

Considerations for How Maryland Can Use Assessments to Reinforce Good Teaching and Improve Student Learning

Richard Laine
Director of Education
National Governors Association
rlaine@nga.org 202-624-3629

December 17, 2015

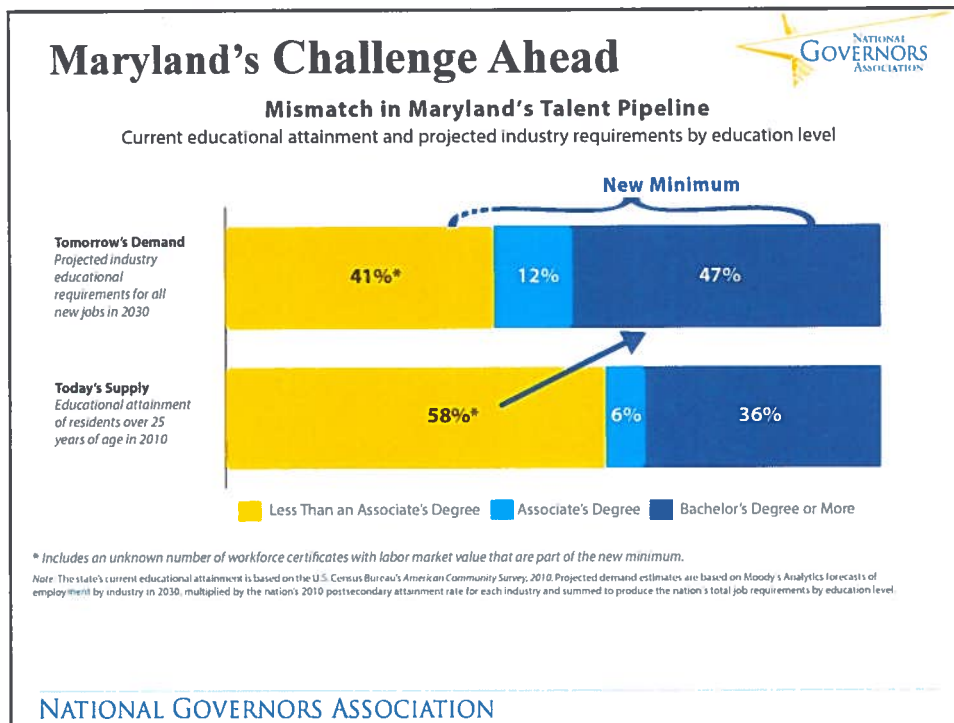
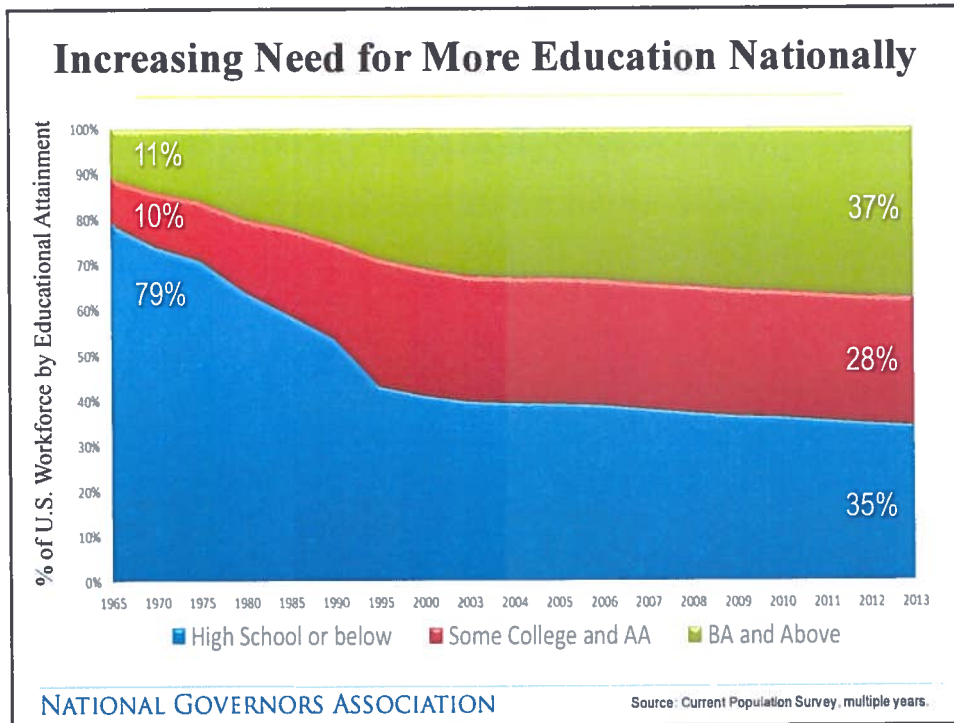


