

MICHIGAN

1 Assigns to schools annual ratings that are clear and intuitive

1

N/A

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2 Encourages schools to focus on all students, not just low performers

2

N/A

□ □ □ □ □ □

3 Measures all schools fairly, including those with high rates of poverty

3

N/A

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ESSA grants states more authority over their school accountability systems than did NCLB. Three of the most important improvements states can make are to: (1) assign to schools annual ratings that are clear and intuitive for parents, educators, and the public; (2) encourage schools to focus on all students, not just their low performers; and (3) measure and judge all schools fairly, including those with high rates of poverty.

To determine whether Michigan's proposed ESSA accountability system accomplishes these three objectives, this analysis evaluates its state plan, as submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on May 3, 2017,³⁷ as explained below.

1

Are the labels or ratings for schools clear and intuitive for parents, educators, and the public?

Michigan receives a mark of **not applicable** because it has not decided whether it will assign summative annual ratings to schools. We encourage policymakers to adopt such ratings—and ensure that they're clear and intuitive for educators, parents, and the general public by using an A–F system, five-star system, or the equivalent.

2

Does the rating system encourage schools to focus on all students?

There are two primary ways for state accountability systems to encourage schools to focus on all students: (1) use a performance index and/or scale scores in place of proficiency rates when measuring achievement and (2) measure the growth of all students. Michigan receives a mark of **not applicable** because it has not decided whether it will assign schools annual ratings. The state uses proficiency rates—a mistake that might encourage schools to focus on pupils just above or below the proficiency cutoff, to the detriment of other pupils. But it also uses a measure of growth for all students, which can encourage schools to heed the educational needs of every child.

3

Is the rating system fair to all schools, including those with high rates of poverty?

Michigan receives a mark of **not applicable** because it has not decided whether it will give schools annual ratings or assign a specific weight to its growth model. Growth measures gauge changes in pupil achievement over time, independent of prior achievement, and are therefore less correlated with poverty, thus affording high-poverty schools the opportunity to earn positive ratings.