the school gradually—or not so gradually—declines." Reversing the harm done by a subpar principal, he warns, "can take years."[29]

A growing number of education reformers share Cerf's assessment. Recognizing the critical importance of school leadership for improving student learning, they are developing high-quality alternative recruitment and preparation programs, modeled on earlier efforts to find innovative ways to recruit nontraditional teacher candidates. Now many states are expanding the pool of providers who recruit, prepare, and license principals. That means moving beyond traditional schools of education to allow school districts, for-profit institutions, nonprofit groups, university business schools, charter school networks, and others to prepare school leaders—all in an effort to give innovators the chance to devise better ways to meet educational needs.

Many states are expanding the pool of providers who recruit, prepare, and license principals.

Why are new pathways to school leadership jobs needed? Simply put, because most principal preparation programs are ineffective. A number of studies have found that while the role of the principal has evolved over the past two decades toward a focus on boosting student achievement, principal preparation programs have not kept up. Arthur Levine, former president of Teachers College at Columbia University, studied principal preparation programs in education schools and found that "educational administration is the weakest program that schools of education offer."[30]

Levine's study documented numerous problems: "Few strong programs exist; most vary in quality from inadequate to appalling. Their shortcomings include irrelevant and incoherent curricula, low admission and graduation standards, inadequate clinical instruction, weak faculties, degrees that are irrelevant to the jobs students eventually hold, insufficient financial support, and poor research." Principals themselves agree: Almost 70% believe that leadership training at universities is "out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's school districts."[31] What's more, a 2007 study by Frederick M. Hess and Andrew P. Kelly found that principal preparation courses expose candidates to almost none of the most influential management thinkers.[32]

While these weaknesses remain all too common, a growing awareness of the need for better principal training has led to considerable progress: High-quality alternative preparation programs are now proliferating. As policymakers continue to look for the best models, these entrepreneurial programs are becoming the gold standard for reinventing a struggling principal preparation system.

For districts that are seeking to recruit and prepare high-quality nontraditional candidates for principal positions, New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) is an appealing partner. NLNS works closely with districts, beginning with recruiting and admissions. It has a highly selective admissions process that starts with an online application and includes two sets of interviews. The organization seeks out candidates who possess the proven characteristics of highly effective school leaders: a belief that every student, regardless of background, can excel academically; a sense of urgency to achieve dramatic gains in student learning and close the achievement gap; a track record of achieving goals and results; and a demonstrated ability to dramatically raise academic achievement for all students. To date, NLNS has admitted fewer than 7% of its applicants.

Once admitted, candidates attend a four-week summer institute in which they learn instructional and organizational leadership skills. After completing the institute, aspiring school leaders begin a year-long paid residency, working alongside a mentor principal and participating in a school leadership team. NLNS residents also take academic courses and complete three projects designed to help them acquire specific school management skills. The program is small compared to the size of the nation's

school systems—it has trained 646 participants in nine cities as of 2009.[33] But its influence is growing fast.

Another promising model is the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) School Leadership Program, which is tailored specifically to prepare leaders for KIPP's much-admired network of high-performing charter schools. It includes intensive summer coursework in instructional, organizational, and operational leadership; apprenticeships at high-performing KIPP schools; and leadership coaching. Participants in the School Leadership Program also partake in leadership conferences on starting a school.[34] According to Daryl Cobb, KIPP's chief learning officer, the leadership program was developed out of necessity. "It was a reaction to the traditional principal preparation programs that did not offer the kind of training we believe is necessary to lead a KIPP school."[35] The program includes the Fisher Fellowship and the Miles Family Fellowship.

The process of overhauling principal recruiting and training will no doubt be a long one, with false starts and setbacks along the way. It is crucial for would-be reformers to understand that no single transformational model will be successful everywhere. Many ideas are needed about how to attract, train, and support school leaders with the right mix of leadership training programs. Fortunately, as states and districts attempt to solve a problem that threatens to cripple other promising school reforms, they can draw on the growing number of effective programs that prepare principals to lead today's schools.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers

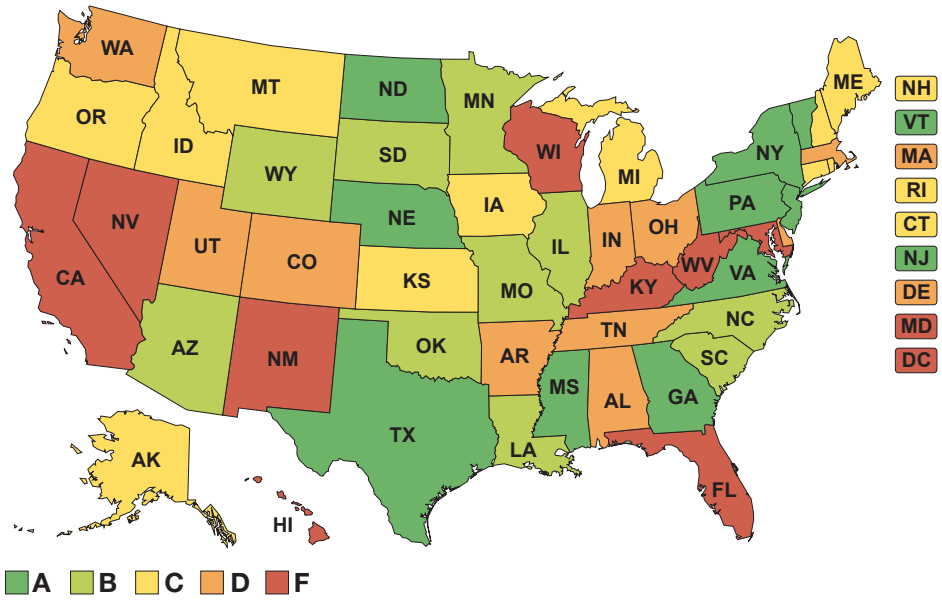
While most teachers work hard to meet the needs of their students, there are teachers who simply should not be teaching. Public Agenda reports that more than 80% of educators believe that there is at least one person in their building who fails to do good work.[36] And there is a growing realization among policymakers that the policies and conditions that allow poor-performing teachers to stay in the classroom must change. In a 2009 speech to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, President Barack Obama declared that "if a teacher is given a chance or two chances or three chances but still does not improve, there's no excuse for that person to continue teaching. I reject a system that rewards failure and protects a person from its consequences. The stakes are too high."

But at the state and local levels, there remains an archaic system of policy and procedures that make it extremely difficult for school leaders to fire ineffective educators. Many districts have overly burdensome personnel mandates that require principals to fill out reams of paperwork before they can ask someone to leave; one recent examination of 12 large school districts found that half had not dismissed a single tenured teacher for poor performance over the past five years. But while vigorous protections for teachers made sense decades ago, when there was little accountability for principals, due process procedures were weak, and limited school performance data existed, today a genuine data-driven school management culture requires greater flexibility for principals. Without the ability to remove ineffective educators, school leaders cannot build a cohesive school culture, create an environment of real accountability, and ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn.

We therefore evaluated states on the ease with which principals can remove poor-performing teachers. To obtain data on this question, we conducted a special analysis of the 2007–2008 Schools and Staffing Survey, a nationally representative survey of principals and teachers administered every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics. As part of the survey, principals were asked whether a specific policy or program was a barrier to the dismissal of "poor-performing or incompetent teachers." The principals were asked about the following:

- Personnel policies
- Termination decisions not upheld
- Length of time required for termination process
- Effort required for documentation
- Tight deadlines for completing documentation
- Tenure
- Teacher associations or unions
- Level of stress associated with dismissals
- Difficulty in obtaining suitable replacements
- Resistance from parents

We analyzed principals' responses to these questions and then tabulated the results, grading the states on a broad curve. States in which principals reported the fewest barriers to removing ineffective teachers received the highest grades.



Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers

Percentage of principals who say the following is not a barrier to the removal of "poor-performing or incompetent" teachers

State	Grade	Personnel policies	Termination decisions not upheld	Length of time required for termination process	Effort required for documentation	Tight deadlines for completing documentation	Tenure	Teacher associations or unions	Dismissal is too stressful	Difficulty in obtaining suitable replacements	Resistance from parents
Mississippi	A	60%	76%	52%	42%	62%	81%	86%	85%	67%	92%
North Dakota	A	68	85	62	48	77	69	37	79	77	94
Nebraska	A	72	84	50	43	78	41	50	85	85	95
Pennsylvania	A	71	84	53	48	71	39	36	88	93	95
Vermont	A	55	89	50	41	65	55	30	88	92	96
Virginia	A	58	87	44	36	62	33	68	89	82	99
New Jersey	A	62	86	52	52	80	16	30	90	87	98
Georgia	A	55	85	38	30	64	36	81	88	75	98
Texas	A	55	75	45	35	57	48	71	91	76	95
New York	A	58	84	42	46	79	19	37	97	90	95
South Dakota	B	60	91	54	34	73	27	48	86	74	93
South Carolina	B	49	82	33	30	65	45	85	85	67	99
Minnesota	B	55	82	44	40	85	24	32	87	91	94
Arizona	B	61	82	44	35	57	46	62	84	68	94
Missouri	B	70	81	45	35	71	24	55	85	71	95
Illinois	B	55	80	50	42	70	22	33	89	91	96
North Carolina	B	50	76	41	39	68	34	63	92	70	98
Louisiana	B	48	76	49	42	78	30	61	84	64	96
Wyoming	B	61	85	45	35	76	24	44	80	85	95
Oklahoma	B	55	80	49	43	65	21	48	85	86	96
Michigan	C	66	82	47	39	67	20	25	88	95	94
Montana	C	58	82	49	40	74	28	37	89	74	91
Rhode Island	C	44	84	52	41	76	24	18	95	88	99
New Hampshire	C	54	87	43	38	62	27	29	90	91	94
Connecticut	C	51	96	46	29	58	23	29	91	91	100
Maine	C	48	89	33	35	77	27	26	91	90	96
Alaska	C	59	77	53	40	72	31	32	84	75	89
Kansas	C	57	81	54	41	73	14	36	92	63	96
Idaho	C	51	91	37	32	69	31	32	78	85	96
Oregon	C	62	81	34	26	68	44	28	78	86	94
Iowa	C	59	87	38	33	67	37	22	72	87	94
Ohio	D	41	83	49	39	61	25	23	85	89	98
Arkansas	D	51	81	33	22	55	56	49	74	77	91
Massachusetts	D	52	77	40	34	65	20	20	93	92	96
Alabama	D	43	75	45	38	75	12	37	84	76	96
Indiana	D	55	77	37	35	66	20	17	86	91	96
Delaware	D	45	85	33	27	55	33	29	88	88	97
Utah	D	54	89	35	29	72	35	45	62	62	90
Colorado	D	43	84	38	37	74	25	26	84	75	88
Tennessee	D	55	79	44	30	72	9	29	73	82	98
Washington	D	43	85	28	26	57	30	21	82	85	99
Kentucky	F	50	73	31	32	65	14	36	81	72	96
Wisconsin	F	44	76	29	27	61	25	16	78	95	95
New Mexico	F	36	66	29	22	54	40	39	82	68	95
Florida	F	34	75	25	26	58	23	29	89	72	95
California	F	39	74	29	28	55	13	18	83	84	96
Maryland	F	36	69	24	25	45	27	28	88	72	97
District of Columbia	F	33	54	30	29	44	44	23	90	53	96
West Virginia	F	21	67	22	23	49	29	30	76	76	98
Nevada	F	22	59	16	14	53	25	20	79	75	97
Hawaii	F	26	58	14	12	37	14	4	80	73	96
U.S.		52	80	40	35	65	28	39	86	82	96

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey 2007-2008.

Data

When well-run corporations want to drive success and increase productivity, they closely monitor their operations. Using powerful data systems, they look for inefficiencies and redundancies, tackling these problems to improve results. Intensively tracking business operations—and those of the best nonprofits—has become the norm.

High-quality data systems are rare in education, however. Few states track how high school graduates perform in college or the workplace. Definitions of key data points vary across schools, districts, and states, making reliable data collection difficult. But without solid information on school operations, education leaders cannot manage critical functions in ways that enhance efficiency or provide the breakthrough improvements that are so desperately needed.

States have long collected data on schools, of course. But for the most part, their efforts have focused on issues of compliance rather than performance, with states and districts gathering detailed information on system inputs such as teacher salaries rather than outputs such as retention rates. It is encouraging that states have recently taken steps to collect better achievement data; many now have a wealth of information on the proficiency of elementary and middle school students in reading and math. Still, basic test-score results are far from enough, because they lack the detail and scope necessary to track and ultimately improve key school functions.

The underlying problem is that state and local data systems often lack the technical infrastructure needed to drive school reform. Ideally, local educators should have high-quality, real-time data that they can use to evaluate the effectiveness of particular approaches and initiatives. Data systems should be granular, providing specific information about individual students, teachers, and programs. Educators should be able to analyze state and district assessment data at the item level so that they can figure out whether students missed the same test item and adjust their teaching strategy accordingly. Data systems should also offer detailed information about internal processes, from human resources to parent satisfaction, so that educators know how long it takes for the Human Resources Department to hire or reject an applicant and the degree to which families approve of school services delivery.[37]

To evaluate what states have done to reform their data systems, we examined their performance in the following areas:

Strong Infrastructure. For years, education leaders have failed to invest in high-quality data systems. That must change, so we graded states on whether they have the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. This capacity is central to operational evaluations because it allows school leaders to examine changes in achievement over time. The Data Quality Campaign published these data in 2008.

Matching Teachers to Students. We also graded states on whether they have a teacher-identifier system that can match teachers to students. While many states collect data on teacher education and certification, fewer than half can link individual teachers to students. This is a critical step, making it possible to understand what types of teacher training and expertise have the greatest impact on student learning outcomes. Again, the Data Quality Campaign published these data in 2008.

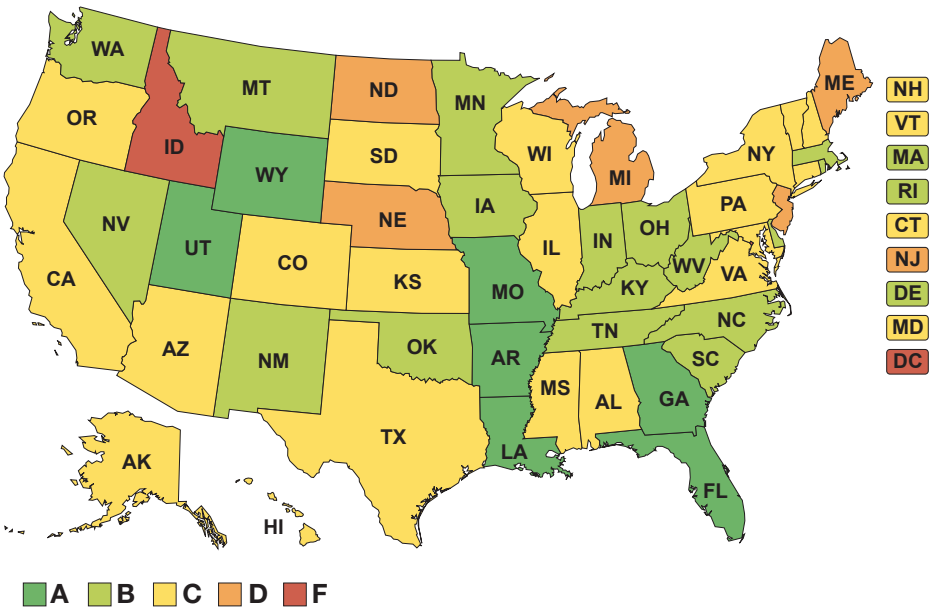
Empowered Decision Makers. Stakeholders often do not have access to the information they need to address challenges. That makes it difficult for educators to try new things—or even to figure out what's not working. To assess where states stand, we list those states that provide teachers with an interactive school-level database for analysis. Editorial Projects in Education released these data in 2006 (the most recent figures available).

Connected Data Systems. Education leaders today generally have a good handle on basic educational facts and figures. But they rarely have the power to link such data across education systems, from elementary school through high school and on to college, in a way that would allow them to assess the effectiveness of a particular instructional program. We graded states on whether they have such longitudinal data systems. Achieve, a national organization dedicated to raising academic standards, published this information in 2009. It gives credit to states that are able to annually match student-level data between K–12 and postsecondary systems.

Full Transparency. While states often gather large amounts of education data, few make the information openly available to parents, policymakers, and the public.

But transparency improves data accuracy, because stakeholders often do not take procedures seriously until the information is made public. Thus, we graded the states on one representative example of transparency: whether they report student remediation rates in college. We chose to focus on this indicator for two reasons: It is a good example of the kind of innovative practice that this report encourages, and it serves as a good proxy for the degree to which states report outcomes data to the public. The remediation data were published by Achieve in 2009.

Focused Accountability. Too many states and districts collect mountains of data but then do not act on what they find. While better management data will attune educators to new issues and challenges, the information will ultimately be only as good as states' and schools' willingness to use it to tackle problems. Using another representative example, we graded the states on whether they use college remediation data as part of their accountability system. Again, we used information published by Achieve in 2009.



Data

State	Grade	State has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year	State has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students	State provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis	State has a P-20 longitudinal data system	State publicly reports college remediation data	State factors college remediation data into accountability
Arkansas	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Florida	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Georgia	A	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Louisiana	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Missouri	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Utah	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Wyoming	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Delaware	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Massachusetts	B	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ohio	B	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Oklahoma	B	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes
Indiana	B	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Iowa	B	Yes		Yes	Yes		
Kentucky	B	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Minnesota	B	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Montana	B	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Nevada	B	Yes		Yes		Yes	
New Mexico	B	Yes	Yes			Yes	
North Carolina	B	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Rhode Island	B	Yes	Yes			Yes	
South Carolina	B	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Tennessee	B	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Washington	B	Yes		Yes	Yes		
West Virginia	B	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Alabama	C	Yes	Yes				
Alaska	C	Yes		Yes			
Arizona	C	Yes		Yes			
California	C	Yes		Yes			
Colorado	C	Yes		Yes			
Connecticut	C	Yes		Yes			
Hawaii	C	Yes	Yes				
Illinois	C	Yes		Yes			
Kansas	C	Yes		Yes			
Maryland	C			Yes		Yes	
Mississippi	C	Yes	Yes				
New Hampshire	C	Yes		Yes			
New York	C	Yes		Yes			
Oregon	C	Yes			Yes		
Pennsylvania	C	Yes	Yes				
South Dakota	C	Yes		Yes			
Texas	C	Yes			Yes		
Vermont	C	Yes		Yes			
Virginia	C	Yes		Yes			
Wisconsin	C	Yes		Yes			
Maine	D	Yes					
Michigan	D	Yes					
Nebraska	D	Yes					
New Jersey	D	Yes					
North Dakota	D	Yes					
District of Columbia	F						
Idaho	F						
U.S.		48	21	34	12	18	2

SOURCES: Data Quality Campaign, *Data Quality Index*, 2008; Editorial Projects in Education, Education Counts, 2006; and Achieve, *Closing the Expectations Gap*, 2009.

Innovation Highlight: Data Capacity

When the 133 graduates of the Class of 2009 at Western Heights High School in Oklahoma City walked down the aisle to "Pomp and Circumstance," they passed 56 empty chairs along the way—one chair for each of the 56 dropouts who should have graduated that day.

This kind of vivid symbolism reflects the systematic efforts of the Western Heights School District to gather and disseminate data about its students. While some districts struggle with how to track students who enter and exit their schools, Western Heights officials know exactly which students they have lost. This awareness is due not only to the district's sophisticated data system but also to the way Superintendent Joe Kitchens and school staff use the data. "If you don't understand the scope of the problem, it's hard to know if you're making any headway," says Kitchens.[38]

Kitchens is not the only one to recognize the importance of good educational data. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has recently been using his bully pulpit to underscore the importance of reliable information to foster innovation and empower educators to develop new approaches to solving persistent educational problems. In June 2009, Duncan told an audience of education researchers, "Many teachers are hungering for data to inform what they do. Our best teachers today are using real-time data in ways that would have been unimaginable just five years ago.… They aren't guessing or talking in generalities anymore. They feel as though they're starting to crack the code."[39]

These new ideas about the use of data have increasingly been backed by dollars. Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, there has been a flurry of activity to build up education data systems. For example, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 earmarked $250 million for data improvement.

But while much has been done to improve data systems, the operationally useful data that school leaders and teachers need are still largely a pipe dream. Almost all recent efforts have focused on improving data systems at the state level. But few state data systems collect the kind of information that is essential to local school management and classroom instruction; instead, they focus on metrics related to test scores and school expenditures. Meantime, many of the data actually being used at the school and classroom levels come from district-level data systems, which are of uneven quality and badly in need of support.

If the lion's share of the information being used to drive classroom instruction comes from local data systems, efforts to increase data capacity should be geared not only to state-level reforms but also directly to districts and individual schools. Moreover, extra effort must be made to ensure that the data collected in these systems can help school leaders improve both school management and teaching and learning.

An impressive example of just how much difference high-quality data make to effective teaching can be found at Winds West Elementary School, another Western Heights school, where fifth-grade teacher Amy J. Cody uses district data to focus on areas in which students may have weaknesses. "If we see that everyone in fourth grade struggled with charts and graphs last year, we incorporate that into our teaching," Cody says.[40] The district's data system pulls together information from 11 software systems, which communicate with one another using the Schools Interoperability Framework. The system provides instructors with detailed information about individual student performance on a variety of assessments, broken down by content area.

This kind of information comes in handy for parent-teacher meetings. Cody typically prints out a variety of data reports about each student to walk parents through areas in which their child may be struggling. "The parents are grateful, because they get test scores in the mail that are hard to read. We try to break it down so they are easy to understand," she said.[41]

In addition to informing classroom instruction, data from the district's state-of-the-art system are used for everything from identifying students eligible for free- and reduced-price school lunches (which has enabled the program to include many students who were not previously being served) to figuring out ways to lower the district's four-year cohort dropout rate (which went from 40% to 29% in two years).

To be sure, the data-driven practices of schools and districts like Western Heights Public Schools are not yet the norm. But many educators across the country are tapping the potential of data. Chicago Public Schools, for example, has been tracking the rate at which high school graduates enter and persist in college. The district is using that information to improve college readiness and build a college-going culture in its K–12 schools.

The creative use of education data is often made possible by data entrepreneurs. Partnerships with technology firms such as SchoolNet and Wireless Generation have enabled school districts to put student-level information at the fingertips of teachers, administrators, and parents. A contract with SchoolNet, for example, which typically costs a district about $1 million, offers schools and districts a way to organize and analyze assessment data, attendance records, and instructional information for each student with a few clicks of the mouse. Chicago Public Schools, the New Haven Independent School District, Atlanta Public Schools, and the School District of Philadelphia are just a few of the districts that have partnered with SchoolNet to put real-time student-level data in the hands of teachers and parents. If knowledge is power, this ready access to information seems a surefire recipe for success.

Pipeline to Postsecondary

The research is indisputable: Far too many students graduate from high school unprepared for the rigors of college and the workplace. Fewer than half of high school graduates who took the 2009 math ACT met the testing organization's college readiness benchmarks. More than 40% of first-year community college students require remedial courses. Even students who earn good grades in high school arrive at college unprepared—nearly four out of five students in college remediation report having a high school grade point average of 3.0 or higher.

The widespread lack of career and college readiness among high school graduates is a complex problem with a number of underlying causes. Top among them is the fact that high schools are not sufficiently rigorous. But the situation is made far worse by a high school-to-career pipeline that is simplistic and rigid, hampered by a decades-old, one-size-fits-all approach to student placement. Or, more precisely, a two-size-fits-all approach, in which students are tracked into either a college- or a career-oriented curriculum, then evaluated based on a fixed set of academic inputs such as Carnegie credits and seat time.

This system has long failed students, schools, and the nation. By prioritizing inputs over outputs, the pipeline does not guarantee readiness or provide much flexibility. What's more, in today's economic environment the distinction between a college track and a career track no longer makes sense. To be prepared for the business realities of the 21st century, students need to be ready for both college and a career.

States must create new systems that ensure accountability while promoting flexibility and experimentation as they seek to dramatically improve student readiness. We sought to evaluate what steps states have taken in this regard, examining their performance in six areas:

Challenging Curriculum. To see if states are taking the steps to provide a rigorous education for students, we graded the states on whether they require students to take college- and career-ready classes to earn a high school diploma. We relied on 2009 data collected by Achieve, which gave credit to states if they had mandatory, challenging course requirements and permitted students to opt out only with a parental waiver.

Robust Assessment Systems. State assessment systems often give students false expectations of success by testing them at very low levels. To gauge how effectively states are addressing this problem, we evaluated whether each state has college- and career-ready assessment systems that indicate whether students are prepared for college and the workplace. The data come from Achieve and were published in 2009. The organization gave credit to states such as New York that have developed their own readiness exams, as well as states such as Maine that have incorporated national college admissions exams such as the SAT into their assessment systems.

