



RESOURCE TITLE:

# 50-State Comparison: States' School Improvement Policies

All states identify schools most in need of improvement by using **school accountability systems** and other metrics. State improvement strategies range in intensity from general technical assistance to alternative governance for identified schools or districts. When schools do not meet their improvement goals in the state-established timeframe, more rigorous interventions may be taken. States have leveraged the flexibility under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by integrating existing school improvement systems with ESSA requirements or establishing school improvement requirements in addition to federal expectations.

Education Commission of the States researched K-12 school improvement policies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to provide this comprehensive resource. This resource provides information identified in statute, regulation and state ESSA plans as of September 2022.

Click on the metrics below for 50-State Comparisons showing how all states approach these policies. Or **view** individual state profiles.



## 50-State Comparisons

**1. Improvement Categories:** ESSA requires states to identify improvement categories for schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATS). States may also include additional statewide categories for schools. ESSA requires that states establish entrance and exit criteria for CSI and ATS schools.

This data point includes the names of categories for improvement identified in state policies and ESSA plans and the criteria for entering and exiting those categories.

**2. Improvement Plans and Needs Assessments:** ESSA requires that schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) develop and implement an improvement plan that addresses the reasons for the school's identification and will result in improved student outcomes. For TSI schools, ESSA requires that schools develop and implement a school-level targeted support and improvement plan. Broad stakeholder engagement is a component of these requirements.

This data point includes whether improvement plans or needs assessments are required in policies or ESSA plans; the contents of those improvement plans, and needs assessments, if specified; and any identified participants in the plan or needs assessment process, including participants required to approve or review the plans or assessments.

**3. Strategies and Supports:** This data point includes types of strategies and supports for improvement identified in state policies and ESSA plans. ESSA requires states to reserve Title I-A funds to make grants to local educational agencies to serve schools under comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities. The types of supports and improvement activities are at the discretion of the state.

**4. Alternative Governance:** This data point includes the criteria for when alternative governance will be implemented for school improvement and a description of the alternative governance strategies identified in state policies and ESSA plans. Alternative

governance strategies are not required by ESSA and states have broad discretion in the alternative governance strategies that are implemented for school improvement.

**5. More Rigorous Interventions:** ESSA requires that schools identified by the state for comprehensive support and improvement that have not improved within a state-determined number of years (not to exceed four years) are subject to more rigorous state-determined action, such as the implementation of interventions (which may include addressing school-level operations).

This data point includes the criteria for entering and exiting more rigorous interventions and a description of the more rigorous interventions and strategies provided in state policies and/or ESSA plans.

## 6. All data points for all states

### Key Takeaways

- **At least 39 states** included improvements categories in addition to ESSA requirements.
- **About 37 states** require improvement plans beyond the federal requirements, including six that require improvement plans for all schools.
- **At least 20 states and the District of Columbia** require parent and/or community engagement in the development of improvement plans.
- **About 38 states** include an alternative governance strategy.
- **About 22 states** include alternative governance as a more rigorous intervention.

### Related Resources

- **Guiding Questions for State School Improvement Efforts**
- **50-State Comparison: States' School Accountability Systems**

👤 **AUTHOR(S):** Carlos Jamieson,  
Gerardo Silva-Padron, Jennifer  
Thomsen, Lauren Bloomquist, Mary  
Fulton, Meghan McCann

📄 **RESOURCE TYPE:** 50-State  
Comparison

🎓 **EDUCATION LEVEL:** K-12

★ **STATE(S):** Nationwide

## i MORE ON THIS ISSUE

Accountability

ESSA

*Education Commission of the States is the trusted source for comprehensive knowledge and unbiased resources on education policy issues ranging from early learning through postsecondary education.*

## 📧 SUBSCRIBE

**Subscribe** to our publications and stay informed.

## ? REQUEST ASSISTANCE

Need more information? **Contact** one of our policy experts.



**Contact Us**   **Terms of Use**

©2023 Education Commission of the States.

All Rights Reserved.

