

# Following Through on What We've Started

The landmark \$5 billion federal competitive grant program helped fuel some of the boldest and most aggressive public education reforms in a generation. Race to the Top officially ended in July 2015, and today more than 40 states are implementing college- and career-ready standards and effective teaching reforms. But the work to improve schools and help students is far from finished.

What have states and districts accomplished? Supporters argue that Race to the Top (RTTT) spurred innovation throughout the country, including in states that didn't receive RTTT grants.<sup>1</sup> In turn, some critics argue that states have moved too quickly and on too many fronts,<sup>2</sup> leading to massive pushback, and that this era of reforms has placed too much responsibility in the hands of state leaders.<sup>3</sup> Critics also express concern about the federal government's role and the state education agency's role in RTTT.

**We think that a final judgment of RTTT—either favorable or critical—is premature.** It's simply too early to know whether these wide-reaching reforms will succeed in the longterm or whether the federal role was misguided. While some critics want to write the epitaph of initiatives like new college and career readiness standards and educator evaluations, it

will take more than a few years to change systems that have been in place for decades. RTTT has reinforced promising state and local policy

changes, yet much work is still ahead to strengthen instruction and organize schools to meet the new challenge of preparing students for college and careers.

By 2017, a new administration will be in the White House, with its own education agenda. Of the 19 states that were awarded RTTT grants, all will have new governors, and most, if not all, will have new state superintendents. Education leaders, reformers and allies must keep reforms moving forward. The hyper-competitive economy demands that we give all of our young people advanced training, excellent communication skills and the tenacity to navigate the complex new world.

**So what's next for states and districts that are implementing college- and career-ready standards, high-quality assessments, and educator evaluation systems? We believe the best course of action is to stay the course. In a country so in love with innovation, it's time to think of follow-through as the new innovation.**

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# FOLLOWING THROUGH 10 Action Steps for State and District Leaders

## STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Keep the focus on the quality, rigor and comparability of standards and assessments—and deliver high-quality instructional supports.

1. Help educators access high-quality teaching materials aligned to college and career readiness standards.
2. Stick with high-quality, annual, state summative assessments to measure student progress toward standards—and explain why assessments matter.
3. Rethink local assessment systems to emphasize “fewer, better and essential assessments” and help teachers with assessment literacy.

## SCHOOL LEADERS

Improve teacher development by investing in school leaders—especially principals.

4. Develop school leaders’ skills to understand, observe, evaluate and improve standards-aligned instruction.

## SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Reorganize school systems to empower effective teachers and increase their impact, especially with low-income youth and youth of color.

5. Adopt school models that allow the most effective teacher leaders to both work directly with students in classrooms and lead, coach, support and mentor other teachers.
6. Create, refresh or restart schools so that every student can attend an outstanding public school—traditional or public charter.

## SYSTEM LEADERS

Keep improving educator evaluation and support systems with educator engagement and support.

7. Increase the quality of evaluations by expanding the observer pool and including student surveys.
8. Maintain student growth data in educator evaluations, but adjust the weights and measures for educators in different grades, subjects and roles.

## STATE EDUCATION LEADERS

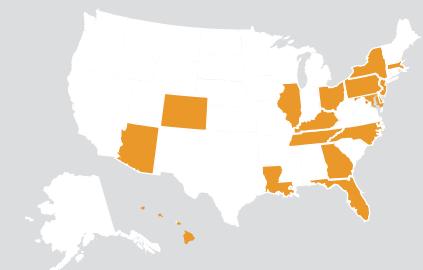
Maintain accountability and focus on equity while building broader coalitions to prevent backsliding and improve reforms over time.

9. Use state resources to monitor achievement gaps and re-envision accountability systems.
10. Build broader coalitions to improve implementation and prevent policies from backsliding, while continuously gathering data and improving new standards, assessments and evaluation systems.