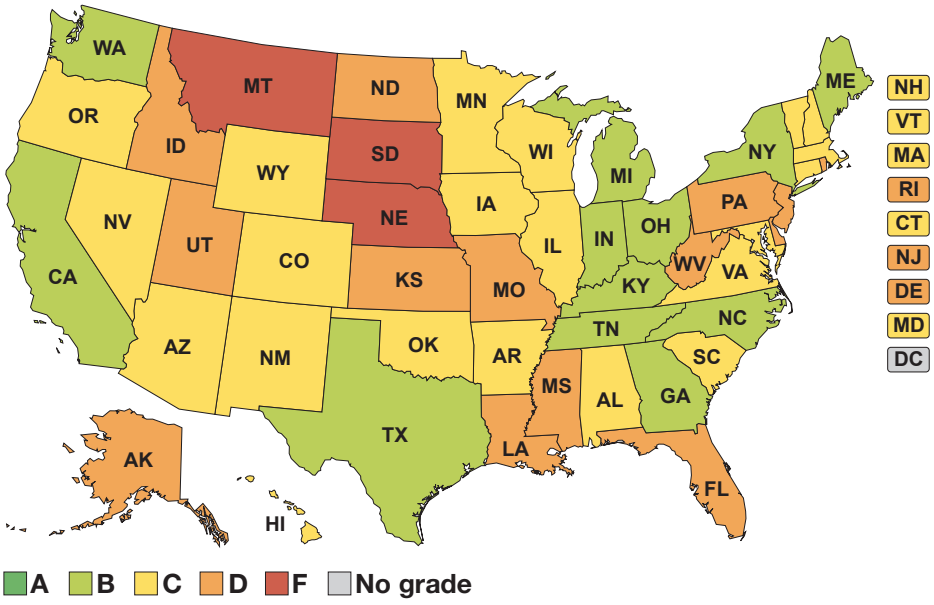
Rigor in Coursework. Another promising approach to the problem of low academic standards in high school is to use rigorous, acclaimed programs such as Advanced Placement (AP) and the International Baccalaureate. We graded states on the proportion of high school seniors who took and passed AP exams. The data come from the College Board and show the percentage of the class of 2008 that scored a 3 or higher on any AP exam during high school.

Dual Enrollment Opportunities. Education policymakers rarely give high school students the flexibility to take advanced courses that allow them to earn college credit or to demonstrate their proficiency through exams or other performance measures. One valuable way for states to tear down the artificial, cumbersome divide between advanced high school coursework and introductory college studies is by offering dual-enrollment programs. To grade states on this measure, we obtained data on dual-enrollment programs by conducting an analysis of the 2007–2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of teachers and principals administered every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Work-Based Internships. While an increasingly competitive international workplace demands that all students graduate from high school ready for the world of work, most high schools do little to help students learn real-world skills and knowledge. Once, such opportunities were unnecessary or even frivolous. Today, they are invaluable.[42] Thus, we examined the percentage of schools reporting work-based internships. The data come from the 2007–2008 SASS, which asked educators

whether students can earn course credit for work-based learning or internships outside of school.

Availability of Career-Oriented Diplomas. In many states, the pipeline to college and a career is too rigid, and the educational system often fails to provide students with alternative ways to demonstrate their readiness for their next step after high school. For the pipeline to accommodate more students than before in ways that are both efficient and cost-effective, it must offer greater choice and flexibility. Some states have tried to address this challenge by offering a high school diploma with a career specialization. We graded states on this measure using 2009 data from Editorial Projects in Education, which examined whether students who complete career-oriented or technical coursework can earn a specialized career concentration on their standard high school diploma.



Pipeline to Postsecondary

State	Grade	State requires college- and career-ready diploma	State has high school exams that gauge college and career readiness	Percentage of students in the high school class of 2008 passing an AP test	Percentage of schools reporting dual enrollment programs	Percentage of schools reporting work-based internships	State offers standard high school diploma with career specialization
Michigan	B	Yes	Yes	13.0%	77%	79%	Yes
Georgia	B	Yes	Yes	16.3	66	71	Yes
Tennessee	B	Yes	Yes	9.2	72	75	Yes
New York	B	Yes	Yes	23.3	57	53	Yes
Texas	B	Yes	Yes	14.5	66	53	Yes
Kentucky	B	Yes	Yes	10.0	56	67	Yes
Indiana	B	Yes		10.0	73	87	Yes
Ohio	B	Yes		10.8	85	73	Yes
North Carolina	B	Yes		17.3	82	65	Yes
Washington	B	Yes		15.5	83	61	Yes
Maine	B		Yes	19.3	60	67	Yes
California	B		Yes	20.2	50	72	Yes
Connecticut	C			21.0	70	87	Yes
Virginia	C			21.3	82	73	Yes
Wisconsin	C			16.6	86	84	Yes
Vermont	C			19.8	66	87	Yes
New Mexico	C	Yes		9.9	86	55	Yes
Iowa	C			8.3	98	79	Yes
Maryland	C			23.4	56	82	Yes
Colorado	C		Yes	19.0	81	57	
New Hampshire	C			15.5	58	87	Yes
Massachusetts	C			20.8	54	74	Yes
Arkansas	C	Yes		10.6	81	31	Yes
Alabama	C	Yes		6.8	58	69	Yes
Oklahoma	C	Yes		9.8	79	41	Yes
Oregon	C			13.1	69	78	Yes
South Carolina	C			13.8	80	66	Yes
Illinois	C		Yes	15.2	59	75	
Minnesota	C	Yes		14.2	59	73	
Nevada	C			13.5	65	71	Yes
Arizona	C	Yes		7.9	77	70	
Wyoming	C			7.5	81	64	Yes
Hawaii	C			8.0	62	74	Yes
Florida	D			18.2	52	58	Yes
West Virginia	D			6.9	66	70	Yes
Pennsylvania	D			11.9	57	59	Yes
Louisiana	D			3.7	76	54	Yes
Utah	D			18.9	53	69	
New Jersey	D			17.3	41	53	Yes
Rhode Island	D			9.5	45	54	Yes
North Dakota	D			6.9	58	46	Yes
Kansas	D			8.6	72	65	
Delaware	D	Yes		13.8	24	55	
Mississippi	D	Yes		3.9	45	45	
Idaho	D			9.5	66	56	
Alaska	D			13.3	59	52	
Missouri	D			6.5	58	67	
South Dakota	F	Yes		9.7	38	32	
Montana	F			10.6	53	46	
Nebraska	F			6.5	58	46	
District of Columbia	—	Yes		6.9	‡	‡	Yes
U.S.		20	10	15.2	65	65	37

— State did not receive a grade in this category.
‡ Reporting standards not met.
SOURCES: Achieve, *Closing the Expectations Gap*, 2009; College Board, *AP Report to the Nation*, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey 2007-2008; and Editorial Projects in Education, Education Counts, 2009.

Innovation Highlight: Early College High Schools

In recent years, one of the most closely watched educational innovations for high school- and college-age students is the early college high school (ECHS). This new model blends high school and college, allowing students to complete high school while earning up to two years of college credit or an associate's degree at the same time. Supporters say this unconventional approach offers a wide range of benefits: It exposes secondary school students early to the rigors of college-level work, better preparing them for postsecondary education; gives students who lack key course credits additional time to meet high school graduation requirements; motivates teenagers to continue their education beyond high school; and saves students and their families tuition dollars. ECHSs often have a career focus, too, so they help prepare students for the workforce.

The premise behind this blended model of high school and college is simple: In a global economy, our outdated model of high school prepares too few students for success in college. In theory, students understand that college pays off—a majority of them say that they aspire to earn a college degree. But somehow, between high school graduation and college completion, their plans derail. College remediation rates are high, which is a key reason—along with pressure to work—that students are taking longer to earn their degrees. And college completion rates are low. Overall, fewer than 60% of students who enter four-year institutions earn a bachelor's degree within six years. Barely one-fourth of community college students complete an associate's or bachelor's degree within six years of entering college.[43] Students from low-income families are even less likely to complete a degree: Only 4 out of 10 entering students from low-income families complete a two- or four-year degree within six years.[44]

ECHSs take on these problems by reinventing the model of high school education. First, unlike traditional accelerated learning programs, they target underserved students rather than affluent high achievers, and they are frequently located on college campuses. ECHSs are generally small schools that provide students with a college-preparatory curriculum and enable them to enroll in college-level courses once they demonstrate mastery of high school standards. Students either tackle college-level work within their ECHS or physically enroll on the college campus. According to Dawn Cooper, director of the Early College Initiative at the University System of Georgia, the schools provide "an intervention strategy for students who may not be well served by traditional middle and high schools."[45] ECHSs offer a rigorous course of study; high expectations; and supportive, personalized learning. By helping students enroll in college courses and giving them the academic and social support they need to succeed, ECHSs "strive to remove the financial, academic, and psychological hurdles that prevent too many students from entering and succeeding in college," Cooper says.[46] The flexible structure of ECHSs means that at-risk students, who may take longer than four years to earn their high school diplomas, are able to enroll in engaging, challenging, college-level classes alongside their regular courses, earning college credit in the process.

The biggest catalysts for the new blended high school and college model are the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Jobs for the Future (JFF), a national action-research and policy organization that promotes innovation in education. The two organizations have worked with a number of partner institutions to start and support ECHSs around the nation. JFF leads the Early College High School Initiative, which had launched more than 250 schools in 24 states as of the 2008–2009 school year. The early academic results of the initiative are promising. A recent evaluation by the American Institutes for Research and SRI International found that "ECHSs had a higher average percentage of students scoring proficient on their states' assessments in English language arts/reading and mathematics than did other high schools in the districts in which they are located."[47] Of the ECHS graduates in 2006 and 2007, 85% earned at least a semester of college credit and 10% earned two years of college credit or an associate's degree.[48] Moreover, "more than 60% were accepted to four-year colleges, exceeding national rates for similar populations."[49]

The largest concentration of ECHSs can be found in North Carolina, where former Governor Mike Easley created a network of 60 schools across the state.[50] The North Carolina ECHSs are located on college campuses (easing the logistics of dual enrollment), and many have a career focus or theme. Like those in other states, they offer a high

school diploma and up to two years of college credit or an associate's degree. The schools tend to have smaller classes, a greater emphasis on project-based learning, and better access to technology than traditional high schools.

In keeping with the goals of the movement, North Carolina's ECHSs are targeted at students who might not have considered college; these students are often the first in their families to attend college. Jessica Diaz, a student at Cross Creek Early College High School, is full of praise for her school. "It has given me so many opportunities, like being able to go to college and to be the first in my family to graduate," she says. "It is like another family at school that supports me whenever I need it."[51]

ECHSs aren't right for every student. But for low-income and minority teens whose high school classes might otherwise lack rigor, and for those who can benefit from additional time to complete high school and stay on track to college, ECHSs can make a lot of sense.

Technology

Successful organizations use technology as a tool for self-improvement. Rather than viewing computers or digital programs as an end unto themselves, they see technology as a way to leverage change, improve efficiency, and tackle new challenges.[52] Many American businesses have excelled using this approach, strategically deploying technology to boost productivity, so that what once took ten workers now takes fewer than eight.

But within education, the reality is frequently less inspiring. Educators often give little thought to how technology might modernize education delivery and thus improve teaching and learning. Schools, for example, frequently purchase computers without clear learning goals—and eventually let them languish at the back of classrooms. Education leaders also have not taken advantage of technology to improve the management of education and make schooling cheaper and more efficient. Many schools still use information systems that date back to the 1960s. Indeed, the Stockton Unified School District in California appears so committed to Beatles-era technology that it recently posted a job opening for a technician whose main responsibility would be to repair the district's various typewriters.

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To meet 21st century challenges, it will not be enough for schools to do the same thing as before, only better. Demands and incentives must change, and technology holds enormous promise to help make this happen. When strategically implemented, school technology could become what Harvard Business School's Clay Christensen calls a "disruptive technology"—a simple concept that upends an entire industry and creates widespread innovation. For example, virtual schools, also known as cyberschools, offer students more freedom and choice than conventional schools, especially for rural students who otherwise might not have access to advanced or specialized coursework.

We initially hoped to evaluate how much return on investment (ROI) states receive for their technology spending. We wanted to understand how states have used technology to reduce costs, improve outcomes, or rethink education delivery. But those data do not appear to exist. After a systematic survey of the Web sites of all 50 states and the District of Columbia, we found almost no evidence that any state had conducted a large-scale technology ROI study. We also found very few state data on technology use or implementation. Rather, it appears that states collect data largely on the presence of technology, such as the number of schools with high-speed Internet access.

