

# Ensuring Equity in ESSA: The Role of N-Size in Subgroup Accountability

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## Abstract

States are responsible for setting the minimum number of students needed to form a student subgroup for federal reporting and accountability purposes. This required student subgroup size is commonly referred to as the state-set "n-size." States should set this number as low as possible to maximize the number of student subgroups created. This will ensure that states identify student subgroups with low academic performance and/or low high school graduation rates and provide targeted interventions to support the schools those students attend. Specifically, states should not require a subgroup to include more than ten students to include that subgroup for reporting and accountability purposes.

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## What Is “N-Size” and Why Does It Matter?

**At its core, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is a civil rights law with the primary purpose of ensuring that historically underserved students have equitable access to the educational opportunities they need to reach their full potential. Knowing the achievement level of individual students is fundamental to knowing whether the purpose of this law is being fulfilled.**



During its time, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the previous bill to reauthorize ESEA, required states to report on the performance of historically underserved students—including students of color, students from low-income families, and students with disabilities—and held them accountable for gaps in performance. While NCLB’s approach to addressing those performance gaps was misguided, its requirement to reveal how these students were performing was a critical first step to ensuring equity.

Prior to NCLB, the overall performance of a school often masked the performance of student subgroups, hiding gaps in academic achievement and high school graduation rates for historically underserved students.<sup>1</sup> The recently passed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 requires states, districts, and schools

to identify low-performing subgroups of students, report on their progress, and provide targeted intervention and support when they consistently demonstrate low performance.

The key term in this requirement is “subgroups” of students, which refers to student groups based on racial/ethnic status, socioeconomic status, English-language ability, and disability status. Under ESSA, as under NCLB, states set the minimum number of students required to create a subgroup of students at the school, district, and state levels. This state-set number, commonly referred to as the “n-size,” must not reveal personally identifiable information about the student and must yield statistically reliable information.<sup>2</sup> However, a significant number of states set their n-size higher than necessary to meet the requirements originally set under NCLB and maintained under ESSA.

Additionally, setting the n-size too high interferes with a state's ability to meet the student subgroup accountability requirements<sup>3</sup> under ESSA. ESSA requires states to identify schools with consistently underperforming subgroups of students and implement evidence-based, targeted intervention in these schools.

However, if a school does not have enough students from a particular subgroup to reach the state-set n-size, then the school does not have to report the academic performance or high school graduation rates of students in that subgroup and ESSA does not require interventions and support for those students. For example, if a state sets the n-size at 30 students and a high school has only twenty-nine African American students in the twelfth-grade class, that subgroup of African American students essentially does not exist for reporting and accountability purposes. The individual students would count in the high school's overall graduation rate, but the school would not report any gaps between the graduation rate of African American students and their white peers in that particular high school, nor would the school receive any intervention and support to address those gaps.

If states set the n-size higher than necessary to be statistically sound and protect student privacy, they are *less likely* to reveal the low performance of student subgroups. Consequently, they are *more likely* to overlook a number of student subgroups for both reporting and accountability purposes and underidentify schools needing and receiving targeted intervention and support.



## Consistency and Comparability of Data

Consistency across states in terms of comparable data is also an important goal to ensure accurate cross-state comparisons of gaps in student subgroup performance. Currently, significant variation exists across states regarding the minimum number of students needed for a student subgroup to exist for federal reporting and accountability and improvement purposes. As table 1 shows, for federal accountability and improvement purposes

- thirteen states set an n-size of 10 or fewer students;<sup>4</sup>
- nine states and California's [CORE Districts](#)<sup>5</sup> set the n-size between 11 and 20 students;<sup>6</sup> and
- twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia set the n-size at 21 or more students<sup>7</sup> (eight of those states set it at 31 or more students<sup>8</sup>).



