What’s Next for Low-Performing Schools?

State Plans Related to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

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Education Northwest
Center on School Turnaround Partners

- Education Northwest, Portland, OR
- Academic Development Institute, Lincoln, IL
- Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education, Charlottesville, VA
- WestEd, Sacramento, CA
- LEAD
- National Implementation Research Network, Chapel Hill, NC
With ESSA there will be policy changes

- More is left to states
- No separate funding stream
- No required tie between achievement and evaluation
- No specific interventions
But, Low-Performing Schools Still Matter

- Schools still identified
- "Evidence-based" approaches remain key
- Report cards add another factor
- Schools must have funding
- Testing policies continue
Research Questions

- Do SEA leaders anticipate states will change policies and practices for low-performing schools in response to ESSA overall?
- Will the extent of these changes vary by past policies?
- What about changes in specific school turnaround practices and policies related to ESSA?
- To what extent do SEA leaders report needing assistance?
Descriptive Study

- Center on School Turnaround
- 50 states, plus Puerto Rico

Surveys
- REL Central Publication
- 50 state policies for low-performing schools

Document Review
SEAs Planning to Make Overall Changes to Policies or Practices Due to ESSA (n = 49)

- Not at all, 0%
- A little, 31%
- A moderate amount, 59%
- A lot, 10%
Variation Based on Past SEA Policy

- Reforms in the **day-to-day operations** of schools were associated with changing policies and practices at least “a moderate amount” ($\chi^2 (1, N = 48) = 4.652, p = .031$)

- The relationship between **closing schools** was not significantly related to reports of at least moderate changes related to ESSA.
SEAs Planning to Change Due to ESSA

Identification of low-performing schools (n = 41)
5% Not at All 37% A Little 39% A Moderate Amount 20% A Lot

Evidence-based interventions to assist districts with low-performing schools (n = 41)
5% Not at All 44% A Little 37% A Moderate Amount 15% A Lot

Evidence-based interventions aimed at closing achievement gaps in schools (n = 41)
5% Not at All 44% A Little 37% A Moderate Amount 15% A Lot

Evidence-based interventions in low-performing schools (n = 42)
7% Not at All 40% A Little 38% A Moderate Amount 14% A Lot

Inclusion of “other factors” to identify low-performing schools that get at students’ opportunity to learn (n = 41)
12% Not at All 22% A Little 46% A Moderate Amount 20% A Lot

State issued “report cards” for schools (n = 39)
13% Not at All 33% A Little 26% A Moderate Amount 28% A Lot

Funding policies for low-performing schools (n = 41)
15% Not at All 39% A Little 29% A Moderate Amount 17% A Lot

State actions in persistently low-performing schools that do not respond to the evidence-based interventions (n = 41)
15% Not at All 26% A Little 46% A Moderate Amount 13% A Lot

Use of SAT or ACT tests in high school, in place of state tests (n = 39)
24% Not at All 30% A Little 30% A Moderate Amount 16% A Lot

Use of interim assessments (n = 37)
35% Not at All 41% A Little 22% A Moderate Amount 3% A Lot

Policies allowing parents to ”opt out” of testing (n = 36)
47% Not at All 33% A Little 17% A Moderate Amount 3% A Lot
## Top 4 SEA Changes Related to ESSA and Turnaround

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Making Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of low performing schools</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence-based interventions to assist districts with low-performing schools</td>
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Awaiting Guidance  (as of spring 2016)

As other states are undoubtedly experiencing, we still lack clarity on many of the details of implementation. In particular, we would benefit from specific guidance on monitoring flexibilities (and efficient and effective monitoring best practices) within formula and competitive grants.
Engaging Stakeholders (As of Spring 2016)

We are currently evaluating our state accountability plan and will be moving forward to **work with a stakeholder group** to determine what will be included in our ESSA plan.

**SEA Leader**

We are in the process of **holding stakeholder meetings** through advisory committees in our community to inform next steps.
SEAs that could benefit from assistance Related to Turnaround in ESSA

- Evidence-based interventions to assist districts with low-performing schools (n = 39) - 90%
- Evidence-based interventions aimed at closing achievement gaps in schools (n = 39) - 85%
- State actions in persistently low-performing schools that do not respond to the evidence-based interventions (n = 38) - 84%
- Evidence-based interventions in low-performing schools (n = 38) - 84%
- Funding policies for low-performing schools (n = 47) - 81%
- Inclusion of “other factors” to identify low-performing schools that get at students’ opportunity to learn (n = 40) - 68%
- Use of SAT or ACT tests in high school, in place of state tests (n = 35) - 54%
- State issued “report cards” for schools (n = 36) - 50%
- Policies allowing parents to “opt out” of testing (n = 36) - 50%
- Identification of low-achieving schools (n = 39) - 49%
- Use of interim assessments (n = 35) - 49%
Top 5 SEA Needs for Assistance and Changes Related to ESSA and Turnaround

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Findings Summary

- All states were rethinking policy and practice and nearly 70% planned to change policy and practice at least “a moderate amount”
- States with past policies on day-to-day reforms were more likely to report change
- Many state were changing to evidence-based approaches and wanted help with this
More Changes May Be Necessary

The federal administration has
- Further relaxed reporting requirements
- Signaled budget cuts for many federal and state education programs
- Potential new ways to spend funds
Recommendations

Support states and districts
- Regional Educational Laboratories
- Comprehensive Centers
- Others (education service agencies, non-governmental agencies, universities)
Future Directions for Research

- Document state changes in policy and practice
- Explore associations between past and current policy
- Assess implementation and impacts
- Disseminate information
Questions?

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