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

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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
Increasing Need for More Education Nationally

Maryland's Challenge Ahead

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Mismatch in Maryland's Talent Pipeline
Current educational attainment and projected industry requirements by education level

Tomorrow's Demand
Projected industry educational requirements for all new jobs in 2030

Today's Supply
Educational attainment of residents age 25 years or older in 2010

New Minimum

41% 12% 47%

58% 6% 36%

Less Than an Associate's Degree  Associate's Degree  Bachelor's Degree or More

* Includes an unknown number of workforce certificates with labor market value that are part of the new minimum.

Note: Tomorrow's estimated educational attainment is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2010. Projected demand estimates are based on industry's Analytics heuristics of employment by industry in 2010, multiplied by the relevant 2010 post-secondary attainment rates for each industry, and summed to produce the nation's total job requirements by educational level.
Articulating a coherent system

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

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
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”

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)
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

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
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

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)
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

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