Given the massive financial investments in technology by state and federal governments over the past decade, this state of affairs is troubling. We simply could not find useful metrics on the things that mattered most. In the end, we had to limit the scope of our investigation significantly and evaluate the states on the meager input data that were available. We graded state performance in four areas:

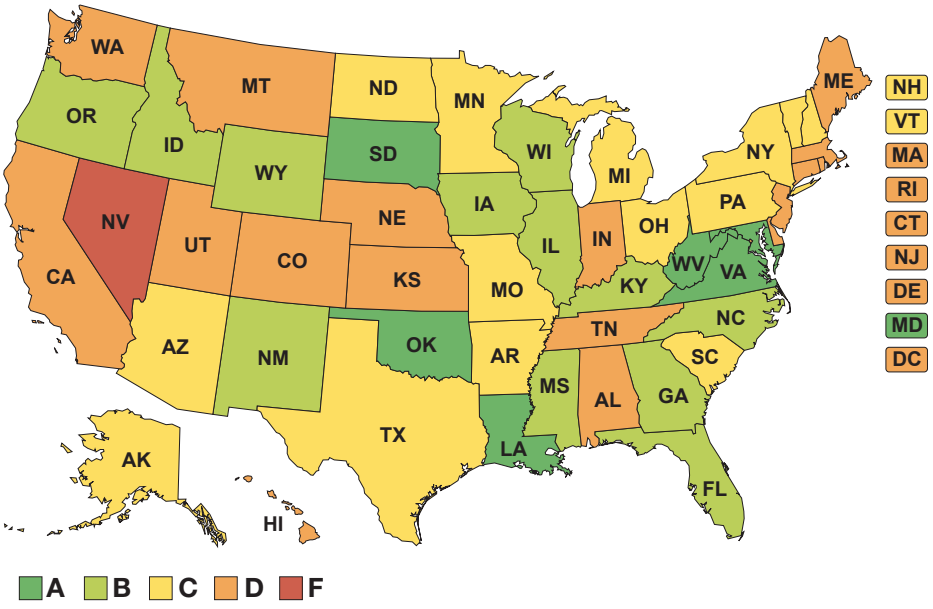
Access to Technology. To be prepared for the modern workplace, students should graduate from high school knowing how to use technology effectively. For example, graduates should have the skills to create a spreadsheet and calculate simple formulas such as averages and percentages. Since students need access to high-quality computers to learn technology skills, we evaluated the states on the number of students per high-speed Internet-connected computer in schools statewide. Education research firm Market Data Retrieval gathered the data, which were published by Editorial Projects in Education in 2006 (the most recent data available).

Online Schooling Options. Virtual schools have the potential to provide instruction that is more adaptable and cost-effective than conventional schooling, but not every state has such schools. We gave credit to states that have established or financed statewide virtual schools that deliver instruction over the Internet. Editorial Projects in Education published these data in 2009.

Use of Computer-Based Student Assessments. States frequently fail to use technology to lower educational costs and improve outcomes. Many schools continue to use outdated paper-based data and information systems, despite the opportunities modern technology provides to improve the management of schools. Zeroing in on one example of cost-effective technology, we graded each state on whether it offers a computer-based student

assessment. Editorial Projects in Education asked states whether they have a computer-based student assessment available to all students and published these data in 2009.

Teachers' Technology Proficiency. While few states appear to monitor the effectiveness of their technology programs, one thing is clear: If teachers do not know how to use computers or the Internet, they will not be able to implement technology in ways that will help students and schools. Consequently, we graded the states on whether they require technology testing of new teachers. Editorial Projects in Education asked states whether they require all teacher candidates to demonstrate their technology competence to receive an initial license; it published these data in 2009.



Technology

State	Grade	Students per high-speed Internet-connected computer	State has established a virtual school	State offers computer-based assessment	State requires technology testing for teachers
West Virginia	A	3.0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	A	3.4	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	A	4.3	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	A	4.4	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	A	1.9	Yes	Yes	
Virginia	A	3.0	Yes	Yes	
Florida	B	3.2	Yes		Yes
Idaho	B	3.3	Yes	Yes	
Iowa	B	3.3	Yes		Yes
New Mexico	B	3.1	Yes		Yes
Wisconsin	B	3.1	Yes		Yes
Georgia	B	3.7	Yes		Yes
Illinois	B	3.9	Yes		Yes
Kentucky	B	3.8	Yes		Yes
North Carolina	B	3.8	Yes	Yes	
Mississippi	B	5.0	Yes	Yes	
Oregon	B	4.4	Yes	Yes	
Wyoming	B	2.6		Yes	
Alaska	C	3.3	Yes		
North Dakota	C	3.1	Yes		
Pennsylvania	C	3.2			Yes
Vermont	C	3.1			Yes
Minnesota	C	3.7		Yes	
Missouri	C	3.5	Yes		
Ohio	C	3.4			Yes
South Carolina	C	3.6	Yes		
Texas	C	3.4			Yes
Arizona	C	4.3	Yes		
Arkansas	C	3.8	Yes		
Michigan	C	3.8	Yes		
New Hampshire	C	4.1	Yes		
New York	C	4.1			Yes
Alabama	D	4.8	Yes		
California	D	5.0			Yes
Delaware	D	4.9	Yes		
Hawaii	D	4.5	Yes		
Kansas	D	2.6			
Maine	D	1.9			
Montana	D	2.9			
Nebraska	D	2.8			
Rhode Island	D	4.6		Yes	
Utah	D	5.3	Yes		
Indiana	D	3.3			
Connecticut	D	3.5			
Massachusetts	D	3.4			
New Jersey	D	3.6			
Washington	D	3.6			
Colorado	D	4.1			
District of Columbia	D	4.2			
Tennessee	D	4.1			
Nevada	F	4.6			
U.S.		3.7	29	13	17

SOURCE: Editorial Projects in Education, Education Counts, 2006, 2009.

Innovation Highlight: Digital Textbooks

Schoolchildren everywhere complain that the textbooks they have to carry around are too heavy, not to mention often boring. School administrators add that schoolbooks are extremely costly and frequently out of date. The solution, says a small but vocal group of education innovators: Web-based textbooks, known as digital textbooks, which hold the promise of saving money, boosting student achievement, and helping graduates compete in an increasingly technology-based workforce.

To advocates of digital textbooks, the drawbacks of traditional textbooks are numerous, beginning with their average price tag of around $100.[53] Because of the hefty price, schools often do not have the resources to replace textbooks regularly, which means that they quickly fall behind the times. The average lifespan of a textbook in a classroom is six years,[54] a period during which many things critical to student learning can happen, from advances in science and technology to crucial historic events. Beyond the problem of timeliness, many commentators fault traditional textbooks for their lackluster content. "The dullness of history textbooks is legendary," says education historian Diane Ravitch. "I have trouble reading them because of their jumbled, jangly quality. I also have trouble lifting them, because they are so heavy and overstuffed with trivia and pedagogical aid."[55]

Digital textbooks offer an entrepreneurial approach to circumventing these problems. For one thing, they can be updated quickly and frequently to provide up-to-the-minute information. For another, they are designed to maximize learning and minimize boredom for a generation accustomed to using cell phones, iPods, and the Internet for instant access to information, entertainment, and communication. Among other features, digital textbooks offer interactive educational content and links to timely and eye-catching online resources.

Empire High School in Arizona's Vail Unified School District was one of the first schools to pilot the schoolwide use of digital textbooks. In 2005, the school began providing laptops to all students. The students' families pay $50 for laptop insurance, but other costs are offset by money the school saves by not purchasing traditional textbooks. Students get all their materials, including digital textbooks, through the Internet. "Learning from the laptops really helped my growth as a student. I was able to learn from so many different sources, and I really feel that I am ahead of the curve with regard to education," says Empire student David Gritis.[56]

While digital textbooks have quickly become popular on college campuses, interest in the new medium in K–12 education remains in the early stages. But that could change if California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has his way. In 2009, he announced that the nation's first statewide digital textbook plan would be launched in California. Under the initiative, which began in August 2009, the state provided districts with a list of approved digital versions of high school math and science textbooks that are aligned with state standards and have undergone academic review. Although the state does not mandate the use of these cybertexts, the initiative gives districts more options when choosing the learning materials that best suit their students' needs.

In a bow to budgetary realism, the initiative does not call for each student to have access to a personal computer—an expensive proposition—but rather for teachers to present digital texts using projectors or to print out individual chapters of the text, or for students to take turns using computers that schools already have. Ultimately, though, the new policy might produce budgetary savings: Governor Schwarzenegger believes that the initiative could save the state $300 to $400 million, money that he would like to allocate for hiring new teachers and reducing class size. He contends that the initiative will also save paper and increase student engagement in the learning process.[57]

Ideas such as Web-based textbooks invariably attract education entrepreneurs. When Governor Schwarzenegger asked textbook publishers and other companies to submit digital textbooks to the state for review,[58] one company that stepped forward was CK-12, a Palo Alto nonprofit. CK-12 seeks to lower the costs of schoolbooks by collaborating with schools and districts to create free, customized, Web-based texts. Students and teachers can access the digital textbooks online with a password. Seven of the 16 digital textbooks that were approved by California are published by CK-12. Murugan Pal, cofounder of CK-12,

says his organization is designed to work within the system, not to create a futuristic paper-free world. "We're not here to replace textbooks—we're here to coexist with them."[59] CK-12 also recently worked with schools in Virginia to create a digital physics textbook that could provide updated content to the 1960s edition of the text that was still in use.

It is too soon to tell whether digital textbooks will spread or whether they will prove educationally effective. No doubt there will be ample trial and error as more schools and districts begin to experiment with the new technology. But if advocates prove correct, the electronic texts could be ideally suited to supplement, or even replace, the uninspiring tomes that so many schoolkids love to hate.

State Reform Environment

Twenty-five years ago, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education released *A Nation at Risk,* overhauling our country's schools became a national priority. In the intervening years, some of the recommendations in the report, such as those related to standards, have been followed, but overall their implementation remains woefully inadequate. It is not surprising, therefore, that the dire problems of our school system remain, from low student test scores to a sorely ineffective education bureaucracy.

What the experience of the past quarter-century powerfully illustrates is that any meaningful change to an education system that is almost entirely government run boils down to sustained political will. To make schools flexible, innovative, and focused on performance, reform advocates must engage in a long, sustained effort to promote school reinvention. In other words, the burden for the changes we sketch here cannot and should not rest solely on the shoulders of educators. That has not worked before. It will not work now.

In many ways, policymakers themselves are at the root of the problem: They have not done nearly enough to advocate the reforms needed to bring our nation's education system into the 21st century. In early 2009, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for a Competitive Workforce conducted an online survey of chambers of commerce and found that many business leaders believed that there was little political support in their states for key systemic initiatives. For instance, only 12% of business leaders perceived a great deal of support from elected state officials for charter schools. And just 7% believed there was a good amount of support from elected officials for bonuses for effective teachers.

While we would argue that a state's reform environment is perhaps the most important category in this report, it is also the area where we have the least available information. As a result, we could not grade the states on their reform environment based on existing data. However, we gathered several indicators that we believe do paint a useful picture of each state's reform environment:

Common Standards. Statewide assessments and standards are important measures of student and school performance, including academic achievement gaps. But as our workforce has grown more mobile and our economy more global, states need external benchmarks to assess more accurately how their students are faring academically. Therefore, we measured whether states support the current movement by several organizations to create common academic standards. While we believe this effort should be regarded with appropriate caution until it is finalized and implemented, common standards can serve as a helpful reality check for states. The National Governors Association provided these data, which were current as of September 2009.

International Benchmarks. In decades past, comparisons with other states were adequate for states that wished to assess their capacity and success in preparing students for the workforce. While still useful, such comparisons have been rendered more parochial by an increasingly global economy. Thus, in this measure we gave states credit for participating in the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, an international assessment of math and science.

Graduation Rates. In 2005, the National Governors Association spearheaded a national effort to move toward a common definition for graduation rates. The definition was strengthened and incorporated into final regulations under the administration of President George W. Bush. But while most states now collect and report graduation rates based on this definition, far fewer states are using the data as part of their accountability systems. Because we believe this is an important indicator of political will for reform within each state, we gave credit to states that are using the new graduation rate measure in their accountability systems. Achieve published these data in 2009.

