RATING THE RATINGS

AN ANALYSIS OF THE 51 ESSA ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS

BY BRANDON L. WRIGHT
AND MICHAEL J. PETRILLI

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Our Criteria – in our view, states should:

1.) Assign annual ratings to schools that are clear and intuitive;

2.) Encourage schools to focus on all students, not just their low performers;

3.) Fairly measure and judge all schools, including those with high rates of poverty.
Clear, intuitive labels

- **Strong**: A-F, five stars, or the equivalent

- **Medium**: Text labels that are easy to understand

- **Weak**: Data dashboards or text labels that aren’t clear regarding a school’s quality, or identification of only schools eligible for improvement
Clear, intuitive labels

- **Exemplar: Arizona** uses A-F letter grades to clearly convey to all observers how well a given school is performing.
Focus on all students

- **Strong**: At least 50 percent of schools’ annual ratings are made up of a performance index or average scale scores; and growth for all students.
- **Medium**: Between 33 and 50 percent of schools’ annual ratings are made up of a performance index or average scale scores; and growth for all students.
- **Weak**: Less than 33 percent of schools’ annual ratings are made up of a performance index or average scale scores; and growth for all students.
Focus on all students

- Exemplar: 95 percent of Colorado’s school rating is composed of scale scores and a growth measure for all students.
Fair to high-poverty schools

- **Strong:** Academic growth of any kind constitutes at least 50 percent of a state’s summative rating system

- **Medium:** Academic growth of any kind constitutes between 33 and 50 percent of a state’s summative rating system

- **Weak:** Academic growth of any kind constitutes less than 33 percent of a state’s summative rating system
Fair to high-poverty schools

- **Exemplar: Tennessee** is strong on this metric because various academic growth measures will constitute 80 percent of schools’ annual ratings.