## RACE TO THE TOP: A PRIMER

LAUNCHED IN 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, RTTT offered funding to states and districts willing to adopt a reform agenda focused on higher academic standards, more rigorous educator evaluations, data systems to track student and teacher performance, and turning around struggling schools. More than 35 states applied for the grants, and many passed legislation to improve their chances in the competition; 19 states and their local education agencies received more than \$4 billion to implement these reforms. Another \$360 million went to two consortia of 35 states to design and deploy higher-quality, common statewide assessments—the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The program’s reach extended far beyond the grantees: 43 states and the District of Columbia are upgrading statewide teacher evaluation policies in the coming years, and 44 states and the District of Columbia are implementing the Common Core State Standards.<sup>4</sup>

19 States Received RTTT Grants



# STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Keep the focus on the quality, rigor and comparability of standards and assessments—and deliver high-quality instructional supports.

New college and career readiness standards—such as the Common Core—emphasize problem-solving, critical thinking, a content-rich curriculum and writing skills. States eagerly adopted these higher and better standards because today's students face higher demands in college and the workforce, and because our educators agree that it is time to raise expectations if students are to succeed—especially students of color and low-income students who have been denied these opportunities in the past. The standards have exacerbated longstanding problems like low-quality professional development, instructional materials and assessments. Five years after the standards' adoption, most educators still do not have a deep-enough understanding of the new standards, and the professional development and support they've received has been superficial. States and districts must put high-quality materials in teachers' hands and rethink assessment systems.

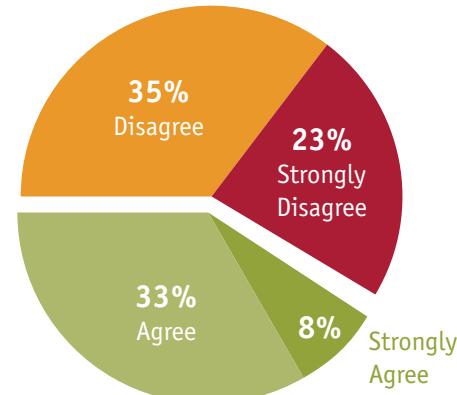
## ACTION 1 Help educators access high-quality teaching materials aligned to college and career readiness standards.

New standards do not prescribe a curriculum. States, districts and educators select instructional materials and decide how standards are taught in classrooms. Whether states use the Common Core or their own standards, districts and states need to ensure that teachers are given time and assistance to learn the standards. They also need to home in on instructional



Nearly 60 percent of teachers in a 2014 *Education Week* survey said that their main curricular materials are not aligned to the Common Core.

*"My textbooks and other main curricular materials are aligned with the Common Core Standards."*



Source: Education Week Research Center, *From Adoption to Practice: Teacher Perspectives on the Common Core*. Bethesda, MD: Education Week Research Center (2014). [http://www.edweek.org/media/ewrc\\_teacherscommoncore\\_2014.pdf](http://www.edweek.org/media/ewrc_teacherscommoncore_2014.pdf)

materials. In the early days of implementing the new standards, district and state leaders and nonprofits produced thousands of standalone lessons and units. What educators need now are coherent, full-length instructional programs (traditional and digital) that they can adapt. **New York's** open source materials are among the best available, and District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) also created a content-rich, standards-aligned curriculum. **Louisiana** and **Tennessee** maintain quality by providing districts with a teacher-vetted, rigorous list of aligned language arts and mathematics instructional materials that districts can elect to purchase. **Rhode Island** gave teachers and principals extensive professional development so that they can identify standards-aligned instruction and materials.

*Despite more than 140 legislative attempts to repeal the Common Core over the past three years, 44 states and the District of Columbia are still implementing the standards, and the remaining states are implementing their own college and career readiness standards.*

## ACTION 2

### Stick with high-quality, annual, state summative assessments to measure student progress toward standards—and explain why assessments matter.

States need annual assessments in English and math to provide essential information to educators and parents about school and student performance and identify schools that aren't serving all children well.