Policy Innovators in Education Network (PIE Network). Few states have strong, independent advocacy groups that push for systematic school reform. We gave credit to states with organizations that belong to the Policy Innovators in Education Network, or PIE Network, which forges a common commitment to advancing equity, high learning standards, effective teaching, accountability, and public school choice.

State Reform Environment

State	Grade	State supports common academic standards	State factors reliable graduation rate into accountability	State has participated in international assessments	Presence of Policy Innovators in Education Network
Alabama	?	√			
Alaska	?				
Arizona	?	√	√		
Arkansas	?	√			
California	?	√			√
Colorado	?	√			√
Connecticut	?	√			√
Delaware	?	√			√
District of Columbia	?	√			
Florida	?	√	√		√
Georgia	?	√			
Hawaii	?	√			
Idaho	?	√			
Illinois	?	√			√
Indiana	?	√	√		
Iowa	?	√	√		
Kansas	?	√			
Kentucky	?	√			√
Louisiana	?	√	√		
Maine	?	√			√
Maryland	?	√			
Massachusetts	?	√	√	√	√
Michigan	?	√	√		
Minnesota	?	√		√	
Mississippi	?	√			
Missouri	?	√			
Montana	?	√			
Nebraska	?	√			
Nevada	?	√			
New Hampshire	?	√			
New Jersey	?	√			
New Mexico	?	√			
New York	?	√	√		
North Carolina	?	√	√		
North Dakota	?	√	√		
Ohio	?	√			√
Oklahoma	?	√			√
Oregon	?	√			√
Pennsylvania	?	√			
Rhode Island	?	√			
South Carolina	?	√	√		
South Dakota	?	√			
Tennessee	?	√			√
Texas	?		√		√
Utah	?	√			
Vermont	?	√	√		
Virginia	?	√			
Washington	?	√	√		√
West Virginia	?	√			
Wisconsin	?	√			
Wyoming	?	√			
U.S.		49	14	2	15

SOURCES: National Governors Association, 2009; Achieve, *Closing the Expectations Gap*, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Highlights from TIMSS 2007*, 2008; and Policy Innovators in Education Network, 2009.

Innovation Highlight: State-Based Education Reform Organizations

Although federal education policy can set an influential framework for reform (especially when it is backed by substantial funding, as the Obama administration and Congress have attempted to do with the Department of Education's $4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund), most decisions that affect schools are made at the state and local levels. If significant change is to occur in education, a state-based education reform organization will be a critical component of success.

To be effective, reform organizations must be able to do several important things at once: identify practices that improve student achievement; inform the public and key opinion influencers about policies that will result in better teaching, learning, and school management; gain broad legislative and public support for those policies; and advocate enacting them at the state level. Successful organizations also provide the infrastructure at the state level required to advance national policy initiatives such as the American Diploma Project, which aims to ensure that high school graduates are prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce, and the Data Quality Campaign, which advocates for high-quality data in the service of improving student achievement.

While state reform organizations are nonprofits, they generally work very closely with the business community. Indeed, in several states education advocacy organizations have been incubated by a business-led organization such as a chamber of commerce or business roundtable. Active engagement by business helps emphasize the connection between education reform and the strength of the state's economy. It also provides a venue through which to amplify the business community's voice in support of education, which is not always possible through state business organizations that have other priorities. Often the education advocacy organization and the state business organization have a strong collaborative partnership that focuses resources and reduces duplication of efforts. Many states have effective statewide reform organizations, but two stand out: the Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition (OBEC) and the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN).

The Oklahoma coalition was formed in 2000 by several large Oklahoma companies and the state's three largest chambers of commerce—the Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce, the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, and the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce. The coalition's work is focused above all on increasing the rigor of educational standards and improving student achievement through legislative action. Executive Director Phyllis Hudecki attributes OBEC's success to focusing on a few key priorities: "We are careful not to address more than three issues in any legislative session—that way we can maximize our impact. Organizations that take on too many issues cause legislators to guess which ones are really important," says Hudecki.

So far, OBEC's most significant achievement has been helping pass the state's landmark Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) Act of 2005. ACE increased academic rigor and strengthened high school graduation requirements for Oklahoma students so they would be prepared for postsecondary education and the world of work. OBEC worked closely with Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry on this legislation, which introduced new high school exams in seven subjects and required students to pass four of them to graduate. OBEC worked hard to build bipartisan support for ACE in the legislature, pulling in the business community and forging partnerships with colleges and universities to underscore the need for improvements in K–12 standards.

In Connecticut, ConnCAN has a different structure but has had a similarly large impact on educational change. Founded in 2005, the independent nonprofit has focused on closing the state's socioeconomic achievement gap through systemic reform. ConnCAN was started by businessman John Sackler along with other businesspeople, philanthropists, and civic leaders. They quickly discovered that despite its affluence and strong overall academic achievement, Connecticut is still a state of educational haves and have-nots. In an effort to tackle that problem, ConnCAN first uses public communication, research and policy work, community outreach, and legislative advocacy to raise awareness of the achievement

gap and its consequences. Next, it builds consensus for reforms that will increase students' access to high-quality schools and empowers parents by providing them with information that helps them make good choices for their children.

One of the most distinctive features of ConnCAN's community outreach work is its statewide grassroots network. To raise awareness of education reform issues, ConnCAN develops informational materials that the voting public can easily understand and act on. Through electronic newsletters and updates, it can mobilize the public to send thousands of letters and e-mails and make thousands of phone calls to elected officials when important legislation is up for debate. Among the group's biggest reform successes are its work to pass legislation providing funding for a statewide data system, its help implementing a quality rating system for early childhood education in the state, and its help paving the way for Teach for America to operate in Connecticut. In addition, each year ConnCAN identifies schools that are especially effective at closing pervasive achievement gaps between rich and poor students and between minorities and nonminorities.

While ConnCAN and OBEC have different approaches, each has developed effective methods of advancing educational reform and challenging the status quo. In the absence of state-based organizations like these, it is very difficult to get traction or political support for initiatives that call for systemic change. The Policy Innovators in Education Network (PIE Network) was formed to strengthen the efforts of such groups. It created a national network of reform organizations and provided them with a forum for shared consultation and professional development. Those efforts fill an important and little-understood gap. There is certainly a place for strong national reform organizations, but the need for state-level groups is just as great. Reform against the odds, especially in states with an unfriendly policy environment, urgently requires effective state organizations for success.

State Report Cards

Alabama

School Management	C
Finance	D
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Alabama does a mediocre job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has solid academic standards, but 90% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching. Alabama also does not have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Alabama receives a low grade in this category. The state gets low marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and a failing score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Alabama does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Alabama gets an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Eighteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. The state also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Alabama receives a disappointing score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-three percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective educators, 2 percentage points above the national average of 61%. Also, 88% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Alabama gets a middling mark for its state data system. While the state has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students, it does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Alabama receives an average grade for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-eight percent of Alabama schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 7 percentage points below the national average of 65%. However, 69% of schools in the state report work-based internships.

Technology. Alabama receives a low grade in this category. The state does not offer a computer-based assessment and does not require technology testing for teachers. The state also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Alabama does support common academic standards.

Alaska

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Alaska does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has disappointing academic standards, and 93% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching.

Finance. Overall, Alaska posts a middling grade in this category. Alaska gets a solid mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, and it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Alaska does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Alaska receives a mediocre mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Eight percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. The state's alternative certification program also gets a very low mark. However, Alaska requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Alaska receives an average grade on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-eight percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective educators, which is 7 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 69% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers, which is 3 percentage points below the national average of 72%.

Data. Alaska gets a middling mark for its state data system. Although the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year, it does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Alaska receives a low mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-nine percent of schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 6 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, Alaska does not offer the option of a high school diploma with a career specialization.

Technology. Alaska receives an average mark in this category. While the state does not offer a computer-based assessment, it has established a virtual school. The state also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. Alaska does not support common academic standards, and it does not factor a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

Arizona

School Management	B
Finance	A
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Arizona does an above-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 89% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, the state has solid academic standards and sanctions low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, Arizona posts an excellent grade in this category. The state gets a solid mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Arizona gets an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Seventeen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. While Arizona requires incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests, it does not require them to pass basic skills tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Arizona receives a good score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Thirty-eight percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, compared with the national average of 61%. Also, 54% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers, which is better than the national average of 72%.

Data. Arizona gets an average mark for its state data system. Although the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year, Arizona does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Arizona receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-seven percent of schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously. That is 12 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, Arizona does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Arizona receives a middling grade in this category. While the state has established a virtual school, Arizona does not offer a computer-based assessment. The state also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Arizona supports common academic standards and factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

Gold Stars. Arizona receives a gold star in the School Management category for holding charter schools accountable for their performance. We award a state a gold star if it meets two criteria: It has more than 250 charter schools, and more than 15% of its charter schools have been closed.

Arkansas

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	A
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Arkansas does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has below-average academic standards, and 89% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching.

Finance. Overall, Arkansas earns a good grade in this category. The state gets excellent marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and the online accessibility of its financial data. However, districts in Arkansas do not have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Arkansas receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Only 52% of principals report having a major degree of influence over teacher hiring, far lower than the national average of 74%. However, the state requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Arkansas receives a below-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Fifty-one percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, better than the national average of 61%. However, 78% of principals report that the effort required for documentation is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Arkansas gets a very good mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data, and it has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

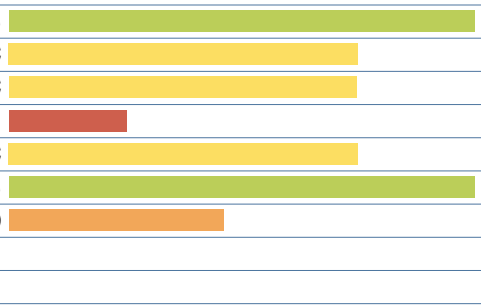
Pipeline to Postsecondary. Arkansas receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-one percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 16 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, only 31% of Arkansas schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Arkansas receives a middling grade in this category. While the state has established a virtual school, it does not offer a computer-based assessment. The state also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Arkansas supports common academic standards.

California

School Management	B
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	



School Management. California does a solid job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 90% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, the state has strong academic standards and a very good charter school law.

Finance. Overall, California earns a mediocre grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, districts in California have full authority over teacher pay. California does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. California receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Thirteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, the same as the national average. While the state requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills tests, it does not require them to pass subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. California receives a dismal score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Eighty-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, worse than the national average of 61%. In addition, 87% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. California gets a middling mark for its state data system. Although the state provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis, it does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. California receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-two percent of California schools report offering work-based internships. That is 7 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, only 50% of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 15 percentage points below the national average of 65%.

Technology. California receives a low grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. California needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the California-based Education Trust-West and EdVoice are members of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network.

Colorado

School Management	C
Finance	A
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Colorado does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, the state sanctions low-performing schools and provides rewards to high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, Colorado gets a very good grade in this category. The state receives high marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and for the online accessibility of its financial data.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Colorado receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Only 11% of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. However, 82% of principals report a major degree of influence over teacher hiring, and Colorado requires incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Colorado receives a poor score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-four percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 13 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 75% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Colorado gets a mediocre mark for its state data system. While the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year, Colorado does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Colorado receives a middling mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-one percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 16 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, 57% of Colorado schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Colorado receives a low grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Colorado also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Colorado Succeeds is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network, and the state supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the School Management category, Colorado receives a gold star for having a state-level expanded learning time initiative. To receive a gold star in this category, a state must have an established policy to expand learning time for all students within a school and/or district, prioritizing high-poverty schools. The initiative must focus on redesigning the school day or year versus tacking on hours.

Connecticut

School Management	F
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Connecticut does a dismal job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-one percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and only 29% of teachers like the way things are run at their school.

Finance. Overall, Connecticut gets a middling grade in this category. While the state earns a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Connecticut does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Connecticut receives a mediocre mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Only 8% of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But the state does require incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Connecticut receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-one percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 10 percentage points above the national average of 61%. However, only 9% of principals report that finding a suitable replacement is a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers.

Data. Connecticut gets a middling mark for its state data system. While the state provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis, Connecticut does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Connecticut receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 5 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state does not require a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Connecticut receives a poor grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not require technology testing for teachers. Connecticut also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network, and the state supports common academic standards.

Delaware

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Delaware does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 89% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, the state has established strong charter school laws.