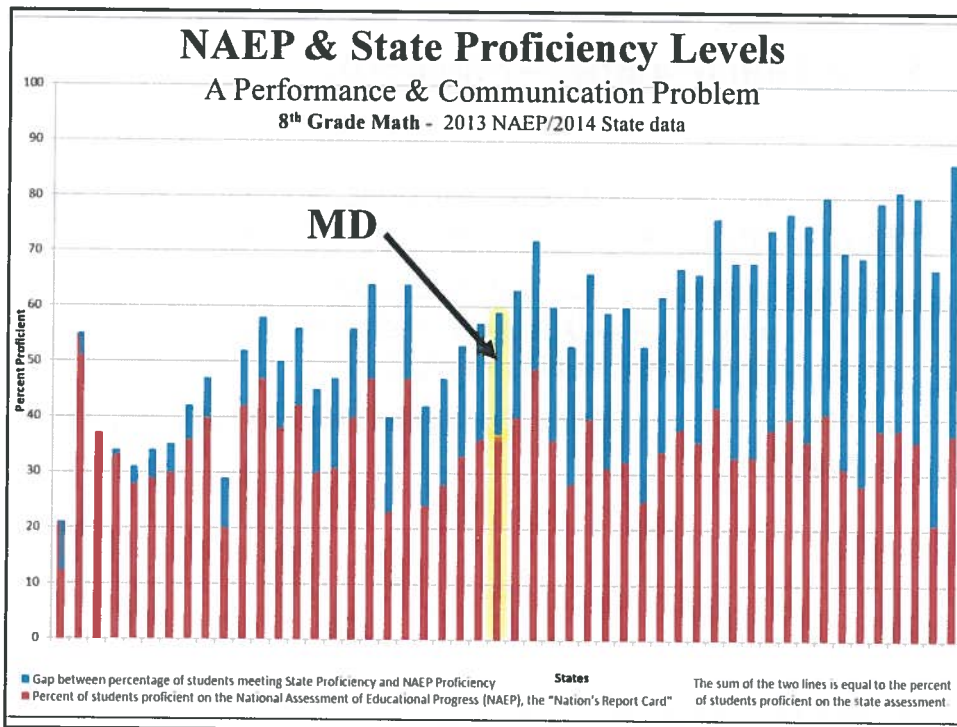
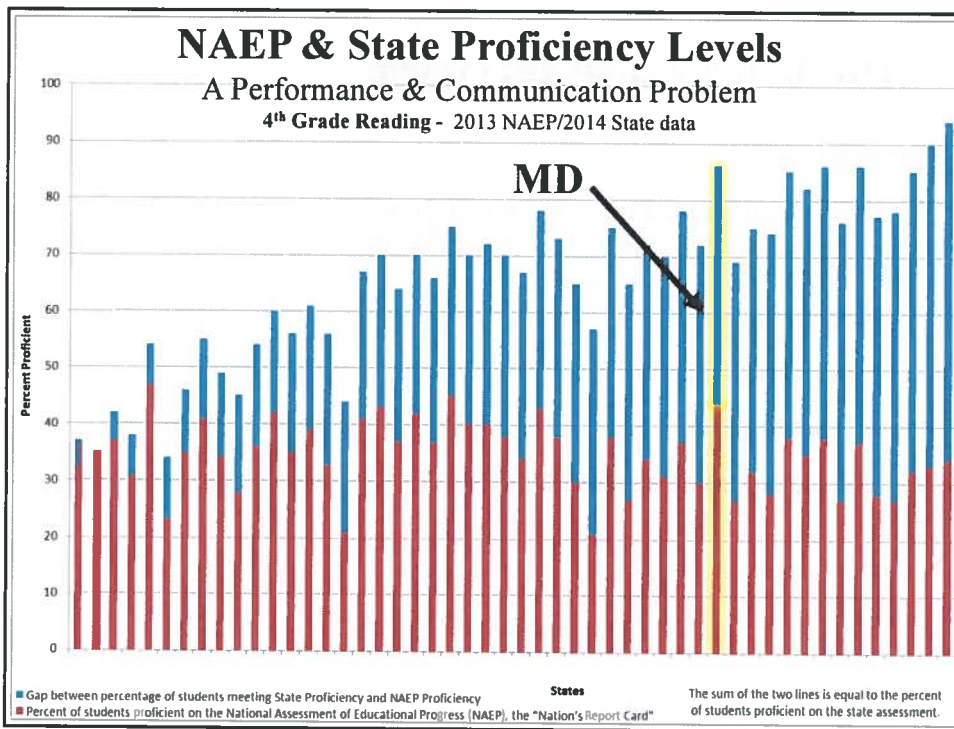
Laying out the presentation