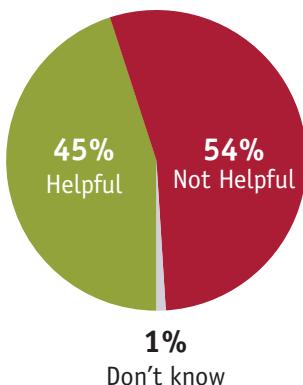
**High-quality summative assessments are characterized by alignment, coherence, rigor and comparability.**

High-quality summative assessments are characterized by alignment, coherence, rigor and comparability. Many states are leaving the PARCC and SBAC consortia;<sup>5</sup> these states must redouble their efforts to ensure that homegrown assessments are truly aligned to the standards, that they include a variety of item types that assess the rigor and depth of the standards, and that results can be

used to benefit students and schools. One way that comparable tests used by multiple states will benefit students: Several states, including California, Hawai'i, Illinois, Oregon and Washington, are planning to use 11th grade PARCC or SBAC results for placement in credit-bearing courses at all public institutions.<sup>6</sup>

### The public is split on the value of standardized tests.

*"Are student standardized tests helpful, or are they not helpful to teachers?"*



Source: PDK/Gallup, "The PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" (September 2014). <http://pdkpoll.pdkintl.org/>



Another challenge: Teachers and parents don't understand or see the benefits of new assessments. States should be more transparent about what's measured and help parents, teachers and students understand why these state assessments matter. To make its assessments more transparent, **New York** released 50 percent of test questions this year.

## ACTION 3

### Rethink local assessment systems to emphasize "fewer, better and essential assessments" and help teachers with assessment literacy.

Assessment is critical to effective teaching. Teachers use assessments—both formative and summative—to plan instruction, diagnose student interventions and monitor progress to standards. But many districts and states have added assessments to hold schools and districts accountable, measure student growth in teacher evaluations, diagnose student learning differences, and intervene and inform instruction—but these have too often been layered on top of existing assessment systems. Simply adding more assessments without carefully analyzing what's already in place is poor practice that will further erode public and educator confidence. The solution is to develop a balanced assessment strategy, jointly owned by the state and its districts, that emphasizes

fewer, better and essential assessments and helps teachers understand the benefits of different tests. States need to clarify what assessments are required and why and eliminate unnecessary or duplicative test requirements. District leaders overseeing instruction, talent and accountability should collaborate to:

1. Identify all assessments currently in use and their purpose;
2. Engage teachers and other educators to review assessments and recommend which ones should remain, which should be modified or improved, which should be eliminated, and what assessments may be missing;
3. Explain to parents, students and educators the purpose of all assessments and how assessment data will be used; and
4. Prioritize professional development for educators on formative assessment and data literacy so that educators can create or select high-quality assessments for their classrooms and use assessment data effectively to improve their students' learning.

*Talk of 2 percent limits on testing time misses the issue: Districts and states need balanced systems and options to use tests for multiple purposes.*

Connecticut, Delaware and New York awarded grants to districts to inventory local assessments and reduce testing. In October 2015, the White House followed New York's lead by recommending that students spend no more than 2 percent of instructional time on standardized test-taking.<sup>7</sup> This approach is insufficient, however, without a balanced approach to assessment that is jointly owned and developed by state and district leaders and aims to allow for more flexibility in what assessments are used and for what purposes.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

- California and New York help English language learners meet standards.
- Achieve's EQuIP rubric adapts work by Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York to assess lessons and units.
- EdReports.org, an independent nonprofit, vets instructional materials.
- Illinois offers advice on developing balanced assessment systems.
- Achieve's inventory resource helps streamline assessments.
- Education First's tool goes one step further, with step-by-step guidance.
- Reform Support Network states created video-based professional development modules on creating or selecting well-designed assessments.



# SCHOOL LEADERS

Improve teacher development by investing in school leaders—especially principals.

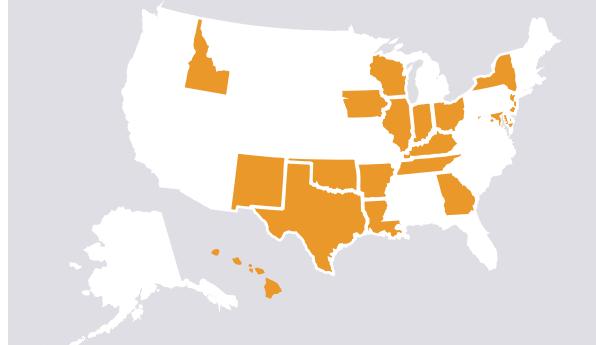
High-quality standards, assessments and instructional materials aren't enough to improve teaching and learning. Teachers, with support from building leaders, need to understand the standards deeply; they need to know how to use and adapt materials and align their teaching to college- and career-ready standards. High-performing principals set the school's culture by distributing leadership, allocating professional learning time and resources, and observing teachers and providing them with actionable feedback aligned with instructional expectations.