Finance. Overall, Delaware earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an excellent score for the online accessibility of its financial data.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Delaware receives a good mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Ten percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Also, Delaware requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Delaware receives a below-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-one percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, higher than the national average of 61%. In addition, 67% of principals report that the length of time required for the termination process is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Delaware gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students and also has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Delaware receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Only 24% of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 41 percentage points below the national average of 65%. Also, only 55% of Delaware schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Delaware receives a low grade in this category. The state does not offer a computer-based assessment, and it does not require technology testing for teachers. Delaware also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Rodel Foundation of Delaware is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network, and the state supports common academic standards.

District of Columbia

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	F
Pipeline to Postsecondary	No grade
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. The District of Columbia does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-two percent of teachers say that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the district's academic standards receive a below-average mark. However, the district has an excellent charter school law.

Finance. Overall, the district earns a middling grade in this category. The district gets a low mark for the simplicity of its school funding mechanism, and only 72% of principals report a major amount of control over the school budget, compared with the national average of 90%.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. The district receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twenty-three percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. The district also earns a high mark for working with national programs to recruit non-traditional teachers and requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. The district receives a very low score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-seven percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 16 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 67% percent of principals report that personnel policies are a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. The district gets a very low mark for its data system. The district does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system and does not provide educators with an interactive school-level database for analysis.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. We are unable to grade the district for its efforts to improve college and career readiness because of insufficient data.

Technology. The district receives a low grade in this category. It does not require technology testing for teachers and does not offer a computer-based assessment. The district also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the district supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation category, the District of Columbia receives a gold star for participating in national programs authorized to certify nontraditional administrators. To receive a gold star in this category, a state must have approved New Leaders for New Schools to propose candidates for state certification.

Florida

School Management	C
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	A
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Florida does a mediocre job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the state received a below-average grade for its academic standards. However, the state sanctions low-performing schools and has an above-average charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Florida earns an above-average grade in this category. The state gets a solid mark for the online accessibility of its financial data, and it has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Florida receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Nineteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. The state also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Florida receives a very poor score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-one percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 10 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 77% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Florida gets an excellent mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data and has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Florida receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-two percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 13 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, 58% of Florida schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Florida receives a solid grade in this category. Although the state needs to improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, it has established a virtual school and requires technology testing for teachers.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Florida does factor a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system and supports common academic standards. Additionally, the Foundation for Florida's Future is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network.

Gold Stars. Florida receives a gold star in the School Management category for holding charter schools accountable for their performance. We award a state a gold star if it meets two criteria: It has more than 250 charter schools, and more than 15% of its charter schools have been closed.

Georgia

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	A
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Georgia does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 93% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, the state has above-average academic standards.

Finance. Overall, Georgia earns a middling grade in this category. The state gets a mediocre mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and the online accessibility of its financial data. Georgia does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Georgia receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Sixteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Also, Georgia requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Georgia receives a high score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Nineteen percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, significantly less than the national average of 61%. In addition, 64% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Georgia gets an excellent mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data and factors this information into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Georgia receives a solid mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is slightly higher than the national average of 65%. Also, 71% of Georgia schools report offering work-based internships, and the state requires a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Georgia receives a good grade in this category. Although the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, the state has established a virtual school and requires technology testing for teachers.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Georgia supports common academic standards.

Hawaii

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Hawaii does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-four percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and only 22% of teachers like the way their school is run.

Finance. Overall, Hawaii earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets an excellent mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives a mediocre score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Hawaii does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Hawaii receives a solid mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Seventeen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative-certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Hawaii also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests. In addition, 95% of principals report having a major degree of influence over teacher hiring.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Hawaii receives a very low score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Ninety-six percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 35 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 88% of principals report that the effort required for documentation is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Hawaii gets an average mark for its state data system. Although the state has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students, it does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Hawaii receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-two percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 3 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, 74% of Hawaii schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Hawaii receives a low grade in this category. The state does not offer a computer-based assessment, and it does not require technology testing for teachers. Hawaii also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Hawaii supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the Finance category, Hawaii receives a gold star for having a student-based funding system. Hawaii is the only state to have such a program, and the approach can reduce inefficiency and inequity as well as offer schools greater financial flexibility.

Idaho

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	F
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Idaho does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 90% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, 63% of teachers like how their school is run. The state also sanctions low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, Idaho earns a middling grade in this category. The state gets an average mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and receives a good score for the online accessibility of its financial data. But Idaho does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Idaho receives a mediocre mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Five percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. However, Idaho requires incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Idaho receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-eight percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, higher than the national average of 61%. In addition, 69% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers, which is 3 percentage points below the national average of 72%.

Data. Idaho gets a very low mark for its state data system. The state does not provide educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis, and it does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Idaho receives a disappointing mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is slightly higher than the national average of 65%. However, the state does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness, nor does it require a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Idaho receives a good grade in this category. While the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, it has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Idaho supports common academic standards.

Illinois

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Illinois does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 88% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, the state does sanction low-performing schools. In addition, 31% of teachers like how their school is being run, which is close to the national average of 32%.

Finance. Overall, Illinois earns a mediocre grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Illinois does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Illinois receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Seven percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But Illinois requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Illinois receives a solid score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-seven percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 6 percentage points above the national average of 61%. However, only 9% of principals report that finding a suitable replacement is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Illinois gets a middling mark for its state data system. Although the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year, it does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match students to teachers.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Illinois receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-nine percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 6 percentage points below the national average of 65%. However, 75% of Illinois schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Illinois receives a higher-than-average grade in this category. Although the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, it has established a virtual school and requires technology testing for teachers.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Advance Illinois is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network, and Illinois supports common academic standards.

Indiana

School Management	B
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Indiana does a good job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Although 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, the state has very good academic standards and provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools.

Finance. Overall, Indiana earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an excellent score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Indiana does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Indiana receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Seven percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. However, Indiana requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Indiana receives a disappointing score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Eighty-three percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 22 percentage points higher than the national average of 61%. In addition, 80% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Indiana gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year and provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis. But while Indiana publicly reports college remediation data, it does not factor that information into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Indiana receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-three percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 8 percentage points higher than the national average of 65%. Also, 87% of Indiana schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Indiana receives a low grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Indiana also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Indiana factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system and supports common academic standards.

Iowa

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	D
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Iowa does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-three percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the state has a very weak charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Iowa earns a good grade in this category. The state gets an above-average mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, and it has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Iowa receives a disappointing mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. One percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Also, the state receives a very low mark for its participation in national programs to recruit nontraditional teachers.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Iowa receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-eight percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 17 percentage points above the national average of 61%. However, only 33% of principals report that tight deadlines for completing documentation are a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Iowa gets a higher-than-average mark for its state data system. The state has a P-20 longitudinal data system and has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. However, Iowa does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Iowa receives a middling mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Ninety-eight percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 33 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state does not require a college- and career-ready diploma and does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Iowa receives a solid grade in this category. While the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, Iowa has established a virtual school and requires technology testing for teachers.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Iowa factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system and supports common academic standards.

Kansas

School Management	F
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	D
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Kansas fails to manage its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-four percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the state has a very weak charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Kansas earns a solid grade in this category. The state gets an above-average mark for the online accessibility of its financial data, and districts in Kansas have full authority over teacher pay. Kansas does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Kansas receives a below-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Four percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. The state also receives a low mark for its work with national programs to recruit nontraditional teachers.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Kansas receives a mediocre score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-four percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 3 percentage points above the national average of 61%.

Data. Kansas gets a middling mark for its state data system. Although the state provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis, Kansas does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Kansas receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-two percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 7 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness. Kansas also does not require a college- and career-ready diploma or offer a standard high school diploma with a career specialization.

Technology. Kansas receives a low grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Kansas also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Kansas supports common academic standards.

Kentucky

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Kentucky does a mediocre job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-two percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the state does not have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Kentucky earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets an average mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an excellent score for the online accessibility of its financial data. However, Kentucky does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Kentucky receives a mediocre mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Ten percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Kentucky also does not require incoming teachers to pass basic skills tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Kentucky receives a very low score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-four percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, and 86% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to the removal of poor-performing teachers.

Data. Kentucky gets a good mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data, but it does not factor that information into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Kentucky receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Kentucky has high school exams that gauge college and career readiness, and the state requires a college- and career-ready diploma. However, only 56% of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 9 percentage points below the national average.

Technology. Kentucky receives a solid grade in this category. While the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, Kentucky has established a virtual school and requires technology testing for teachers.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Kentucky-based Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network, and the state supports common academic standards.

Louisiana

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	A
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	A
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Louisiana does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching. However, the state sanctions low-performing schools and provides rewards to high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, Louisiana earns a middling grade in this category. The state gets a high mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism. However, Louisiana does not have a performance pay program for teachers, and districts in the state do not have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Louisiana receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twenty-two percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. The state also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Louisiana receives a solid score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Only 39% of principals say that teacher unions are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 22 percentage points lower than the national average of 61%. However, 70% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Louisiana gets an excellent mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data, has a state P-20 longitudinal data system, and provides educators with an interactive school-level database for analysis.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Louisiana receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 11 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, 54% of Louisiana schools report offering work-based internships, and the state does not require a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Louisiana receives a very good grade in this category. Although the state needs to improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, Louisiana has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Louisiana factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system and supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation category, Louisiana receives a gold star for participating in national programs authorized to certify nontraditional administrators. To receive a gold star in this category, a state must have approved New Leaders for New Schools to propose candidates for state certification.

Maine

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	D
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Maine does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-three percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the state does not have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Maine earns a mediocre grade in this category. While the state gets a good mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives a below-average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Maine also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Maine receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Sixteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. In addition, Maine requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Maine receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-four percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 13 percentage points above the national average of 61%. However, only 23% of principals report that tight deadlines for completing documentation are a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers, which is 12 percentage points below the national average of 35%.

Data. Maine gets a below-average mark for its state data system. The state does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students, and it does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Maine receives a solid mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 5 percentage points below the national average of 65%. However, the state has high school exams that gauge college and career readiness, and Maine offers a standard high school diploma with a career specialization.

Technology. Maine receives a low grade in this category. The state does not offer a computer-based assessment and does not require technology testing for teachers. Maine also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Maine Heritage Foundation is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network, and the state supports common academic standards.

Maryland

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	A
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Maryland does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Eighty-nine percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and only 35% of teachers like the way things are run at their school.

Finance. Overall, Maryland earns a mediocre grade in this category. While the state gets a low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an above-average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Maryland also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Maryland receives a good mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Eleven percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Maryland also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Maryland receives a very poor score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 11 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 73% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Maryland gets a middling mark for its state data system. Although the state publicly reports college remediation data, it does not factor that information into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Maryland receives an average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 9 percentage points below the national average of 65%. However, 82% of Maryland schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Maryland receives an excellent grade in this category. Although the state needs to improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, Maryland has established a virtual school, offers a computer-based assessment, and requires technology testing for teachers.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Maryland supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation category, Maryland receives a gold star for participating in national programs authorized to certify nontraditional administrators. To receive a gold star in this category, a state must have approved New Leaders for New Schools to propose candidates for state certification.

Massachusetts

School Management	B
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Massachusetts does a solid job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has high academic standards, sanctions low-performing schools, and provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools.

Finance. Overall, Massachusetts earns an average grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an above-average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Massachusetts does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Massachusetts receives a good mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twelve percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Massachusetts also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Massachusetts receives a below-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Eighty percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 19 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 80% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Massachusetts gets a solid mark for its state data system. Although the state publicly reports college remediation data, it does not factor that information into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Massachusetts receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-four percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 11 percentage points below the national average of 65%. However, 74% of Massachusetts schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Massachusetts receives a low grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Massachusetts also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network, and the state has participated in international student assessments that are important for benchmarking. Massachusetts also supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the School Management category, Massachusetts receives a gold star for having a state-level expanded learning time initiative. To receive a gold star in this category, a state must have an established policy to expand learning time for all students within a school and/or district, prioritizing high-poverty schools. The initiative must focus on redesigning the school day or year versus tacking on hours.

Michigan

School Management	C
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	D
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Michigan does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Eighty-nine percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching. However, the state sanctions low-performing schools and provides rewards to high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, Michigan earns a good grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the online accessibility of its financial data, it receives an excellent score for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism. Districts in the state also have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Michigan receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Only 4% of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But Michigan requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Michigan receives a mediocre score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-five percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 14 percentage points higher than the national average of 61%. In addition, 80% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Michigan gets a disappointing mark for its state data system. The state does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system and does not provide educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Michigan receives a solid mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-seven percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. This is 12 percentage points above the national average of 65%. In addition, Michigan has high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Michigan receives a middling grade in this category. Although the state has established a virtual school, it does not require technology testing for teachers. Michigan also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Michigan factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system and supports common academic standards.

Minnesota

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Minnesota does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While the state has enacted an excellent charter school law, 94% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching.

Finance. Overall, Minnesota earns a good grade in this category. While the state gets a low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives a solid score for the online accessibility of its financial data. In addition, Minnesota has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Minnesota receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Only 6% of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But Minnesota requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Minnesota receives a solid score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-eight percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 7 percentage points above the national average of 61%. However, only 18% of principals report that a lack of support for termination decisions is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers, 2 percentage points below the national average of 20%.

Data. Minnesota gets an above-average mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. Although Minnesota publicly reports college remediation data, it does not factor that information into its accountability system.

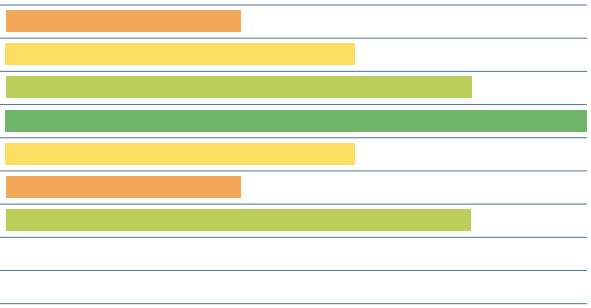
Pipeline to Postsecondary. Minnesota receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-nine percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 6 percentage points below the national average of 65%. However, 73% of Minnesota schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Minnesota receives a middling grade in this category. While the state offers a computer-based assessment, it has not established a virtual school. Minnesota also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Minnesota has participated in international student assessments that are important for benchmarking and supports common academic standards.

Mississippi

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	



School Management. Mississippi does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Eighty-six percent of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the state has a very weak charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Mississippi earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the online accessibility of its financial data, the state gets an above-average score for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism. Mississippi also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Mississippi receives a solid mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twenty-five percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Mississippi also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Mississippi receives an excellent score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Only 14% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 47 percentage points below the national average of 61%. In addition, only 19% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Mississippi gets a mediocre mark for its state data system. Although the state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year, it does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Mississippi receives a low mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Forty-five percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 20 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, only 45% of Mississippi schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Mississippi receives an above-average grade in this category. Although the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology, it has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Mississippi supports common academic standards.

Missouri

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	A
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Missouri does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has lackluster academic standards, and 89% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state does not sanction low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, Missouri earns an average grade in this category. While districts in the state do not have full authority over teacher pay, Missouri receives a high score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Missouri also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Missouri receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Eight percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. However, Missouri requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Missouri receives an above-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Forty-five percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 16 percentage points below the national average of 61%. In addition, 76% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers, which is 4 percentage points above the national average.

Data. Missouri earns a high mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data and has a teacher-identifier system to match students to teachers.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Missouri receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-eight percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 7 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, close to 7% of Missouri students in the 2008 high school class passed Advanced Placement tests, compared with the national average of 15%.

Technology. Missouri receives an average grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school, but it does not offer a computer-based assessment. Missouri also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Missouri supports common academic standards.

Montana

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	D
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	F
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Montana does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has very weak academic standards, and 86% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. In addition, the state does not sanction low-performing schools or have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Montana earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, 87% of principals report a major amount of control of the school budget. Montana does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Montana receives a below-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Four percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Montana also does not require incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Montana receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-three percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers. In addition, 72% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Montana gets an above-average mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. Although the state publicly reports college remediation data, it does not factor that information into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Montana receives a very low mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-three percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 12 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, only 46% of Montana schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Montana receives a lower-than-average grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Montana also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Montana supports common academic standards.

Nebraska

School Management	F
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	D
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	D
Pipeline to Postsecondary	F
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Nebraska does a dismal job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has below-average academic standards, and 91% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. In addition, the state does not sanction low-performing schools or have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Nebraska earns a solid grade in this category. The state gets an above-average mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, and it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. And while Nebraska does not have a performance pay program for teachers, districts in the state have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Nebraska receives a disappointing mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Three percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Nebraska also does not require incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Nebraska receives an excellent score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Fifty percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 11 percentage points below the national average of 61%. In addition, 59% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Nebraska earns a low mark for its state data system. The state lacks a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students. It also does not publicly report college remediation data.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Nebraska receives a dismal mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-eight percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 7 percentage points below the national average of 65%. Additionally, only 46% of Nebraska schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Nebraska receives a disappointing grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Nebraska also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Nebraska supports common academic standards.

Nevada

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	F
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Nevada does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has mediocre academic standards, and 93% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state also does not sanction low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, Nevada earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Nevada also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Nevada receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Sixteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Nevada also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Nevada receives a dismal score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Eighty percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers. In addition, 75% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Nevada gets an above-average mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. Although Nevada publicly reports college remediation data, it does not factor the information into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Nevada receives an average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-five percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is the same as the national average. In addition, 71% of Nevada schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Nevada receives a dismal grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Nevada also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Nevada supports common academic standards.

New Hampshire

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. New Hampshire does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has weak academic standards, and 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. New Hampshire also does not sanction low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, New Hampshire earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. New Hampshire also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. New Hampshire receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twenty percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. New Hampshire also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. New Hampshire receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-one percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 10 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 73% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. New Hampshire gets an average mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year, but it does not publicly report college remediation data.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. New Hampshire receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-eight percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 7 percentage points below the national average of 65%. However, New Hampshire offers a standard high school diploma with a career specialization.

Technology. New Hampshire receives an average grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school, but it does not offer a computer-based assessment. New Hampshire also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, New Hampshire supports common academic standards.

New Jersey

School Management	C
Finance	D
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	D
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. New Jersey does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has mediocre academic standards, and 86% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state also does not sanction low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, New Jersey earns a below-average grade in this category. While the state gets a low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. New Jersey does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. New Jersey receives a good mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twenty-one percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. And while the state does not require incoming teachers to pass basic skills tests, they are required to pass subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. New Jersey receives an excellent score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Only 38% of principals say that personnel policies are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers. That is 10 percentage points below the national average of 48%. Also, only 2% of principals in the state report that resistance from parents is a barrier to dismissal. However, 70% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers.

Data. New Jersey earns a lower-than-average mark for its state data system. The state does not publicly report college remediation data nor factor those data into its accountability system. In addition, New Jersey does not have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. New Jersey receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Forty-one percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 24 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, only 53% of New Jersey schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. New Jersey receives a disappointing grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. New Jersey also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, New Jersey supports common academic standards.

New Mexico

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. New Mexico does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Although the state sanctions low-performing schools, it has mediocre academic standards, and 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching.

Finance. Overall, New Mexico earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets an average mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives a below-average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. New Mexico also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. New Mexico receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Sixteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Also, New Mexico requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. New Mexico receives a very low score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-four percent of principals say that personnel policies are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers. That is 16 percentage points above the national average of 48%. In addition, 61% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers.

Data. New Mexico gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. New Mexico publicly reports college remediation data, but it does not factor college remediation data into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. New Mexico receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 21 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, New Mexico does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. New Mexico receives an above-average grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and requires technology testing for teachers. However, it does not offer a computer-based assessment. New Mexico also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, New Mexico supports common academic standards.

New York

School Management	B
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. New York does a solid job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has strong academic standards and sanctions low-performing schools. Yet, 87% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching.

Finance. Overall, New York earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. New York also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. New York receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Ten percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But New York does require incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests, and the state's interstate portability requirements also receive a good score.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. New York receives a high score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Ten percent of principals report that finding a suitable replacement is a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers. That is 8 percentage points below the national average. In addition, only 5% of principals report that resistance from parents is a barrier to dismissal. Still, 63% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers.

Data. New York earns an average mark for its state data system. While the state provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis, it does not publicly report college remediation data.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. New York receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-seven percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. Twenty-three percent of students in the 2008 high school class passed Advanced Placement tests, compared with the national average of 15%.

Technology. New York receives an average grade in this category. While the state has not established a virtual school, it does require technology testing for teachers. New York also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, New York supports common academic standards and factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

North Carolina

School Management	C
Finance	D
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. North Carolina does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While the state sanctions low-performing schools, it has mediocre academic standards. In addition, 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching.

Finance. Overall, North Carolina earns a low grade in this category. The state gets a very poor mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. North Carolina also does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. North Carolina receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Nineteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. And while North Carolina does not require incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests, it does require basic skills tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. North Carolina receives an above-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Thirty-seven percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 24 percentage points below the national average of 61%. In addition, 66% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. North Carolina gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students and provides educators with access to an interactive, school-level database for analysis. However, North Carolina does not publicly report college remediation data.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. North Carolina receives a good mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-two percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 17 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state's high school exams do not gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. North Carolina receives a solid grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment. However, North Carolina needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, North Carolina supports common academic standards and factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

Gold Stars. In the Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation category, North Carolina receives a gold star for participating in national programs to recruit and certify nontraditional administrators. To receive a gold star, a state must have approved New Leaders for New Schools to propose candidates for state certification.

North Dakota

School Management	D
Finance	A
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	D
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	D
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. North Dakota does a disappointing job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has below-average academic standards, and 90% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. In addition, the state does not sanction low-performing schools or have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, North Dakota earns a high grade in this category. The state gets excellent marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and for the online accessibility of its financial data. However, North Dakota does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. North Dakota receives a low mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Two percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Also, only 39% of principals report a major influence over teacher hiring.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. North Dakota receives a high score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Thirty-one percent of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers. That is 41 percentage points below the national average. In addition, only 6% of principals report that resistance from parents is a barrier to dismissal. Still, 63% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers.

Data. North Dakota gets a below-average mark for its state data system. The state does not publicly report college remediation data nor does it have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. North Dakota receives a high score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Thirty-one percent of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers. That is 41 percentage points below the national average. In addition, only 6% of principals report that resistance from parents is a barrier to dismissal. Still, 63% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers.

Technology. North Dakota receives an average grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school, but it does not offer a computer-based assessment. North Dakota also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, North Dakota supports common academic standards and factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

Ohio

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Ohio does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state sanctions low-performing schools and rewards high-performing or improving ones. But 89% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and only 29% of teachers like the way things are run at their school.

Finance. Overall, Ohio earns a middling grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an excellent score for the online accessibility of its financial data. However, Ohio does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Ohio receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Seven percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. However, Ohio requires incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Ohio receives a below-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-seven percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 16 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 75% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Ohio gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year and publicly reports college remediation data.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Ohio receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-five percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 20 percentage points above the national average of 65%. In addition, Ohio requires a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Ohio receives an average grade in this category. Although the state requires technology testing for teachers, it has not established a virtual school. Ohio also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Kids Ohio and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute are members of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network. Ohio also supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. Ohio receives a gold star in the School Management category for holding charter schools accountable for their performance. We award a state a gold star if it meets two criteria: It has more than 250 charter schools and more than 15% of its charter schools have been closed.

Oklahoma

School Management	B
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	A
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Oklahoma does a solid job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state sanctions low-performing schools and rewards high-performing or improving ones. Still, 86% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching.

Finance. Overall, Oklahoma earns a middling grade in this category. The state receives below-average marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and the online accessibility of its financial data. However, Oklahoma has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Oklahoma receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twelve percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. However, Oklahoma requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests, and the state's interstate portability requirements earn a solid mark.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Oklahoma receives an above-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Fifty-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 9 percentage points below the national average of 61%. In addition, 79% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Oklahoma gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data and factors the information into its accountability system. Oklahoma also has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Oklahoma receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-nine percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 14 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, only 41% of Oklahoma schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Oklahoma receives a high grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment. Still, Oklahoma needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network. Oklahoma also supports common academic standards.

Oregon

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Oregon does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has poor academic standards, and 93% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state also does not sanction low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, Oregon earns an above-average grade in this category. While the state gets a high mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Oregon receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Four percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But Oregon requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Oregon receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 11 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 56% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Oregon gets a middling mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. Although Oregon has a P-20 longitudinal data system, it does not factor college remediation data into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Oregon receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-nine percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 4 percentage points above the national average of 65%. While the state does not require a college- and career-ready diploma, 78% of Oregon schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Oregon receives an above-average grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment. Still, Oregon needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the state reform groups E3: Employers for Education Excellence and the Chalkboard Project are members of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network. Oregon also supports common academic standards.

Pennsylvania

School Management	C
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Pennsylvania does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has below-average academic standards, and 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. However, the state sanctions low-performing schools and rewards high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, Pennsylvania earns a middling grade in this category. The state gets very low marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, but it receives a very strong score for the online accessibility of its financial data. However, it does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Pennsylvania receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Five percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But Pennsylvania requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Pennsylvania earns an excellent mark on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Sixty-one percent of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers, which is 11 percentage points below the national average. In addition, only 5% of principals report that resistance from parents is a barrier to dismissal. Still, 64% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers.

Data. Pennsylvania gets an average mark for its state data system. Although the state does not publicly report college remediation data, it does have a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Pennsylvania receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-seven percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 8 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, only 59% of Pennsylvania schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. Pennsylvania receives an average grade in this category. While the state requires technology testing for teachers, it has not established a virtual school. The state also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Pennsylvania supports common academic standards.

Rhode Island

School Management	C
Finance	D
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	D
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	C
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Rhode Island does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has lower-than-average academic standards, and 88% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. However, the state sanctions low-performing schools and provides rewards to high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, Rhode Island earns a below-average grade in this category. While the state gets an above-average mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, Rhode Island does not have a performance pay program for teachers. Districts in the state also do not have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Rhode Island receives a below-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Ten percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Rhode Island also does not require incoming teachers to pass basic skills or subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Rhode Island receives an average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Eighty-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 21 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 76% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Rhode Island gets an above-average mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year. Although Rhode Island publicly reports college remediation data, it does not factor that college remediation data into its accountability system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Rhode Island receives a low mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Forty-five percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 20 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, Rhode Island does not require a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Rhode Island receives a lower-than-average grade in this category. While the state offers a computer-based assessment, it has not established a virtual school. The state also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Rhode Island supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the School Management category, Rhode Island receives a gold star for having a state-level expanded learning time policy. To receive a gold star, a state must have an established policy to expand learning time for all students within a school and/or district, prioritizing high-poverty schools. The initiative must focus on redesigning the school day or year versus tacking on hours.

South Carolina

School Management	C
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. South Carolina does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has solid academic standards and sanctions low-performing schools. However, 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching.

Finance. Overall, South Carolina earns a good grade in this category. While the state gets a very low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it receives an above-average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. South Carolina also has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. South Carolina receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Thirteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, the same as the national average. South Carolina also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. South Carolina receives an above-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Only 15% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 46 percentage points below the national average of 61%. However, 55% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. South Carolina gets an above-average mark for its state data system. The state has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students and provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis.

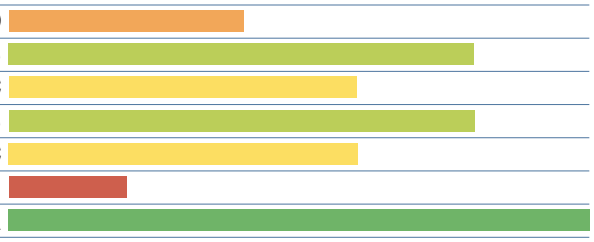
Pipeline to Postsecondary. South Carolina receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty percent of its schools report dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 15 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state does not require a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. South Carolina receives an average grade in this category. While the state has established a virtual school, it does not offer a computer-based assessment. The state also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, South Carolina factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system and supports common academic standards.

South Dakota

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	F
Technology	A
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	



School Management. South Dakota does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has mediocre academic standards, and 91% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. In addition, the state does not sanction low-performing schools or have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, South Dakota earns an above-average grade in this category. The state gets an excellent mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, and it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. However, South Dakota does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. South Dakota receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Three percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But South Dakota requires incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests. The state's interstate portability requirements also earn a high mark.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. South Dakota receives a solid score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Fifty-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 9 percentage points below the national average of 61%. However, 73% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. South Dakota gets a middling mark for its state data system. While the state does not publicly report college remediation data, it does have the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. South Dakota receives a dismal mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Thirty-eight percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 27 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, only 32% of South Dakota schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. South Dakota receives a high grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment. Still, the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the state supports common academic standards.

Tennessee

School Management	C
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	A
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Tennessee does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While the state sanctions low-performing schools, 91% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state's academic standards also receive a middling mark.

Finance. Overall, Tennessee earns a solid grade in this category. The state gets above-average marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and for the online accessibility of its financial data. Tennessee also has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Tennessee receives a high mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Thirteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, the same as the national average. But Tennessee requires teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests. The state's interstate portability requirements also get a solid mark.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Tennessee receives a low score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-one percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 10 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 91% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Tennessee gets a solid mark for its state data system. While the state does not publicly report college remediation data, it provides educators with access to a school-level database for analysis. The state also has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Tennessee receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-two percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 7 percentage points above the national average of 65%. In addition, Tennessee requires a college- and career-ready diploma, and its high school exams gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Tennessee receives a poor grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Tennessee also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the reform group Tennessee Score is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network. Tennessee also supports common academic standards.

Texas

School Management	C
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	A
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Texas does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 89% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching, the state sanctions low-performing schools and provides rewards to high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, Texas earns an above-average grade in this category. The state gets a solid mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Texas receives an excellent mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twenty-seven percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Texas also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Texas receives a high score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Only 29% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 32 percentage points below the national average of 61%. However, 52% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Texas gets an average mark for its state data system. While the state does not publicly report college remediation data, it does have a P-20 longitudinal data system. Texas also has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Texas receives a solid mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. This figure is slightly higher than the national average of 65%. In addition, the state has high school exams that gauge college and career readiness, and it requires a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Texas receives an average grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school, but it does require technology testing for teachers. Texas also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Texas Institute for Education Reform is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network. The state also factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

Utah

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	A
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Utah does a disappointing job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has below-average academic standards, and 92% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state also does not sanction low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, Utah earns a good grade in this category. While the state gets a low mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, it gives districts full authority over teacher pay. The state also has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Utah receives a mediocre mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Eight percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But Utah requires incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests, and 87% of principals report a major influence over teacher hiring.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Utah receives a below-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Fifty-five percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 6 percentage points below the national average of 61%. But 38% of principals report that the stress of dismissal is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers. That is 24 percentage points greater than the national average.

Data. Utah gets a high score for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data, and it has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers with students. Utah also has a P-20 longitudinal data system.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Utah receives a below-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Fifty-three percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 12 percentage points below the national average of 65%. Also, Utah does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Utah receives a low grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school, but it does not offer a computer-based assessment. Utah also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Utah supports common academic standards.

Vermont

School Management	C
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	C
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Vermont does a mediocre job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has lower-than-average academic standards and does not have a charter school law. However, the state sanctions low-performing schools and rewards high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, Vermont earns an above-average grade in this category. While the state does not have a performance pay program for teachers, Vermont gets a solid mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism. Districts in the state also have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Vermont receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Fifteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Vermont also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Vermont receives a very good score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Forty-five percent of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers. That is 27 percentage points below the national average. In addition, only 4% of principals report that resistance from parents is a barrier to dismissal. Still, 70% of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 9 percentage points above the national average of 61%.

Data. Vermont gets a mediocre mark for its state data system. Although the state does not publicly report college remediation data, Vermont does have the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Vermont receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is slightly higher than the national average of 65%. However, Vermont does not require a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Vermont receives an average grade in this category. While the state has not established a virtual school, it does require technology testing for teachers. Vermont also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Vermont supports common academic standards and factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

Virginia

School Management	C
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	A
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	A
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Virginia does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While 89% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching, the state sanctions low-performing schools. The state's academic standards also earn a good mark.

Finance. Overall, Virginia earns a solid grade in this category. Although Virginia does not have a performance pay program for teachers, the state gets a good mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism. Districts in the state also have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Virginia receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Fifteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Virginia also requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests. The state also gets a good mark for its interstate portability requirements.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Virginia receives an excellent score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Thirty-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 29 percentage points below the national average of 61%. However, 67% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Virginia gets a mediocre mark for its state data system. Virginia does not publicly report college remediation data, but it does provide educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Virginia receives an average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-two percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 17 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state does not require a college- and career-ready diploma.

Technology. Virginia receives a high grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment. Still, Virginia needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Virginia supports common academic standards.

Washington

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B
Technology	D
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Washington does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has poor academic standards, and 91% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. In addition, the state does not have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, Washington earns a middling grade in this category. The state gets an average mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and a solid score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Washington does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Washington receives a good mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. While the state's participation in national programs to recruit nontraditional teachers receives a below-average mark, Washington requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Washington receives a below-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-nine percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 18 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 70% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Washington gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state has the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year and has a P-20 longitudinal data system. However, Washington does not publicly report college remediation data.

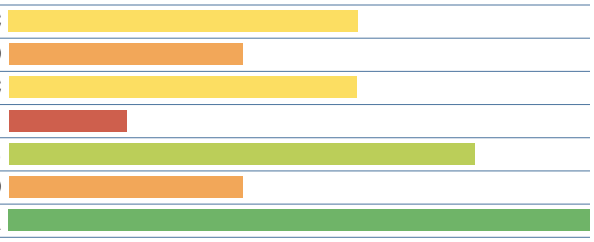
Pipeline to Postsecondary. Washington receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-three percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 18 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, Washington does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Washington receives a low grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Washington needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the Washington-based Partnership for Learning and the League of Education Voters are members of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network. The state also supports common academic standards and factors a reliable graduation rate into its accountability system.

West Virginia

School Management	C
Finance	D
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	B
Pipeline to Postsecondary	D
Technology	A
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	



School Management. West Virginia does a mediocre job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has middling academic standards and does not have a charter school law. However, the state sanctions low-performing schools and provides rewards to high-performing or improving ones.

Finance. Overall, West Virginia earns a below-average grade in this category. The state gets a solid mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. Also, West Virginia does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. West Virginia receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Seven percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But West Virginia requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests and has solid interstate portability requirements.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. West Virginia receives a very poor score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 9 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 71% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. West Virginia gets a solid mark for its state data system. The state provides educators with access to an interactive school-level database and has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. West Virginia receives a low mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Sixty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is slightly higher than the national average of 65%. However, West Virginia does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. West Virginia receives an excellent grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment. Still, the state should significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, West Virginia supports common academic standards.

Wisconsin

School Management	D
Finance	C
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	☆

School Management. Wisconsin does a disappointing job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has below-average academic standards, and 91% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state also does not sanction low-performing schools.

Finance. Overall, Wisconsin earns a middling grade in this category. The state gets below-average marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and for the online accessibility of its financial data. However, districts in Wisconsin have full authority over teacher pay.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Wisconsin receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Seven percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. However, Wisconsin requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Wisconsin receives a dismal score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Eighty-four percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 23 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 75% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Wisconsin gets an average mark for its state data system. The state does not publicly report college remediation data, but it does provide educators with access to an interactive school-level database for analysis.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Wisconsin receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-six percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 21 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Wisconsin receives an above-average grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and requires technology testing for teachers. Still, Wisconsin needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Wisconsin supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation category, Wisconsin receives a gold star for participating in national programs to recruit and certify nontraditional administrators. To receive a gold star, a state must have approved New Leaders for New Schools to propose candidates for state certification.

Wyoming

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	D
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	A
Pipeline to Postsecondary	C
Technology	B
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	

School Management. Wyoming does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has very poor academic standards, and 93% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching.

Finance. Overall, Wyoming earns an above-average grade in this category. While the state receives a very low score for the online accessibility of its financial data, Wyoming gets a particularly high mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism. Additionally, 97% of principals report a major amount of control of the school budget.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Wyoming receives a below-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Five percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. Also, Wyoming does not require incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Wyoming receives an above-average score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Fifty-six percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 5 percentage points below the national average of 61%. In addition, 76% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Wyoming gets an excellent mark for its state data system. The state publicly reports college remediation data and has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers with students.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Wyoming receives a mediocre mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Eighty-one percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 16 percentage points above the national average of 65%. However, the state does not have high school exams that gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Wyoming receives an above-average grade in this category. The state offers a computer-based assessment, but it has not established a virtual school. Still, Wyoming needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, Wyoming supports common academic standards.

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