

Check State Plans: Promise to Practice Rubric

Guidelines for Peers

The 2018-2019 school year marks the deadline that states must identify schools for comprehensive and targeted support, yet many states continue to wrestle with how to leverage their flexibility and implement best practices within their schools and districts. Building on the knowledge gained in *Check State Plans*, the Collaborative for Student Success, in partnership with HCM Strategists, is embarking on a new phase of work called *Promise to Practice*. The purpose of this endeavor is to ascertain:

- 1) whether states are utilizing their autonomy to implement new, rigorous, and innovative approaches to intervene in low-performing schools;
- 2) trends and best practices in how states are approaching school improvement; and
- 3) the progress states have made implementing ESSA's school improvement provisions.

We are looking for states to take an evidence-based approach as required under the law but go further with rigorous criteria and processes to ensure that school improvement funds will support the most effective strategies. We are also looking for a coherent state vision that informs and aligns its strategies, with high expectations matched by supports and guidance to grow districts' and schools' capacity. Please use the following criteria to evaluate the state's portfolio of information regarding their approach for school improvement.

Exemplary – The state has a clear and ambitious strategy to leverage change focused on closing the achievement gap and improving outcomes. The state is providing comprehensive support to LEAs and building their capacity for improvement efforts. This is a model for other states.

Strong – The state is utilizing their flexibility and autonomy to leverage change. The state is providing robust support to LEAs in their turnaround efforts.

Adequate – The state meets the minimum requirements of the law. The state is providing some support to districts in their turnaround efforts. However, the state's approach is likely to maintain the status quo.

Needs Improvement– The state has little evidence that meets the rubric criteria. The state is providing minimal support to LEAs in their turnaround efforts.

Weak– The state's portfolio lacks evidence that meets the rubric criteria. The state is not leveraging their flexibility or autonomy to close achievement gaps and improve outcomes. The state may not be complying and this practice should not be emulated by others.

N/A – The state does not have enough publicly available information to sufficiently evaluate the question.

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The internal scores and comments you provide will be used to inform the development of the final state review as well as the identification of promising practices and considerations for school improvement implementation. As such, please ensure your comments are as clear and specific as possible. Your remarks will not be attributed to you nor made public. If you have any questions, please contact Liz Ross at elizabeth_ross@hcmstrategists.com.

Peer Name:

State Reviewed:

Turnaround Components

For each of the following components, please rate the state’s portfolio using the scale provided and include your rationale.

1. **Coherent and Aligned Vision for Improving Outcomes:** How well does the state articulate a coherent vision or theory of action that drives their school improvement efforts? Is this vision aligned with the state’s accountability system and goals for closing the achievement gap?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

2. **Strategic Use of Funding and Alignment of Resources:** Is the state allocating funding in a way that is strategic and maximizes resources? Are LEAs expected to prioritize improvement efforts that address the underlying performance issues?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

3. **Rigorous Review Process:** Is the state applying rigorous criteria and review processes to ensure resources will be used to support effective school improvement efforts? Is the state prioritizing funding to LEAs who demonstrate the greatest need for school improvement funding (including LEAs with a high percentage of CSI and TSI schools) and the strongest commitment to school improvement?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

4. **Continuous Improvement, Monitoring and Evaluation:** Does the state have a robust, data-driven process to monitor LEAs’ implementation of the school improvement plans

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within their district? Did the state establish clear milestones to ensure improvement over time, and within four years?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

5. **Evidence-Based Interventions:** To what extent is the state mandating LEAs use evidence-based strategies in their improvement efforts? Does the state provide guidance and supports to LEAs to help them identify and implement the most effective strategies based upon their needs?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

6. **Capacity Building and Autonomy:** How well does the state articulate, delineate or set parameters around which interventions and responsibilities belong to the state, LEA and/or school? Does the state provide support or guidance to help LEAs identify and reduce barriers to school improvement? Does the state have a framework or process to support and monitor outside entities who partner with the state, LEAs or schools in school improvement efforts?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

7. **Engagement:** Does the state require LEAs to engage with stakeholders such as parents and community members in the development and implementation of their school improvement plans? Does the state provide sufficient guidance and resources to LEAs to effectively do so, helping them foster local buy-in and promote sustainability?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

8. **Sustainability:** Does the state have a plan in place to review the school improvement efforts statewide and evaluate the impact and effectiveness? Does the state have a process in place to support LEAs and schools by enhancing their capacity to maintain their improvement efforts upon exiting identification and intervention?

N/A Weak Needs Improvement Adequate Strong Exemplary

Overall Approach

In your responses, please incorporate any contextual information provided that you consider relevant to assessing a state’s overall approach. For example, a pending legislative effort, court

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challenge or other factor might impact the state's ability to develop and execute a strong school improvement strategy.

1. **Equity:** How well does the state's approach to school improvement include focused attention on supporting underserved students and closing the achievement gap? Does the state require LEAs to maintain an equity focus in their school improvement plans, activities and resource allocations?

2. **Strengths:** How is the state thoughtfully leveraging ESSA's flexibility to put in place the necessary policies and procedures that create an enabling environment for effective and sustained school improvement, and that consider state/local lessons learned from past efforts? What parts of the state's turnaround strategy or guidance to LEAs were strongest or exemplary?

3. **Improvements:** How can the state improve its turnaround efforts? What parts of the state's strategy or guidance to LEAs were unclear? What risks and challenges might the state face with its current approach?

4. **Recommendations:** Considering this state's strengths and areas for improvement, what recommendations do you have for the field on school turnaround? *(Please clearly indicate which turnaround component(s) your recommendations address. Individual feedback will not be provided to states.)*



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