Principals can't do everything themselves; they need to distribute leadership among teachers and other instructional leads, as well as delegate administrative tasks, student discipline and other non-instructional activities to other staff.<sup>8</sup> **Many states and districts have focused their professional development efforts on teachers, sometimes at the expense of helping principals acquire the skills they need to be instructional leaders. This has to change.**

**Develop school leaders' skills to understand, observe, evaluate and improve standards-aligned instruction.**

A report by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) found that only half of states connect evaluation to professional development, and only 19 states require that evaluators undergo training on how to provide high-quality feedback. Today's school leaders—principals in particular—need a new set of skills. They need to understand the Common Core's instructional shifts. They need to know how to apply that understanding during classroom observations and how to provide teachers with actionable, standards-aligned feedback. Yet recent training for school leaders has focused too much on the nuts-and-bolts of evaluation—such as interpreting the teaching rubric—and not enough on really understanding standards-aligned teaching or on how to help teachers improve their practice. Louisiana maintains a video library that shows principals how to use observation rubrics and provide teachers

**19 states that require evaluators to undergo training to provide high-quality feedback**



Source: (NCTQ 2015). <http://www.nctq.org/dmsStage/StateofStates2015>

with high-quality feedback. Five districts featured in Education First's **recent report** are aligning systems, practices and daily actions to create a culture of actionable feedback. For example, district leaders in St. Bernard Parish, LA, aligned curriculum with teacher evaluations so that principals understand what they're supposed to see in the first 30 minutes of a lesson. In Salem-Keizer Public Schools, OR, district leaders help principals improve their coaching skills through monthly trainings and small group sessions.<sup>9</sup> **Rhode Island's** online modules train school leaders to coach teachers to set goals for student learning, create high-quality assessments and use student data. **North Carolina** conducts regional professional development sessions for school leaders, lead teachers and district leaders on topics including state standards, teacher evaluations and data literacy.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

- **Gwinnett County, GA**, provides school leaders with extensive training and instructional knowledge.<sup>10</sup>
- **Kenton County, KY**, requires principals to conduct at least 50 "learning walks" per week in classrooms.<sup>11</sup>
- **Student Achievement Partners' guides** explain the instructional shifts of the Common Core.
- **RELAY Graduate School of Education** has launched the National Principals Academy Fellowship.

# SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

**Reorganize school systems to empower effective teachers and increase their impact, especially with low-income youth and youth of color.**

To raise student achievement, school leaders need the expertise of teacher leaders and the right supports from district and state leaders. District and school leaders can organize their schools in ways that make better use of the time and talents of their teachers, provide teachers with new responsibilities and roles that will increase student achievement,<sup>12</sup> and stimulate outstanding public schools by chartering new schools and turning around chronically low-performing schools, often with new leadership, staff, and programs.

## ACTION 5 Adopt school models that allow the most effective teacher leaders to both work directly with students in classrooms and lead, coach, support and mentor other teachers.

Great teachers aren't always in the classrooms where they are most needed. In fact, data show that most effective teachers tend to teach wealthier, higher-achieving white students, rather than low-income, under-achieving students and students of color.<sup>13</sup> New school models and teacher leadership opportunities allow effective teachers to expand their impact in under-performing schools without leaving the classroom. In Public Impact's **Opportunity Culture schools**, now being implemented in the lowest-performing schools in five states, high-performing teachers lead teacher teams, teach

### EVERY YEAR IN THE 50 LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICTS...



Source: Tntp, *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Schools* (2012). [http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNP\\_Irreplaceables\\_2012.pdf](http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNP_Irreplaceables_2012.pdf)



classes remotely and teach high-priority classes to ensure that all students have access to quality instruction. In 2014, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC, recruited 107 high-performing teachers to teach at their 15 Opportunity Culture schools,<sup>14</sup> and the district continues to expand the program to more schools.

## ACTION 6

## Create, refresh or restart schools so that every student can attend an outstanding public school—traditional or public charter.