- Providing the rationale for connecting K-12 system to larger objectives
- Building an aligned and coherent system to get better results by taking advantage of new federal flexibility
 - Standards
 - Assessments
 - Accountability
 - Interventions
 - Teachers and Principals
- Planning for the timeline
- Creating coordinated leadership for moving ahead

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION





Articulating a coherent system



- Building an aligned and coherent system amongst:
 - Standards
 - Assessments
 - Accountability
 - Interventions
 - Teachers and Principals

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Standards



- The state must set “challenging state academic standards” in math, language arts, and science (may set standards in other subjects)
- The state must demonstrate that the standards are aligned with credit-bearing coursework in public higher education and relevant career and technical education standards
- Prevents Secretary of Education from influencing state decisions on standards

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Assessments



- States must have annual assessments in language arts and math for grades 3-8 and once in HS & annual science assessments at least once in elementary, middle & high school
- The law balances required participation (95%) with states ability to allow parents to have their students opt out
- State can allow districts to use “nationally recognized” high school exams in place of state test – must be aligned to standards & equivalent to state test in content, difficulty & quality
- Pilot assessment program for up to 7 states
- Grants to states to work with districts on “assessment audit”

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Assessments Part II



- Testing of English Language Learners – two options:
 - Include test scores after one year in country (current law), or
 - Three year transition for an ELL student’s scores:
 - Year one – ELL students take both ELA and math test, results publicly reported but not counted in school rating
 - Year two – ELL students’ results, measuring growth, incorporated into school rating
 - Year three – ELL students’ results treated like every other student
- Testing of students with disabilities
 - Results get reported
 - ESSA allows 1% of students, or roughly 10% of students with disabilities, to be given alternative tests, (mainly for student w/severe cognitive disabilities)

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Accountability



- State must create accountability system with long-term goals, interim progress measures, & annual state/district report cards
- State must make annual determinations of student & school performance – for all students and subgroups (no super subgroups)
- Annual indicators must include: 1) assessments; 2) graduation rates for HS & another academic indicator for elem/middle schools; 3) English proficiency for ELL; 4) at least one additional indicator of school quality or student success; 5) Participation rate
- First three factors have “much greater weight” than 4th factor
- At least bottom 5% of all Title I schools, HS failing to graduate at least 2/3 of their students, or schools with underperforming subgroups must be identified

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Interventions



- For identified schools, district must develop improvement plan:
 - Uses evidenced-based interventions
 - Based on school needs assessment
 - Addresses resource inequities
 - Approved by school, district & state
 - Monitored periodically by the state (if lack of improvement, state must intervene after no more than 4 years)
- Resources
 - School Improvement Grants (SIG) eliminated but Title I set-aside increased to 7%
 - Optional additional 3% Title I set-aside for districts serving highest percentage of identified schools

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Teachers & Principals



- No federal requirement to evaluate teachers & principals but allowed & can use Title II funds
- Title II – continues to support efforts to enhance teacher & principal quality (optional 3% set-aside to enhance school leaders)
- As a side note, have state agency evaluate the value & impact of all Title II dollars so the state can take better advantage of federal funds to develop its teachers & principals

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Timeline



- SY 2015-16 – continues under NCLB
- SY 2016-17 – NCLB school determinations and consequences
- SY 2017-18 – New accountability system implemented
- Any school identified under NCLB or waivers (needs improvement, corrective action, restructuring, or priority) continue implementing existing plan until new Title I plan approved or new accountability system implemented, whichever comes first
- ESSA up for reauthorization after only 4 years (oh, what fun)

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

ESSA Opportunities – Strengthening the Pipeline



- Opportunity to strengthen the education pipeline (early education to K-12 to postsecondary) and its alignment to the workforce
- Chief state school officer required to involve the governor's staff in development of state plan
- Governor has opportunity to sign-off on the plan

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

Final Considerations



- Assessments should have purpose of reinforcing good teaching & provide actionable feedback to students, educators, & parents
- Develop a coherent system of assessments at state & local level by measuring what matters & focusing on what tests at each level of the system can do best
- States need external benchmark to determine what is good enough
- Good assessments cost more, but not a lot – good assessments are worth the cost because they provide the information needed to improve student learning
- What happens after the test is as important as the time leading up to the test – effective reports, intervention, & PD all matter
- If standards or assessments change, accountability cycle needs to be reset & training efforts for teachers & principals redone

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION