

OHIO



THREE STARS OUT OF THREE

Ohio's accountability system is the best in the country at encouraging schools to pay attention to their high achievers. Other states should take heed.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ANALYSIS

The Every Student Succeeds Act grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than its predecessor, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Consequently, states now have an opportunity to design school rating systems that improve upon the NCLB model, especially when it comes to high achievers.

NCLB meant well (as did many state accountability systems that preceded it), but it had a pernicious flaw. Namely, it created strong incentives for schools to focus all their energy on helping low-performing students get over a modest “proficiency” bar, while ignoring the educational needs of their high achievers, who were likely to pass state reading and math tests regardless of what happened in the classroom. This may be why the United States has seen significant achievement growth for its lowest-performing students over the last twenty years but smaller gains for its top students.

Starting in 2011, former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan offered waivers to states that wanted the flexibility to redesign their accountability systems. In particular, states were allowed to incorporate the use of real student growth measures into their school determinations. This was important for a variety of reasons. First, growth measures more accurately evaluate schools' impact on student achievement than proficiency rates, which are strongly correlated with student demographics, family circumstance, and prior achievement. But just as significantly, well-designed growth measures can eliminate the temptation for schools to ignore their high achievers.

ESSA maintains NCLB's requirement that states assess students annually in grades 3–8 and once in high school, as well as the mandate that states adopt accountability systems that lead to ratings for schools. These systems must include four types of indicators: academic achievement; another academic indicator, which can include student growth for elementary and middle schools; growth towards English proficiency for English language learners; and at least one other valid, reliable indicator of school quality or student success. Each of the academic indicators (1–3) must carry “substantial” weight and, in the aggregate, must count “much more” than the fourth.

Here we examine whether Ohio's accountability system prioritizes high achievers. We specifically evaluate the state's system for rating school performance during the 2014–15 school year. We do not examine the quality of Ohio's standards, tests, or sanctions for low performance.

This analysis also illustrates how states can seize the opportunity under ESSA to redesign their accountability systems and prioritize high achievers.

This last point is especially important because many state accountability systems are currently in flux. In part, that's because of recent changes allowed by ESEA waivers, as well as the coming changes driven by ESSA implementation. But it's also because states across the country recently moved to new, tougher assessments linked to their new, tougher standards.

States may think we're being premature in evaluating their systems during this time of massive change. Please understand that our primary objective is to identify the design features of an accountability system that works for all students—which we hope will become the prevailing model now that ESEA is reauthorized and states' testing regimes are becoming stable once again.

Our focus here is on rating systems for elementary and middle schools. A separate analysis will examine the same issues for high school accountability.

HOW STATES CAN PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS IN THEIR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

In our view, states can and should take four steps to ensure that the needs of high achievers are prioritized under ESSA:

1. **For the first academic indicator required by ESSA (“academic achievement”), give schools incentives for getting more students to an “advanced” level.** Under ESSA, states will continue to track the percentage of students who attain proficiency on state tests. They should also give schools incentives for getting students to an advanced level (such as level four on Smarter Balanced or level five on PARCC). For example, they might create an achievement index that gives schools partial credit for getting students to “basic,” full credit for getting students to “proficient,” and additional credit for getting students to “advanced.” (It's not entirely clear from the Department of Education's proposed regulations whether this will be allowed, though we don't see anything in the law prohibiting it.)
2. **For the second academic indicator expected by ESSA (student growth), rate schools using a “true growth model,” i.e., one that looks at the progress of individual students at all achievement levels and not just those who are low-performing or below the “proficient” line.** Regrettably, some states still don't consider individual student growth, or else they use a “growth-to-proficiency system” that continues to encourage schools to ignore the needs of students above (or far above) the proficient level. Using true growth models—such as “value added” or the “growth percentile method”—for all students is much preferred.

3. **Include “gifted students” (or “high achieving students”) as a subgroup in the state’s accountability system and report results for them separately.** States can signal that high achievers matter by making them a visible, trackable “subgroup,” akin to special education students or English language learners, and publishing school ratings for their progress and/or achievement. (Obviously, it makes little sense to simply report that high achievers are high-achieving. But whether they are making strong growth is quite relevant. Alternatively, states might publish results for students labeled as “gifted,” though that opens up a can of worms about how that label is applied.)

4. **When determining summative school ratings, make growth—across the achievement spectrum—count the most.** Finally, the Department of Education’s proposed regulations require states to combine multiple factors into summative school ratings, probably through an index. Each of the three academic indicators (achievement, growth, and progress toward English proficiency) must carry “substantial” weight. But in our view, states should (and, under ESSA, are free to) make growth matter the most (50 percent or more of a school’s total score). Otherwise, schools will continue to face an incentive to ignore their high-performers. (States that don’t combine their indicators into a summative school rating receive a “Not Applicable” here.)

DOES OHIO’S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM PRIORITIZE HIGH ACHIEVERS?



INDICATOR	RATINGS	NOTES
1. Does the state rate schools’ “academic achievement” using a model that gives additional credit for students achieving at an “advanced” level?		Ohio gives additional credit for students achieving at “accelerated,” “advanced,” and “advanced plus” levels. (See Exhibit A.)
2. Does the state rate schools’ growth using a model that looks at the progress of all individual students, not just those below the “proficient” line?		Ohio uses a multivariate value-added model. ¹ A multivariate value-added model estimates a school’s contribution to students’ academic growth by comparing their actual growth to their expected growth based on prior achievement and other factors.
3. Does the state’s accountability system include “gifted students,” “high-achieving students,” or the like as a subgroup and report their results separately?		Ohio includes “gifted students” as a subgroup and reports their results separately. (See Exhibit B.)
4. When calculating summative school ratings, does “growth for all students” count for at least half of the rating?	NA	Ohio will not calculate summative school ratings until 2018. ²

EXHIBIT A³

2014 - 2015 Report Card for
Triway Junior High School

View Printable PDF

- Overview
- Achievement
- Progress
- Gap Closing
- Graduation Rate
- K-3 Literacy
- Prepared for Success

Achievement



This grade combines two results for students who took the state tests. The first result answers the question – How many students passed the state test? The second result answers the question – How well did students do on the state test?

COMPONENT GRADE

Coming in
2016

GRADE

C

Performance Index

The Performance Index measures the test results of every student, not just those who score proficient or higher. There are six levels on the index and schools receive points for every student in each of these levels. The higher the achievement level, the more the points awarded in the school's index. This rewards schools and districts for improving the performance of all students, regardless of achievement level.

Performance Index

- Calculation
- Pie Chart
- Trend



88.2 of a possible 120.0

- A = 90.0 - 100.0%
- B = 80.0 - 89.9%
- C = 70.0 - 79.9%
- D = 50.0 - 69.9%
- F = 0.0 - 49.9%

Achievement Level	Pct of Students		Points for this Level	=	Points Received
Advanced Plus	0.0	x	1.3	=	0.0
Advanced	3.3	x	1.2	=	4.0
Accelerated	32.6	x	1.1	=	35.9
Proficient	35.5	x	1.0	=	35.5
Basic	17.4	x	0.6	=	10.5
Limited	7.9	x	0.3	=	2.4
Untested	3.2	x	0.0	=	0.0
					88.2

GRADE

B

Indicators Met

Indicators Met measures the percent of students who have passed state tests. It also includes the gifted indicator. Test results are reported for each student in a grade and subject.

[Click here](#) for a complete list of passage rates required to meet each indicator.

Indicators Met %

- Indicators
- Comparison
- Achievement Levels
- Trend



6 out of 7

- A = 90.0 - 100.0%
- B = 80.0 - 89.9%
- C = 70.0 - 79.9%
- D = 50.0 - 69.9%
- F = 0.0 - 49.9%

Grade	Subject	Passage Rate	Met
7th Grade	Mathematics	72.4%	✓
	Reading	70.1%	✓
8th Grade	Mathematics	72.3%	✓
	Reading	71.4%	✓
	Science	81.4%	✓
HS	Algebra I	100.0%	✓
	English I	NC	

GIFTED INDICATOR X

EXHIBIT B⁴

2014 - 2015 Report Card for
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- Achievement**
- Progress
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Gifted Students



The Gifted Students data and Indicator highlight the opportunities for and performance of gifted students. The dashboard answers several questions: How many students are identified as gifted and in what categories? How many of those students are receiving gifted services? How well are those gifted students performing? The Gifted Indicator measures whether opportunity and performance expectations are being met for gifted students.

INDICATOR

Not Met

ALL ACHIEVEMENT

Gifted Indicator

- Overview
- Performance Index
- Gifted Inputs

The Gifted Indicator is derived from three components: Gifted Value Added grade, the Performance Index for gifted students, and a Gifted Inputs score.

Gifted Value Added

Value Added Grade: D Schools must earn a Gifted Value Added grade of C or better to meet the Gifted Value Added component.

Value Added Met? Not Met

Gifted Performance Index

Performance Index: 110.189 Schools with at least 10 unique students in the Gifted Performance Index calculation must score 115.0 or better to meet the Gifted Performance Index component.

Performance Index Met? Not Met

Gifted Inputs

Total Points: 34.0 Points are earned based on identification and services provided to gifted students. Schools must earn 40 or more points out of a possible 100 to meet the Gifted Inputs component.

Gifted Inputs Met? Not Met

Gifted Indicator Final Result

INDICATOR

Not Met

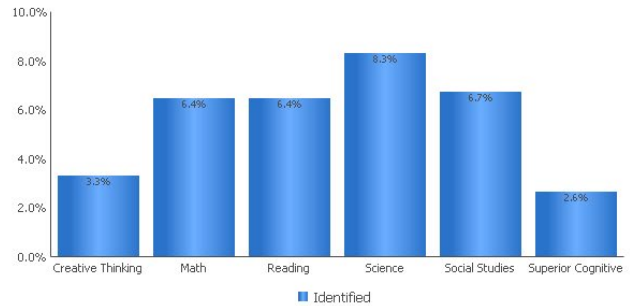
The Gifted Indicator is Met if none of the three components are Not Met. Gifted Inputs alone cannot determine the Gifted Indicator, however; if both the Value Added and Performance Index components are NC, then the Gifted Indicator is also NC.

[Click here](#) for a complete description of how the Gifted Indicator is determined.

Additional information on Identification and Services

All Grades

This chart shows the percentage of all enrolled students that are identified as gifted and that are receiving gifted services.



Note: Students may be identified in more than one category

ENDNOTES

1. “Common Questions about Ohio’s Value-Added Student Growth Measure,” Ohio Department of Education, page 1, accessed May 9, 2016, <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Accountability-Resources/Value-Added-Technical-Reports-1/Questions-Value-Added-Student-Growth.pdf.aspx>.
2. “Guide to 2015 Ohio School Report Cards,” Ohio Department of Education, page 4, accessed May 9, 2016, <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/ReportCardGuide.pdf.aspx>.
3. “2014–2015 Report Card for Triway Junior High School,” Ohio School Report Cards, accessed May 9, 2016, <http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/School-Report.aspx?SchoolIRN=061622>.
4. *Ibid.*