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Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

The study team for this project consists of a prime contractor, Westat and a subcontractor, Mathematica Policy Research. Neither of these organizations or their key staff has financial interests that could be affected by findings from this study, *Implementation of Title I and Title II-A Program Initiatives: Results from 2013–14.*

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Executive Summary

A. Introduction

This report describes the implementation of policies and initiatives supported by Title I and Title II-A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)[1] during the 2013–14 school year. Title I is one of the U.S. Department of Education's largest programs, accounting for $15 billion in the 2016 federal budget. Historically, Title I has provided financial assistance to schools and districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families to help increase these students' achievement.

Title II-A of ESEA (Improving Teacher Quality State Grants) likewise provides substantial federal resources to support the education of low-income students, focusing specifically on improving educator quality. Title II-A funds may be used for teacher recruitment and retention, professional development, mentoring, induction, or class-size reduction. State grants under Title II-A amount to over $2 billion in the 2016 federal budget.

Over the past decade, there have been notable changes in federal and state education policies to increase the rigor of content standards and develop richer assessments; the use of student achievement growth (alongside proficiency levels) in school accountability measures; additional federal funds (as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act[2]) to support the turnaround of chronically low-performing schools; and initiatives to promote educator effectiveness, particularly through the development of new educator evaluation systems (promoted by Race to the Top and the Department of Education's ESEA flexibility initiative). Titles I and II-A of ESEA were major vehicles for providing federal funding supporting these initiatives and establishing regulations to promote them.

ESEA was subsequently re-authorized in December 2015 with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).[3] ESSA departs in substantial ways from prior federal policy, giving states more discretion to design and implement their own policies regarding the use of funds from Titles I and II-A..

This report uses nationally representative data collected during the 2013–14 school year to examine the implementation of policies promoted through Title I and Title II-A of ESEA. Using surveys of states, districts, principals, and teachers alongside extant data and documents, this report describes trends in student achievement as well as policy and practice in 2013–14 in three core areas: (1) state content standards and assessments in math and reading/ELA, (2) school accountability, and (3) teacher and principal evaluation and support. Several prior studies have examined one or more of these areas (Hyslop 2013; Rentner 2013; Achieve 2015; Pennington 2014; Doherty & Jacobs 2015); however, these studies use data collected only from states, or in one case from a non-nationally representative sample of schools. This report provides policymakers with detailed information on how ESEA provisions in these

[1] The Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002), P.L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 *et seq.*

[2] American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, 26 U.S.C. § 1 et seq.

[3] Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, P.L. 114-95, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 *et seq.*

three areas have been playing out in states, districts, schools, and classrooms across the country. Prior to examining implementation, the report describes trends in student outcomes, particularly on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), to provide context for the implementation findings.

Key Findings

- **Proficiency rates on the NAEP slightly increased from 2005 to 2015.** For example, the percentage of public school students proficient in 4th-grade math was 35 percent in 2005 and increased to 39 percent in 2015. Increases in proficiency between 2005 and 2015 were evident in reading and math; in elementary, middle, and high school grades; across racial and ethnic groups; and in the large majority of individual states.
- **Most states adopted and most principals and teachers reported implementing state standards that focused on college- and career-readiness in 2013–14.** All 43 states with ESEA flexibility committed to having college- and career-ready standards in place by 2013–14 and seven of the eight states without flexibility had adopted college- and career-ready standards through the Common Core State Standards. Sixty-nine percent of principals reported fully implementing state content standards in ELA in all grades in their schools; in math, 67 percent of principals reported full implementation. Most teachers (79 percent) reported receiving professional development related to state content standards, and a large majority (92 percent) reported weekly use of instructional activities likely to promote the attainment of college- and career-ready standards. High school principals and teachers reported less implementation of standards and more challenges to implementation, relative to elementary and middle school principals and teachers.
- **Many state assessments incorporated more sophisticated response formats to better assess students' college- and career-readiness**. In their reading/ELA summative assessments, 24 to 36 states (depending on grade level) reported using extended constructed-response formats, a type of response format intended to assess higher-order thinking skills. Nineteen states used this response format in math assessments.
- **States used ESEA flexibility to move away from the 100 percent proficiency goal required under the 2002 reauthorization of ESEA (known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)) and to target a narrower set of schools—those with persistently lowest performance or substantial student achievement gaps—for additional support.** Twenty-eight of the 43 states with ESEA flexibility adopted a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students and subgroups not proficient in 6 to 8 years. States with ESEA flexibility identified 5 percent of Title I schools as lowest performing and an additional 10 percent of Title I schools with substantial student achievement gaps, while states still operating under NCLB identified 43 percent of Title I schools as lowest performing. Schools identified as lowest-performing in states with flexibility were more likely to implement resource-intensive strategies than schools identified as lowest-performing in states without flexibility. Few of the lowest-

performing schools adopted the most-aggressive available interventions, regardless of the state's flexibility status.

- **Almost all states adopted new laws or regulations related to educator evaluation systems between 2009 and 2014, and 60 percent of districts reported full or partial implementation in 2013–14.** Overall, 32 percent of districts reported fully implementing a new teacher evaluation system, and an additional 27 percent were piloting or partially implementing a new system. However, only 18 percent of the districts reported using system characteristics consistent with emerging research (e.g., Kane & Staiger 2012; Kane, McCaffrey, Miller, & Staiger 2013; Whitehurst, Chingos, & Lindquist 2014), such as student achievement growth using statistical adjustments for student characteristics, multiple observations conducted by trained and certified observers using a professional practice rubric, and at least three performance categories.

B. Data Sources, Sample Design, Data Collection, and Analysis Methods

To examine the implementation of Titles I and II-A, the study team administered surveys to state administrators, district administrators, principals, and teachers in spring and summer 2014. We also reviewed state documents; information on school improvement status, school Title I status, and proficiency on state assessments from ED*Facts*; achievement data from NAEP; and information on school characteristics from the Common Core of Data.

The study sample included all states plus the District of Columbia and nationally representative samples of districts, schools, and core academic[4] and special education teachers. All states, 99 percent of districts, 87 percent of principals, and 80 percent of teachers responded. In total, survey responses were received from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, 562 districts, 1,091 schools, and 6,346 teachers.

The study addresses five research questions:

1. How has student achievement changed over time?
2. What content standards and high school graduation requirements are states adopting, and what materials and resources do states, districts, and schools provide to help teachers implement the state content standards?
3. What assessments do states and districts use (in terms of assessment format and coverage of grade levels and content areas), and what materials and resources do states, districts, and schools provide to support the implementation of assessments and use of assessment data?
4. What elements are included in states' accountability systems? How do states and districts identify and reward their highest-performing schools, identify and support their lowest-

[4] Core academic teachers are those whose primary subject taught was general elementary, reading/ELA, math, science, or social studies.

performing schools, and offer differentiated support for schools that are neither highest-performing nor lowest-performing?

5. How do states and districts evaluate teacher and principal effectiveness and assess equitable distribution of teachers and principals, and what supports do states, districts, and schools provide to improve teacher and principal effectiveness?

Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, frequencies, percentages) and simple statistical tests (e.g., tests for differences of proportions) were used to answer the research questions. The study was not designed to produce causal inferences, and all comparisons should be interpreted as purely descriptive. In particular, the research design does not support claims about the effects of federal policies.

In addition to examining implementation of Titles I and II-A policies and practices nationally, we looked for differences by state, district, school, and teacher characteristics to determine if some types of respondents were more likely than others to report implementing particular reforms. For selected questions, we examined differences by school grade span, Title I status, district size, state or district ESEA flexibility status, state or district teacher/principal evaluation system implementation status, teacher's primary subject taught, and school poverty.

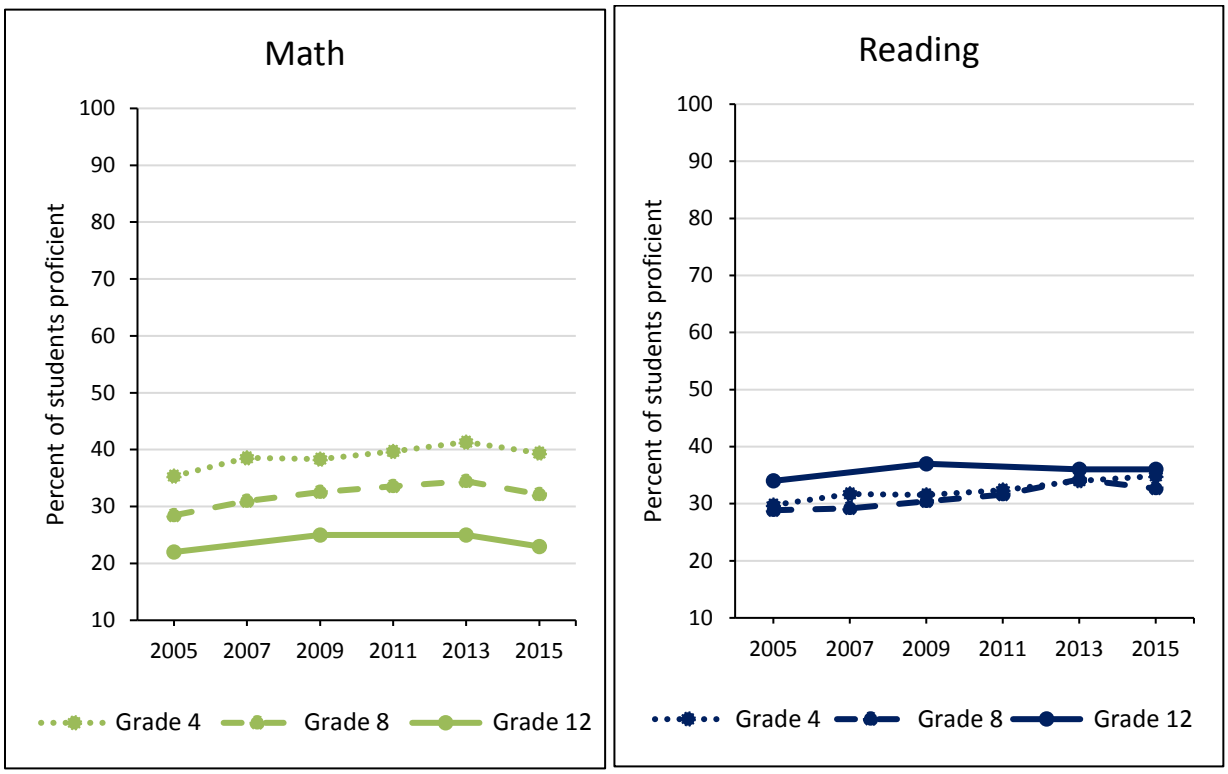
C. Trends in Student Proficiency and Graduation Rates

We examined trends in student proficiency in reading and math according to NAEP and according to states' own assessments as well as high school graduation rates.[5] Changes in student achievement cannot be attributed to any particular policy or practice examined in this report, but they provide context for the report's implementation findings.

Nationally, NAEP proficiency rates increased slightly from 2005 to 2015 in reading and math, in elementary, middle, and high school grades. Although proficiency levels declined slightly in some grades and subjects between 2013 and 2015, they remained higher than 2005 levels across the board, by 1 to 2 percentage points in 12th grade and 4 to 5 percentage points in 4th and 8th grades.

[5] For most of the trend analyses, we begin with 2005, which is the final year included in the previous National Assessment of Title I (Stullich, Eisner, & McCrary 2007). This allows us to extend the analysis of student proficiency on NAEP and state assessments.

Exhibit ES.1. Percentage of public school students proficient in math and reading, by grade: NAEP, 2005–15



Note: Percentages include students who scored at or above proficient. The 23 percent of 12th-grade students who were proficient in math in 2015 was not statistically different from the 22 percent who were proficient in 2005. In all other grades and subjects, 2015 proficiency rates exceeded 2005 proficiency rates by statistically significant margins.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), selected years, 2005–15 Math and Reading Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, tables 222.50, 222.60, 221.40, and 221.60.

NAEP proficiency rates rose from 2005 to 2015 for economically disadvantaged, African American, Hispanic, and White students. African American students, Hispanic, and White students all showed increases in proficiency in both reading and math in 4th and 8th grades on NAEP assessments. Economically-disadvantaged and Hispanic 12th grade students also showed increases in proficiency in both reading and math. Meanwhile, changes in proficiency rates for African American and White 12th grade students and for English learners and students with disabilities were mixed and often not statistically significant during the same period. Interpreting trends in the scores for English learners and students with disabilities is difficult, however, because students can move in and out of the categories, and criteria for inclusion in the category may not be identical across years.

NAEP proficiency rates increased in most states. Improvements in NAEP proficiency rates were widespread across states. Proficiency rates on NAEP math and reading exams in 4th and 8th grades improved for 46 or more states (depending on grade and subject) from 2005 to 2015. (State-specific results for 12th grade are not consistently available.)

Many states saw nominal declines in proficiency on their own assessments, perhaps because they were raising their proficiency expectations, bringing them closer to NAEP levels. Proficiency changes on state assessments were often negative. NAEP used consistent scales and proficiency expectations over time, but many states did not. Changes in proficiency rates on state assessments reflect changes in content standards, assessments, and proficiency thresholds as well as true changes in the achievement of successive cohorts of students. In consequence, changes in proficiency rates on state assessments often do not track changes in proficiency rates on NAEP. Two recent studies (Achieve, 2016; Peterson, Barrows, & Gift 2016) found that a large number of states recently raised their proficiency standards. In those states, the number of students deemed proficient on their own assessments went down, bringing their proficiency expectations more in line with those of NAEP.

The national high school graduation rate rose from 75 percent in 2004–05 to 83 percent in 2014–15. By state, 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rates in 2013–14 varied from 69 percent in the District of Columbia to nearly 91 percent in Iowa.

D. Content Standards and Assessments

Since 1994, ESEA has required states to adopt content standards in reading/ELA and math and administer student assessments aligned to those standards.[6] Early content standards and proficiency expectations varied widely, and advocates argued that high schools needed to raise standards to meet increased demands of college and the workplace (Achieve, 2004). The National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve began developing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with an aim to identify skills that students would need to be college- and career-ready. New tests were needed in order for assessments to be aligned with these new common standards and for the assessments to better measure higher-order thinking skills. The study describes state and local efforts as of spring 2014 related to content standards and assessments.

State policies related to standards and assessments have continued to change in the last few years.[7] In addition, under ESSA, states will have more flexibility regarding the content standards they adopt, but will still be required to have challenging standards that promote college- and career-readiness. ESSA continues to require states to assess students annually in math and ELA in each of grades 3 through 8 and once in grades 9 through 12 and in science at least once during each of three grade ranges (3–5, 6–9, and 10–12). ESSA provides greater flexibility in the types of assessments used (including the option to combine scores from multiple interim assessments) and allows states to set a limit on the percentage of instructional time devoted to assessments.

[6] See Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, P.L. 103-382, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 *et seq.*

[7] More than 25 states that had adopted the CCSS renamed the standards as of September 2014 (Salazar & Christie 2014). As of 2015, three states had replaced the CCSS standards; seven states were reviewing the standards; and the legislatures in 21 states were considering bills to stop implementing the standards. The number of states committed to using the new, CCSS-aligned assessments has changed as well, with many states withdrawing from the testing consortia. For the 2015–16 testing period, 21 states planned to use the Smarter Balanced or PARCC assessments (Gewertz 2016).

1. Implementation of State Content Standards in ELA and Math

In order for new content standards adopted at the state level to have an effect on student achievement, they must be supported with aligned instructional materials and professional development at the school and classroom levels.

Most states adopted and implemented state content standards that focused on college and career readiness in 2013–14. All 43 states that received ESEA flexibility committed to having college- and career-ready standards in place by 2013–14. In addition, seven of the eight states without flexibility had adopted college- and career-ready standards through the Common Core State Standards.

A majority of principals reported full implementation of reading/ELA and math state content standards in their schools during 2013–14. Twenty-five to 26 states (depending on grade spans) reported requiring districts to fully implement reading/ELA and math curricula aligned with state content standards in 2013–14. Full implementation of the reading/ELA or math standards was reported at significantly higher rates by elementary (71–72 percent) and middle school (73–74 percent) principals than by high school (58–59 percent) principals.

Most teachers reported receiving professional development related to state content standards for reading/ELA or math. Teachers in elementary schools (84 percent) were significantly more likely than teachers in high schools (70 percent) and middle schools (74 percent) to report receiving professional development on standards. Eighty percent of teachers worked with other teachers across grades or courses in 2013–14 to make connections between the state content standards, curricula, and lesson plans. Forty-four percent reported engaging with teachers of the same grade or subject at least weekly to plan lessons or courses.

Nearly half of teachers reported using instructional activities consistent with college- and career-ready reading/ELA and math standards every day, and more reported using these practices at least weekly. Forty-four percent of teachers reported daily use of instructional activities that incorporated literary and informational texts, applied math concepts in real-world situations, or had students demonstrate math understanding through complex problem solving. Over 90 percent of teachers reported using these practices at least weekly.

Few teachers found incorporating the state content standards into their instruction to be a major challenge. Although, only 20 percent of teachers reported that incorporating the state content standards into their instruction as a major challenge, when asked about specific challenges, teachers reported higher percentages for one or more issues. For example, lack of time for lesson planning was reported as a major challenge by 56 percent of teachers and 40 percent of teachers reported professional development as a major challenge.

Almost two-thirds of teachers reported classroom visits by an administrator, a mentor, or a coach to see how the teacher's instruction aligned with state content standards. Overall, 63 percent of teachers reported classroom visits to observe alignment of instruction with state content standards, and a higher percentage of elementary teachers (70 percent) than other teachers (61 percent of middle

school teachers and 52 percent of high school teachers) reported these visits. Teachers reported more monitoring of alignment in states with ESEA flexibility and a Race to the Top grant (72 percent) compared to states without ESEA flexibility (45 percent). The data do not allow us to determine whether the patterns reflect the influence of the federal program or pre-existing differences between the states.

2. Types of State Assessments and Ways Educators Prepared Students for Assessments

Assessments provide a measure for how well students are meeting standards. The adoption of college- and career-ready standards required new assessments in order to be aligned with content standards and to better assess higher-order thinking skills.

In 2013–14, a majority of states participated in piloting the PARCC or Smarter Balanced assessments. Thirty-one states piloted the PARCC or Smarter Balanced summative assessments in spring 2014. Since this study's data collection, some of these states no longer belong to the PARCC or Smarter Balanced consortia and are administering different assessments. In spring 2015, 30 states participated in full-scale PARCC or Smarter Balanced assessments, and 21 states planned to use these assessments for 2015–16 testing.[8]

Many state assessments incorporated more sophisticated response formats to better assess students' college- and career-readiness. In 2013–14, 24 to 36 states (depending on grade level) reported using extended constructed-response formats, a type of response format intended to assess higher-order thinking skills, in their reading/ELA summative assessments. Nineteen states used this response format in math assessments. Many states that reported using extended constructed-response formats were states that reported participating in the PARCC or Smarter Balanced pilot in spring 2014. However, 8 to 14 states (depending on grade level) not in the pilot reported using this type of response format in their reading/ELA summative assessments, and 5 to 6 states (depending on grade level) not in the pilot reported using this format for their math summative assessments.

A majority of districts reported administering summative assessments or assessment items in reading/ELA or math in addition to the required state summative assessments. Depending on the grade level, 48–60 percent of districts required administering additional summative assessments or assessment items in reading/ELA, and 46-57 percent of districts did so in math. Twenty-one percent of districts reported not requiring any additional districtwide reading/ELA summative assessments or assessment items across all grades, while 24 percent of districts reported not requiring any additional districtwide math summative assessments or assessment items.

All states provided some type of accommodations for English learners and students with disabilities. Nearly all (48) states reported that English learners could be given extra time to take assessments. Most states allowed a range of assessment accommodations for students with disabilities. For example, all states allowed students with disabilities to be given flexibility in timing or scheduling, to respond in a different manner, and to be assessed in a different setting.

[8] See Gewertz (2015) for information on states that participated in the full-scale 2015 consortia assessments. See the Boston Foundation (2015) for information on Massachusetts' participation. See Gewertz (2016) for information on state plans for 2015–16.

3. Resources to Support Implementation of Assessments and Use of Assessment Data

Both PARCC and Smarter Balanced summative assessments are administered on computers, resulting in new technology requirements and a need for support in using data from these assessments.

In spring 2014, most districts expected students to use computers for 2015 state assessments, but many lacked needed technology. Seventy-two percent of districts reported in spring 2014 that they expected their students to use computers for assessments the following year. This percentage was nearly 90 percent of districts in states that subsequently administered PARCC or Smarter Balanced assessments in spring 2015. Among districts where students would be required to use computers, 64 percent of all districts and 59 percent of those in the consortia assessment states reported in 2014 having both sufficient computer resources and sufficient Internet bandwidth for the 2015 assessments.

Most teachers reported receiving professional development on analyzing and using student assessment data to support instruction. Seventy-seven percent of teachers reported receiving professional development for using assessment data, and thirty-seven percent of teachers reported working with an instructional coach on assessment data. Teachers in elementary and middle schools were significantly more likely than teachers in high schools to receive these supports. For example, 45 percent of teachers in elementary schools and 33 percent of teachers in middle schools reported working with an instructional coach on assessment data compared to 25 percent of teachers in high schools.

Most teachers reported using assessment data for instruction, especially in elementary schools. More than 80 percent of teachers reported that they used assessment data for a variety of purposes, including setting measurable learning objectives (91 percent), evaluating the effectiveness of a lesson/unit (89 percent), planning instruction (88 percent), and monitoring the progress of different groups of students (81–95 percent, depending on the subgroup). For almost every purpose, teachers in elementary schools (84–97 percent) were most likely and high school teachers (69–91 percent) were least likely to use assessment data.

4. State High School Graduation Requirements

High school graduation requirements provide an additional way for states and stakeholders to promote students' college- and career-readiness. In the last decade, many states have increased their high school graduation requirements.

A majority of states required students graduating in 2014 to take 4 years of reading/ELA, but fewer years of other core academic subjects to receive a standard high school diploma. Forty-four states required graduating high school students to take 4 years of reading/ELA. States with minimum coursework requirements for a standard high school diploma in 2014 required an average of 3.9 years of reading/ELA, 3.3 years of math, and approximately 3 years of science and social studies. Most states (36) did not report changes to core academic course requirements for students entering high school in 2013 relative to those entering high school in 2010.

Most states required graduating students to take some kind of an exam. Thirty-nine states required students graduating in 2014 with a standard high school diploma to take some kind of exam, although some did not require them to pass the exam. Nine states required students not only to take but to pass end-of-course/grade subject tests, and 10 states required students to pass a comprehensive, exit, or grade-specific exam. The most common testing requirement involved subject-specific tests at the end of a course or grade, which was required by 23 states.

E. Accountability and Support for Schools and Districts

Outcome-based accountability systems for schools are designed to establish goals for student achievement, inform stakeholders about the progress and performance of schools, and identify struggling schools for support and improvement. NCLB required states to establish goals for student proficiency on state-mandated assessments, with annual targets rising over time so that by 2014, all students would be proficient. Schools that fell short of targets were identified for improvement and were subject to an increasingly aggressive set of interventions. ESEA flexibility regulations were introduced in 2012, inviting states to reset their proficiency goals and broaden the scope of their accountability measures. In 2013–14, when the surveys for this study were conducted, 42 states and the District of Columbia had been granted ESEA flexibility. Eight states continued to operate under NCLB policies.

ESSA gives all states substantially more discretion to design their own accountability systems in the future. States must still set long-term goals and report student achievement, and they must identify persistently low-performing schools and schools with low-performing subgroups. But ESSA directs states to design their own long-term goals, measures of school performance, and strategies for improving low-performing schools.

1. Measures of School Performance and Progress

Under NCLB, states had to adopt a long-term goal of 100 percent student proficiency in math and ELA by 2014. ESEA flexibility allowed states to re-set their long-term proficiency goals, and allowed them to use a wider range of student achievement measures than was required under NCLB. States receiving flexibility identified high- and low-performing schools based on their success in meeting annual school performance targets.

Most states with ESEA flexibility adopted a long-term proficiency goal that differed from NCLB's 100 percent proficiency goal. Twenty-eight of the 43 states with ESEA flexibility adopted a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students and subgroups not proficient in 6 to 8 years. Fifteen states (seven states with ESEA flexibility and eight states without ESEA flexibility) sought to achieve proficiency for 75–100 percent of their students. Eight states with ESEA flexibility established other goals for proficiency.

About half of the states with ESEA flexibility set annual school performance targets that varied across schools. NCLB required all schools to meet the same annual school performance targets, but states with ESEA flexibility were permitted to vary the targets for different schools. In 21 of 23 states

that allowed targets to vary, targets were based on the school's initial proficiency rate, so that schools with lower initial proficiency rates would have lower initial targets that increased more rapidly.

Under NCLB, schools that missed proficiency targets for two years were identified for improvement; after four years, they were required to implement more aggressive interventions. ESEA flexibility, in contrast, required states to identify 3 categories of schools—(1) the persistently lowest-performing 5 percent of Title I schools (priority schools), (2) 10 percent of Title I schools with the greatest achievement gaps (focus schools), and (3) highest-performing and high-progress schools (reward schools). To identify these categories of schools, many states rank ordered schools by the level of performance and the size of achievement gaps using a broader set of measures than were used for annual school performance targets.

To identify high- and low-performing schools, some states with flexibility used a wider range of assessments and other measures than were required under NCLB. Sixteen of the 43 states with ESEA flexibility expanded the assessments used to identify high- and low-performing schools to include science or social studies. Some states used additional academic measures, including college entrance exam participation or scores (16 states), career or technical courses or certification (7 states), and enrollment in college courses or dual enrollment (6 states). Two states included enrollment in college post-high school and one used student and parent engagement surveys. States also used measures beyond proficiency levels and graduation rates to identify low-performing schools. For example, 17 states with ESEA flexibility examined the achievement growth of individual students to identify priority schools and 21 states used subgroup achievement gaps to identify focus schools.

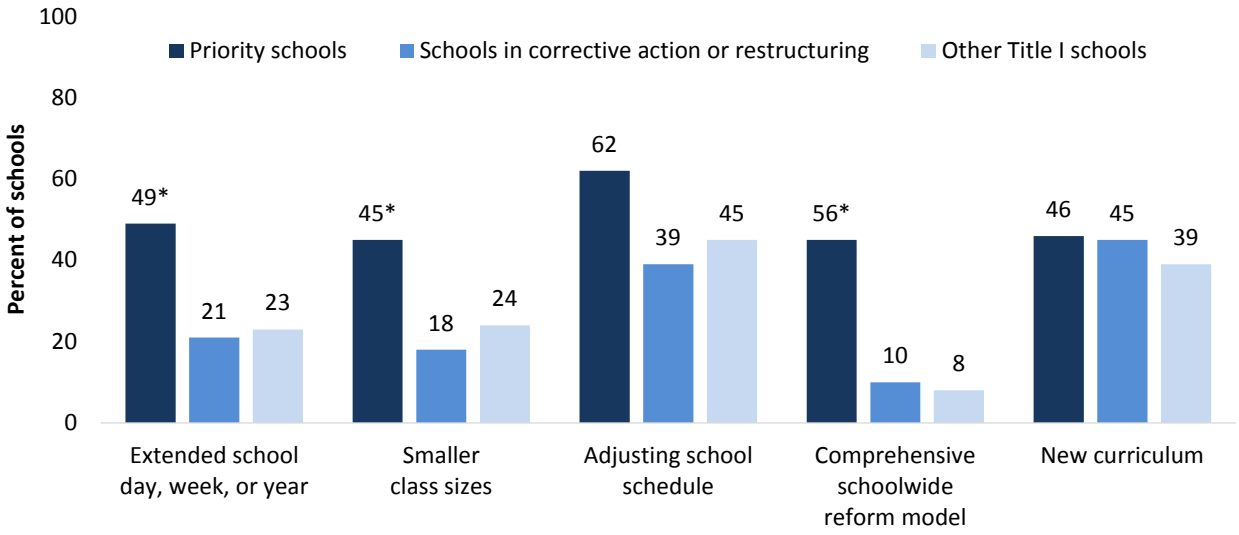
2. Identifying and Supporting the Lowest-Performing Schools, and Identifying and Rewarding the Highest-Performing Schools

Under NCLB, aggressive interventions for schools began after they missed school performance targets for four years; at this point, they were classified as "in corrective action" and after five years, schools were "in restructuring." As the annual school performance targets rose toward 100 percent proficiency, the number of schools in corrective action and restructuring increased substantially. ESEA flexibility eliminated these NCLB requirements and instead allowed states to concentrate resources and attention on a smaller group of the lowest-performing Title I schools, known as priority schools. States with ESEA flexibility identified a smaller number of persistently low-performing Title I priority schools, which were required to adopt a set of turnaround practices that included replacing low-performing principals and teachers, providing job-embedded professional development, increasing learning time, and using data to support instruction. States with ESEA flexibility also identified focus schools with subgroup achievement gaps for interventions designed to address the gaps.

States with ESEA flexibility identified a narrower set of Title I schools as those with persistently lowest performance compared to states operating under NCLB. States identified 6,957 schools as lowest performing in 2013–14, including 5 percent of Title I schools in states with ESEA flexibility (priority schools) and 43 percent of Title I schools in states still operating under NCLB rules (schools in corrective action or restructuring).

Title I priority schools were more likely than other Title I schools to adopt resource-intensive strategies of extending school time, reducing class sizes, or implementing a comprehensive schoolwide reform model. Substantial percentages of principals of priority schools reported that they had adopted extended school time (49 percent in Title I priority schools vs. 23 percent in other Title I schools), or reduced class sizes (45 percent vs. 24 percent)—strategies that entail additional staffing costs. Many priority schools also adopted a comprehensive schoolwide reform model (56 percent vs. 8 percent), a strategy that requires working with the model's developer over a lengthy period and extensive professional development (Exhibit ES.2). Schools in corrective action and restructuring usually offered school choice (78 percent) and supplemental educational services (88 percent), as required by NCLB, but were not more likely than other Title I schools to implement many other reforms.

Exhibit ES.2. Percentage of lowest-performing and other Title I schools implementing instructional interventions to support student achievement: 2013–14



* Percentage is statistically different from percentage for other Title I schools ($p < .05$).
Note: The category, "other Title I schools," excludes focus schools, priority schools, schools in corrective action, and schools in restructuring.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Implementation of Title I/II Program Initiatives: Spring 2014 Principal Survey.

Most of the lowest-performing Title I schools did not adopt the most aggressive governance and staffing interventions available to them. Much like low-performing schools under NCLB and SIG (Hurlburt et al., 2011; Scott, 2008; Scott & Kober, 2009; Taylor et al., 2010; Troppe et al., 2015), most Title I priority schools and schools in corrective action and restructuring did not experience closure, re-opening under new management, or replacement of most of the staff. More priority schools replaced their principals than replaced teachers: 18 percent of Title I priority schools replaced their principals before the start of the 2013–14 school year as part of the school improvement plan.

A majority of Title I priority school principals reported that the school's progress was monitored by site visits and collection of student data. Eighty-six percent of Title I priority school principals reported that they were monitored by site visits, and 75 percent said their student data were

collected for monitoring purposes. About half of Title I priority schools experienced each of these monitoring activities quarterly or more often (49 percent for site visits and 47 percent for collection of student data).

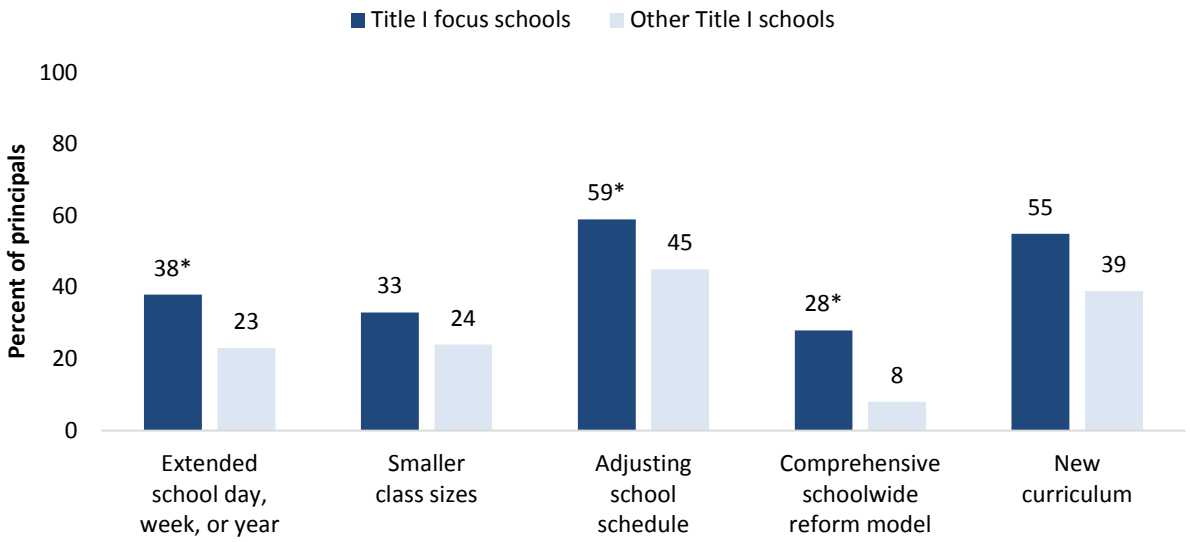
Compared to the level of monitoring in priority and focus schools, monitoring was much less common in Title I schools in corrective action and restructuring. In priority and focus schools, 26 percent of principals reported no monitoring by the state or districts, whereas in Title I schools in corrective action and restructuring, three-quarters of principals reported no monitoring of any kind.

ESEA flexibility required that states identify not only low-performing schools, but also schools with substantial subgroup achievement gaps (focus schools) and provide additional support to those schools.

Consistent with federal requirements, all states with ESEA flexibility identified 10 percent of their Title I schools with low subgroup achievement as focus schools. In 2013–14, states with ESEA flexibility identified 4,571 schools as Title I focus schools, comprising 10 percent of all Title I schools both overall and within each state.

A majority of principals of Title I focus schools reported implementing several activities consistent with state requirements and the level of support for such schools. Nearly all (97 percent) focus school principals reported developing a school improvement plan. A majority of Title I focus schools adopted a new curriculum (55 percent) (Exhibit ES.3). Fewer than half of focus schools adopted the more resource-intensive interventions, such as extending school time (38 percent), reducing class sizes (33 percent), or implementing a comprehensive schoolwide reform model (28 percent). However, a larger proportion of focus schools compared with other Title I schools adopted each of these interventions except class size reduction. There were few differences between Title I focus schools and other Title I schools in the proportions of principals and teachers receiving professional development or technical assistance on a range of topics.

Exhibit ES.3 Percentage of principals reporting that they implemented instructional interventions, by low-performing Title I school status: 2013–14



* Percentage is statistically different from percentage for other Title I schools ($p < .05$).
Note: The category, "Other Title I schools," excludes priority schools, schools in corrective action, and schools in restructuring.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Implementation of Title I/II Program Initiatives: Spring 2014 Principal Survey.

Both NCLB and ESEA flexibility sought not only to identify and support the lowest-performing schools, but also to identify and support high-performing schools.

Almost all states identified highest-performing or high-progress schools. Of the 48 states that identified highest-performing or high-progress schools in 2013–14, all of the states publicly recognized high-performing Title I schools, and 17 states provided financial rewards. Only five states provided more operating flexibility and autonomy to these schools.

F. Teacher and Principal Evaluation, Support, and Equity of Distribution

NCLB required all teachers of core academic subjects to be highly qualified, which was defined as having a bachelor's degree, full state certification, and competency in the core areas in which they teach. Starting in 2012, states granted ESEA flexibility were allowed to abandon the "highly qualified" teacher requirement and instead were required to implement teacher and principal evaluation systems consistent with emerging research. States were also encouraged to use evaluation results to make personnel decisions, assess the equity of students' access to effective educators, and inform individualized professional development for educators.

This study documents the state of educator evaluation policies and practices and related supports in 2013–14. It also looks at how states and districts assess the equity of students' access to effective educators. ESSA allows Title II-A funds to be used for evaluation systems, but does not have any requirements for those systems. ESSA also requires that teachers meet state certification

requirements but eliminates NCLB's requirement of staffing core subjects with "highly qualified" teachers. Thus, it reduces the federal role in educator evaluation and teacher certification in the future.

1. Educator Evaluation Systems

The evolving research on measuring teacher effectiveness (e.g., Kane & Staiger 2012; Kane et al. 2013; Whitehurst, et al. 2014; Chaplin, Gill, Tompkins, & Miller 2014) supports evaluation systems that include: (1) student achievement growth, measured with statistical methods such as value-added models (VAMs) or student growth percentiles (SGPs) that can account for differences in the students served by different teachers; (2) multiple observations of practice conducted by trained and certified observers using a professional practice rubric; and (3) at least three performance rating categories. Our findings on the implementation of educator evaluation systems in 2013–14 focus on these three elements commonly associated with valid and reliable measures of teacher performance that are intended to identify higher and lower performing teachers.

Since 2009, almost all states adopted new laws or regulations governing teacher evaluation, but only a few required all of the practices that might validly and reliably differentiate among teachers. In 2013–14, most states (36) included some measure of student achievement growth in their teacher evaluation system, but only 19 required VAM or SGP statistical methods based on a teacher's own students. A majority of states (39) required at least one classroom observation using a professional practice rubric, and most states (37) also required using at least three performance categories. Only 7 states required all three elements: (1) achievement growth measures using VAMs or SGPs based on a teacher's own students, (2) practice ratings based on at least one observation by a trained and certified observer using a professional practice rubric, and (3) at least three performance categories.

While some elements of evaluation systems were present in nearly all districts, districts varied in the use of evaluation practices consistent with valid and reliable differentiation of teacher performance. The overwhelming majority of districts (95 percent) used at least three performance categories, and nearly all (92 percent) required at least one classroom observation using a professional practice rubric. But only 29 percent of districts required at least two observations by trained and certified observers. Half of districts used student achievement growth in teacher evaluations, but only 37 percent used a VAM or SGP to assess the teacher's contribution to the achievement of his/her own students. Only 18 percent of districts used evaluation systems with all three key elements.