Too many schools are under-performing, in part because states are not embracing a comprehensive set of school turnaround strategies. State and district leaders have a moral imperative to intervene in persistently low-performing schools and districts, using the models or strategies that actually work. Of the federal school turnaround models, *transformation* and *turnaround* are typically less successful than *restart* or *closure*—which are often the best, yet most politically contentious, options. States should be willing to close failing schools (or provide districts with cover to close the schools themselves), while helping districts build special infrastructure for restarts and new schools, such as new school

incubator organizations and innovation zones that bring high-performing charter school operators into neighborhoods that lack quality school options.

**Cleveland Metropolitan School District** is implementing the “Cleveland Plan,” which aims to improve the quality of district schools by expanding or replicating existing high-performing schools (both traditional and charter), starting new schools, and closing under-performing schools or turning them over to charter operators with a track record of success.

Tennessee used RTTT funding to create the **Achievement School District** (ASD), which was charged with moving schools from the bottom five percent to the top 25 percent of schools statewide. In 2014–15, ASD student scores in math and science grew faster than statewide averages, and ASD high schools made double-digit proficiency gains in Algebra and English.<sup>15</sup>

## MULTIPLE APPROACHES FOR TURNING AROUND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

- In **Louisiana**, **Ohio**, **Rhode Island** and **Tennessee**, high-performing teachers are taking the lead in mentoring, professional development and classroom observations.
- **Lawrence Public Schools**, MA, has moved decision-making to school-based teams of teachers and principals.
- **New Jersey's** union and state education agency (SEA) partnered on legislation for new teacher leadership roles.
- **Leading Educators** is developing leadership skills of highly effective teachers, especially in high-poverty schools.<sup>16</sup>

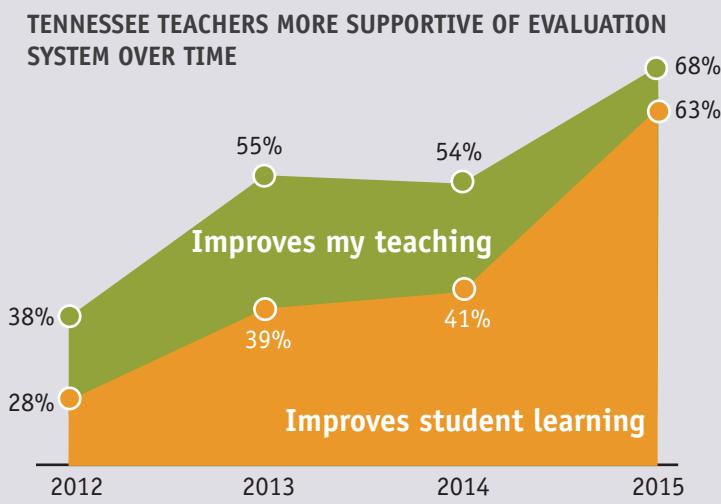
# SYSTEM LEADERS

## Keep improving educator evaluation and support systems with educator engagement and input.

As currently implemented, many educator evaluation systems have focused primarily on consequences and not on improvement and support—and educators have been (justifiably) reluctant to embrace these new evaluation systems. In addition to increasing evaluators' and instructional leaders' skills in observing and recognizing standards-aligned instruction, a few policy changes are needed. In Tennessee, state and district leaders continuously improve implementation by talking directly to teachers and, more importantly, using their feedback

### *Strategies for increasing the quality of evaluations include using multiple observers, conducting multiple observations, co-observing, and using student surveys.*

to make midcourse corrections. This approach appears to be working: A 2015 survey indicated that 68 percent of Tennessee teachers believe the evaluation process improves teaching and 63 percent feel it improves learning—which is a 79 percent increase and a 125 percent increase since 2012, respectively.<sup>17</sup>