In 2013–14, about one-third of districts were fully implementing a teacher evaluation system established since 2009. Thirty-two percent of districts reported fully implementing a new teacher evaluation system, and an additional 27 percent were piloting or partially implementing a new system. New evaluation systems were far more prevalent among districts in states that had adopted new laws or regulations for teacher evaluation.

The vast majority of teachers viewed the observation component of their performance evaluation favorably in 2013–14. Most teachers who had recently been evaluated agreed (somewhat or strongly) that the observer was well qualified (89 percent) and that the feedback was a fair assessment

of their teaching (87 percent). Seventy-three percent of responding teachers reported receiving specific ideas of how they could improve their instruction.

More than half of teachers evaluated using student achievement growth agreed that it was a fair and beneficial measure. Sixty-one percent of responding teachers indicated that student achievement growth was included in their evaluations, and 59 percent of them somewhat or strongly agreed that it was a fair measure of their contribution to student achievement. A similar percentage (56 percent) somewhat/strongly agreed that, in the long run, students would benefit from including growth in teacher evaluations (Exhibit ES.4).

Exhibit ES.4. Percentage of teachers who somewhat/strongly agreed with statements about their evaluation: 2013–14

Statement	Percent of teachers somewhat/ strongly agreeing
Observer[1]	
The people who observed my teaching are well qualified to evaluate it	89
Feedback based on formal observations[1]	
The feedback was a fair assessment of my teaching	87
The feedback provided specific ideas about how I could improve my instruction	73
Student achievement growth used in teacher's evaluation[2]	
Student achievement growth for my students is a fair way to assess my contribution to student achievement	59
In the long run, students will benefit from including measures of student achievement growth in the evaluations of teachers	56

[1] Row is limited to teachers evaluated in 2012–13 or 2013–14 and who were formally observed at least once in 2012–13 or 2013–14 (n=5,429). Ninety-seven percent of teachers were observed at least once during these years.
[2] Row is limited to teachers evaluated in 2012-13 or 2013–14 whose evaluation included a measure of student achievement growth (VAM/SGP based on own students or a broader group, or SLOs, SGOs) (n=3,400). Sixty-one percent of teachers reported student achievement growth used in their evaluation.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Implementation of Title I/II Program Initiatives: 2014 Teacher Survey.

2. Supports Provided by States and Districts to Improve Educator Effectiveness

Title II-A has been the primary source of federal funds provided to states and districts to improve educator effectiveness since its creation as part of NCLB. This section describes how districts were using Title II-A funds, including to support the development and implementation of new teacher evaluation systems—a purpose that ESSA now explicitly authorizes as an allowable use of funds. We then turn to the ways that evaluation results have been used to promote improvements in educator effectiveness.

Professional development to support instruction was a commonly reported use of Title II-A funds. The majority of districts reported using Title II-A funds to provide professional development related to state content standards (75 percent of districts) and analyzing student assessment data (62 percent of districts). Some districts used Title II-A funds to support using teacher evaluation results, with those implementing new evaluation systems most likely to do so.

Many districts reported using teacher evaluation results to inform professional development decisions, decisions related to professional rewards for effective teachers, and tenure loss/ termination/layoff for low-performing teachers. Nearly all districts (96 percent) said they used teacher evaluation results to inform professional development. Seventy-eight percent of districts reported using evaluation results to determine any type of professional reward, such as recognizing high-performing teachers (56 percent), granting tenure (46 percent), career advancement opportunities (39 percent), or salary increases (14 percent). Eighty percent of districts reported using teacher evaluation results to inform any tenure loss/termination/layoff decision for low-performing teachers. Districts were more likely to report using the evaluation results for professional development or professional reward decisions if they were fully implementing a new system than if they were not.

Only half of teachers reported access to professional development resources specifically linked to their performance evaluation results. Fifty-one percent of teachers reported access to professional development resources such as an online resource or a principal or school leader identifying professional development opportunities, or a video library or self-paced, Internet-based modules linked to specific areas of improvement. This percentage did not differ significantly for districts that were implementing new evaluation systems and those that were not.

More than half of states reported examining the effectiveness of their teacher preparation programs. Twenty-nine states reported that they examined the effectiveness of their teacher preparation programs in the 12 months prior to the survey administration in 2014. One state reported using only teacher evaluation ratings or VAMs/SGPs to assess program effectiveness. Eight states reported using evaluation ratings or VAMs/SGPs and other factors; and 20 states reported using only other factors such as teacher certification, placement or retention, qualitative reviews of the program, classroom observations ratings, and staff feedback on graduates.

3. Equitable Distribution of Effective Educators

Under NCLB and ESEA flexibility, states were expected to ensure that disadvantaged students covered by Title I would have the same access to high-quality teachers as more advantaged students.

Thirty states reported examining the equitable distribution of teacher quality or effectiveness. Eleven states examined the distribution using some type of performance information, most commonly teacher evaluation ratings (used in 10 states). Twelve states examined the distribution of "highly qualified" teachers as defined by NCLB. Twenty-one of the 30 states examining the equitable distribution of teachers reported finding substantial inequities.

The most common state action to address inequities in the distribution of teacher quality or effectiveness was to provide additional resources to support teachers. Thirteen of the 21 states that found substantial inequities provided resources such as professional development or coaching to improve the effectiveness of less-qualified or less-effective teachers, and 6 states established financial incentives to improve disadvantaged students' access to effective teachers. Six of the 21 states reported taking no action despite identifying inequities.

As a result of ESSA, the first statutory changes in ESEA since NCLB will be initiated. ESSA departs in substantial ways from NCLB and from the Department of Education's policies in the years since the passage of NCLB. Under ESSA, states will have more discretion to design and implement their own policies related to the use of federal funds from Title I and Title II-A. It remains to be seen which of the current efforts by states and districts will continue.

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