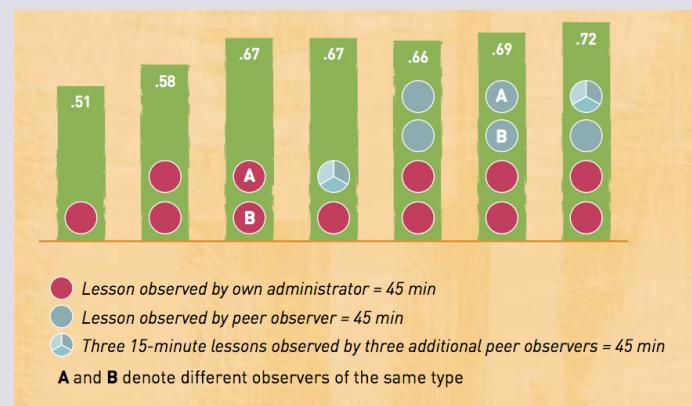
Source: Tennessee Department of Education, "Tennessee Educator Survey." (August 2015). <http://tn DOE.azurewebsites.net/>

### ACTION 7

### Increase the quality of evaluations by expanding the observer pool and including student surveys.

It will take time and practice for principals to upgrade their expertise in standards, accurately observe instructional practice, and get better at delivering feedback and support. Researchers have found that multiple observations by two or more observers per teacher increases the reliability of evaluation data,<sup>18</sup> while also easing burdens on school leaders. Colorado law allows teachers to be observers, which has enabled **Denver Public Schools** to hire peer observers. **DCPS** and **Hillsborough County Public Schools**, FL, also use peer observers with deep expertise in their subject areas, who provide teachers with content-specific, detailed feedback and coaching to improve. Ohio is working on a co-observation model, where two observers sit in on a class simultaneously and compare their feedback to improve accuracy,<sup>19</sup> and New Jersey has

### MULTIPLE OBSERVATIONS BY MULTIPLE OBSERVERS IMPROVE RELIABILITY



Source: Cantrell, S. and Kane, T. Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching. The MET Project, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (January 2013). [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET\\_Ensuring\\_Fair\\_and\\_Reliable\\_Measures\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reliable_Measures_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)

adopted regulations that require multiple observers and co-observations. Some states actually prohibit certificated staff from evaluating other certificated staff—these outdated regulations need to be changed. What's more, students know effective teaching when they experience it, and researchers have found that student perception surveys are a valid and reliable measure of teacher effectiveness. Several states and districts—including **Denver Public Schools**, **Pittsburgh Public Schools** and **Kentucky**—use student surveys to provide teachers with more feedback on their instruction.

## Maintain student growth data in educator evaluations, but adjust the weights and measures for educators in different grades, subjects and roles.

When it comes to student growth and educator evaluations, one size does not fit all. States and districts should continue to incorporate student growth data into educator evaluations. States may want to give more flexibility and decision-making to individual school districts to decide what student growth measures to use and how to weight measures for some educators. Educator evaluation systems should:

1. Match the weight to the educator role. In the past, **DCPS** has varied the type and weight of student growth measures for teachers in non-tested subjects and grades and non-instructional positions like guidance counselors and social workers. Using schoolwide reading and math growth measures for non-instructional positions may be acceptable when first implementing new evaluations, but it's not an acceptable long-term solution.
2. Reduce the weight placed on student growth measures. Maryland and New Jersey adjusted weights during the transition to new state assessments. Massachusetts has dropped fixed weights altogether and asks teachers and evaluators to examine a body of evidence when evaluating a teacher's contribution to student learning.
3. Create more rigorous and authentic assessments, including performance tasks and portfolios of student work. With RTTT funding, **New York City** developed a suite of performance tasks in non-tested grades and subjects, and **North Carolina** and **Tennessee** use robust, peer-reviewed portfolios to measure teachers' contributions to student growth in subjects that don't lend themselves to pencil-and-paper assessments like the fine arts, world languages and physical education. Portfolios and performance tasks might not have the same psychometric properties as large-scale standardized tests, but they can still be used to measure teacher effectiveness.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

- **Delaware** and **Tennessee** enable school districts to submit alternative educator evaluation systems.
- **New Haven Public Schools, CT**, hired retired teachers as “third party validators” to conduct **classroom observations**.
- **Georgia, Hawai'i, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island** and other states created a **toolkit** and **library** with resources on student learning objectives.

# STATE EDUCATION LEADERS

Maintain accountability and focus on equity while building broader coalitions to prevent backsliding and improve reforms over time.

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is renewed, it seems likely that Congress will pull back on the federal government's role in education policy, leaving SEAs to pick up the slack. SEAs risk losing ground gained over the past decade in comparing school progress and monitoring equity by reporting results for all students and student subgroups. SEAs now must assess how best to preserve essential accountability while upgrading accountability systems and how to work with communities to maintain a focus on equity and achievement. State leaders should ask: What school and district accountability expectations should we maintain? How will we work with school districts, educators and coalition partners to protect policies and initiatives that promote accountability and equity in public education?

## ACTION 9

### Use state resources to monitor achievement gaps and re-envision accountability systems.

If ESEA renewal curtails the federal role in school accountability and equity, states must step up to fill the void. In many states, this means SEAs will have to prioritize accountability, equity and other core functions over direct implementation of reforms (instead delegating direct support and technical assistance to regional entities and nonprofits). States should continue publishing disaggregated school-level data on student performance and using these data to challenge schools and districts to address achievement gaps. But accountability systems should be re-envisioned to prioritize performance and results over compliance. Accountability systems should create incentives for continuous improvement for every school, recognize high-performing and high-growth schools and share their



successes with others, intervene with struggling schools, and provide them with resources to get better or close them and replace them with new schools. Some states may wish to offer districts the flexibility to determine the assessments they use to monitor equity and student progress, providing those assessments are compatible with the state's accountability system.<sup>20</sup> Broader measures of student success and college and career readiness besides summative assessments should be considered too, such as participation and results in college-level courses. Being flexible with assessment system choices or adding new measures of college and career readiness, however, should not mean backing away from the commitment to equity and outcomes. The state's commitment to equity should drive these accountability system choices.

*Two major challenges: Preserve essential accountability while upgrading systems and work with communities to maintain commitment to equity.*

## Build broader coalitions to improve implementation and prevent policies from backsliding, while continuously gathering data and improving new standards, assessments and evaluation systems.

From the get-go, Massachusetts collaborated with a wide-reaching group of educators and union leaders to develop a new educator evaluation system all sides could accept. Coalitions like **Tennessee SCORE** and **Ready Washington** have amplified reform messages and built support for reforms in their states. When critics attacked the Common Core and new assessments, **Louisiana's Stand for Children** pressured legislators to keep the standards and brokered compromises in other areas, and **High Achievement New York** provided resources to counter the opt-out testing narrative. Increasingly,

states and districts are engaging civil rights groups, like the **National Urban League** and **National Council of La Raza**, to enlist low-income families and communities of color in efforts to preserve reforms. All states and districts need to work with community and education partners to help policymakers, the public and parents understand and support all of these new reforms. Without continued attention to coalition-building, states and districts will find it difficult to sustain the reforms.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

- Nonprofit **Colorado Education Initiative** delivers technical assistance to school districts, rather than the state.
- **New York, Ohio** and **Tennessee** used RTTT funds to create regional technical assistance offices and staffing.
- **Rhode Island's** EdStat system monitors performance and progress.

## CONCLUSION

RTTT spurred states and districts to enact big reforms and push forward with new innovations. But implementing the new standards, increasing teacher and principal expertise and leadership, turning around low-performing schools, and helping all children achieve college and career readiness will take years.

These reforms have the potential to deliver long-term benefits to students and teachers, but only if states, districts and policymakers follow through and implement them with quality. States and districts need to be more forthright with the public and policymakers about the investments needed to implement new standards, assessments and evaluations. Candor and a commitment to continuous improvement will go a long way toward mitigating calls to roll back reforms.

We urge patience. Allow the reforms to take root—and make important mid-course corrections—before charting a new course.

**Quality follow-through is the new innovation.**



# ABOUT THIS BRIEF

From 2009 to 2011, Education First advised RTTT state winners Colorado, Hawai'i, Maryland, Ohio and Tennessee through the application process and supported Hawai'i, Ohio and Tennessee into initial implementation. We were among the primary technical assistance providers to all 19 RTTT states through the U.S. Department of Education's Reform Support Network from 2011 to 2015. We continue to work side-by-side with state and district leaders to address some of the most vexing challenges they face while implementing RTTT. We also support many states and districts that are implementing the same reforms without RTTT grants.

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## ENDNOTES

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