**TABLE 1: State N-Size**

 States with N-Size of 10 or Less     States with N-Size Between 11 and 20     States with N-Size of 21 or More

STATE	N-Size for Federal Accountability and Improvement Purposes	N-Size for Reporting Academic Performance and High School Graduation Rates
Alaska <sup>9</sup>	5	5
Maryland <sup>10</sup>	5	5
Wyoming <sup>11</sup>	6	6
Florida <sup>12</sup>	10	10
Iowa <sup>13</sup>	10	10
Maine <sup>14</sup>	10	10
Mississippi <sup>15</sup>	10	10
Nebraska <sup>16</sup>	10	10
North Dakota <sup>17</sup>	10	10
Oklahoma <sup>18</sup>	10	10
South Dakota <sup>19</sup>	10	10
Utah <sup>20</sup>	10	10
West Virginia <sup>21</sup>	10	10
New Hampshire <sup>22</sup>	11	11
Georgia <sup>23</sup>	15	10
Alabama <sup>24</sup>	20	10
Colorado <sup>25</sup>	16/20 <sup>a</sup>	No minimum set
Connecticut <sup>26</sup>	20	20
CORE Districts (California) <sup>27</sup>	20	20
Massachusetts <sup>28</sup>	20	6/10 <sup>b</sup>
Minnesota <sup>29</sup>	20	10
Rhode Island <sup>30</sup>	20	20
Wisconsin <sup>31</sup>	20	20
Arkansas <sup>32</sup>	25	25
District of Columbia <sup>33</sup>	25	10
Idaho <sup>34</sup>	25	25
Kentucky <sup>35</sup>	25/10 <sup>c</sup>	10

(continued)

**Notes:** N-size refers to the minimum number of students needed within a specific subgroup to create that subgroup for federal reporting and accountability purposes.

<sup>a</sup> Colorado uses an n-size of 16 students for the academic achievement and high school graduation rates of student subgroups and an n-size of 20 students for growth in academic achievement for student subgroups.

<sup>b</sup> Massachusetts uses an n-size of 10 students for reporting the academic performance of student subgroups and 6 students for reporting high school graduation rates of student subgroups on school report cards.

<sup>c</sup> Kentucky uses an n-size of 25 students to identify the bottom 5 percent of student subgroups and an n-size of 10 students for the "nonduplicated student gap group." See Kentucky Department of Education, ESEA Flexibility Request, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ky3req32015.doc>.

**TABLE 1: State N-Size (continued)**

 States with N-Size of 10 or Less     States with N-Size Between 11 and 20     States with N-Size of 21 or More

STATE	N-Size for Federal Accountability and Improvement Purposes	N-Size for Reporting Academic Performance and High School Graduation Rates
Nevada <sup>36</sup>	25	10
Texas <sup>37</sup>	25	25
Delaware <sup>38</sup>	30	30
Indiana <sup>39</sup>	30	10
Kansas <sup>40</sup>	30	30
Michigan <sup>41</sup>	30	30
Missouri <sup>42</sup>	30	30
Montana <sup>43</sup>	30/10 <sup>d</sup>	6
New Jersey <sup>44</sup>	30	10
New York <sup>45</sup>	30	5
North Carolina <sup>46</sup>	30	10
Ohio <sup>47</sup>	30	30
Pennsylvania <sup>48</sup>	30	30
South Carolina <sup>49</sup>	30	30
Tennessee <sup>50</sup>	30	10
Virginia <sup>51</sup>	30	30
Washington <sup>52</sup>	30	10
Arizona <sup>53</sup>	40	10
Hawaii <sup>54</sup>	40	40
Louisiana <sup>55</sup>	40/10 <sup>e</sup>	10
New Mexico <sup>56</sup>	40	10
Oregon <sup>57</sup>	40/30/20 <sup>f</sup>	40/30/20
Vermont <sup>58</sup>	40	11
Illinois <sup>59</sup>	45	10
California <sup>60</sup>	50	50

**Notes:** N-size refers to the minimum number of students needed within a specific subgroup to create that subgroup for federal reporting and accountability purposes.

<sup>d</sup> Montana uses an n-size of 30 students for federal accountability purposes. For small schools that test fewer than thirty students overall, which account for approximately 40 percent of the state's schools, Montana uses an n-size of 10 students for federal accountability purposes.

<sup>e</sup> Louisiana uses an n-size of 40 students for high school graduation rates and an n-size of 10 students for performance on assessments for federal accountability purposes.

<sup>f</sup> Oregon uses an n-size of 30 students for the overall growth in student academic achievement and the growth in academic achievement for student subgroups and an n-size of 40 students for the overall high school graduation rate and student subgroup high school graduation rate. However, Oregon uses two years of data when reporting student performance and high school graduation rates and uses four years of data for small schools. So while 40 students is the minimum n-size for reporting high school graduation rates, this is forty students over two consecutive cohorts combined. This means that each student subgroup cohort must average twenty students per year (and only ten students per year in small schools) to be included for federal accountability purposes.

This extreme variation makes cross-state comparisons of student subgroup performance difficult. For example, Maryland currently has an n-size of 5 students, while Louisiana has an n-size of 40 students. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) notes that setting a maximum n-size that allows for less varying extremes creates greater "uniformity in reporting practices across states in order to facilitate cross-state comparisons."<sup>61</sup> Further, when states set an unnecessarily high n-size, it increases the likelihood that they will underreport the number of schools with gaps in the performance of student subgroups, limiting their ability to provide additional support to a significant number of historically underserved students.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) recommends that states set a consistent n-size of 10 for the purpose of determining whether "significant disproportionality" exists among racial/ethnic groups in the rates at which students with disabilities within each racial/ethnic group are disciplined.<sup>62</sup> According to the proposed rules from OSERS, wide variations exist across states in the n-size they use to create the racial/ethnic groups to determine whether students with disabilities within these groups are disciplined at varying rates based on race. For this purpose, nine states set the n-size at 10 students, while four states set the n-size at 30 students, for example. If a school does not have enough students from a particular racial/ethnic subgroup to reach the n-size, then the school does not have to examine whether students with disabilities within that racial/ethnic group are disciplined at disproportionate rates.

ED notes that when states set a higher n-size, they eliminate more student subgroups, and school districts, from the analysis, thereby limiting the number of students states can identify for additional support. When states set an unnecessarily high n-size for the purpose of determining "significant disproportionality" they undermine accountability in the same way that high n-sizes undermine ESSA's reporting and accountability provisions. ED proposes setting the maximum n-size at 10 students to address these concerns and "ensure that States examine as many racial and ethnic groups for significant disproportionality in as many [districts] as possible," according to the proposed rules.<sup>63</sup>

## Protecting Student Privacy and Ensuring Statistical Reliability

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act,<sup>64</sup> state reporting of disaggregated student data, such as student subgroups, may not be published if the results would yield personally identifiable information<sup>65</sup> about an individual student. In addition, ESSA requires<sup>66</sup> states to set an n-size that protects student privacy and is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information. According to a report by NCES,<sup>67</sup> a state can set an n-size of 10 students, and even as low as 5 students, and fully meet the requirement for statistical reliability and also fully protect student privacy. The NCES report also describes several statistical methods states are using to protect student privacy. For example, some states use "various forms of [data] suppression, top and bottom coding of values at the ends of a [data] distribution, and limiting the amount of detail reported for the underlying [number of students]" to provide statistically reliable information that protects individual student privacy.<sup>68</sup>



## Strengthening Student Subgroup Accountability

A number of states have demonstrated that by lowering their n-size, they are able to identify and support substantially more schools and students:

- Massachusetts was able to include 100 additional schools in its system of school accountability and support by lowering its n-size from 40 to 30 students.<sup>69</sup>
- The California CORE Districts chose to use an n-size of 20 students, which is lower than the state-set n-size of 50 students and, collectively, were able to include 150,000 additional students in their accountability and support systems.<sup>70</sup>
- Mississippi lowered its n-size from 40 to 30 students and the number of schools accountable for students with disabilities increased from 234 to 872. Similarly, the number of schools accountable for English language learners increased from 15 to 447.<sup>71</sup>
- Virginia lowered its n-size from 50 to 30 students. Consequently, the approximate number of schools accountable for African American students increased from 353 to 451 and those accountable for Latino students increased from 122 to 183. The number of schools accountable for students with disabilities increased from 105 to 396, for English language learners from 104 to 139, and for students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch from 672 to 717.<sup>72</sup>
- Sixteen states and the CORE Districts in California lowered their n-sizes within the last two years.<sup>73</sup>

More states should follow these examples and structure their accountability and support systems to expand, rather than limit, the number of student subgroups included within those systems.



## Policy Recommendations

### Federal Recommendations

ED should issue regulations under ESSA that prohibit states from setting an n-size above 10 students for reporting and accountability purposes unless the state demonstrates that setting a higher number would not exclude a significant number of students and schools. Under this regulation, states still would maintain the flexibility to set an n-size below 10 students.

ED has the authority to place these parameters around the state determination of n-size to ensure that states meet reporting and accountability requirements under ESSA. Although under ESSA,<sup>74</sup> the U.S. Secretary of Education is prohibited from setting a minimum number of students needed to form a subgroup, there is no language within ESSA prohibiting the Secretary from setting a maximum n-size or a cap.

The Secretary has the authority to ensure that states meet subgroup accountability requirements. In addition, more accurate cross-state comparisons can be made when there is less variation in state-set n-sizes. Further, this would allow for consistency with the maximum n-size that OSERS proposes.

## State and Local Recommendations

As states consider changes to their accountability and improvement systems, they should set their n-size at 10 or fewer students to ensure they capture the greatest number of student subgroups for reporting, accountability, and improvement purposes under ESSA. When states include these schools in their accountability and improvement systems, the schools become eligible for school improvement funding and direct student services under the law. In addition, states may choose to target other federal and state resources to these schools, such as professional development funding under Title II of ESSA. States and districts should prioritize schools with the greatest numbers and percentages of low-performing students as measured by student achievement and high school graduation rates.

There are a number of evidence-based interventions and strategies that these schools can implement to help close gaps in achievement and high school graduation rates including personalization, early-warning identification and intervention systems, and expanded access to rigorous and advanced course work, among others. (See the sidebar on the next page, "Closing Achievement Gaps with Evidence-Based Interventions," for additional information and examples.)

## Conclusion

The ability of state and school accountability systems to identify and support student subgroups inherently depends upon the existence of those individual subgroups within a state's accountability system. States must accurately determine and report the performance of *all* student subgroups in order to thoroughly identify gaps in student performance, prioritize and target resources, and ensure that the schools serving these students receive the support they need to help close these gaps.

An n-size set higher than necessary to protect student information and be statistically sound is counterproductive to identifying and closing those gaps. The promise of ESSA to ensure that every student succeeds will never be fulfilled unless states structure their accountability and improvement systems to be as inclusive as possible. By setting an n-size of 10 or fewer students, state accountability systems effectively can identify and support the nation's underserved students and realize the civil rights imperative inherent within the law.



## Closing Achievement Gaps with Evidence-Based Reform and Interventions

### Personalization

MDRC conducted an evaluation<sup>75</sup> of New York City's "small schools of choice," which implemented a number of strategies, including an increased focus on personalization. As a result of these reform efforts, the overall high school graduation rates have increased from 60.9 percent to 70.4 percent—9.5 percentage points overall; 13.5 percentage points for African American males and 10.3 percentage points for Latino females.<sup>76</sup> The increase in four-year high school graduation rates is equivalent to nearly half of the gap in graduation rates between white students and students of color in New York City. In addition, this initiative has led to an overall increase in college enrollment of 8 percentage points and an increase in college enrollment for African American males of 11 percentage points, a 36 percent increase relative to their peers.<sup>77</sup> Principals and teachers at these schools with the strongest evidence of effectiveness strongly believe that academic rigor and personal relationships account for the effectiveness of their schools.

The Chicago Public School System effectively uses data to provide students with personalized intervention and support. In Chicago, the city's high school graduation rate rose from 47 percent in 1999 to 69 percent in 2013. This progress resulted from a focused effort to keep Chicago's ninth-grade students on track toward graduation by using data to individualize instruction. The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute predicts that Chicago's graduation rate will exceed 80 percent within the next few years.<sup>78</sup>

### Early-Warning Identification and Intervention Systems

Early-warning identification and intervention systems are based on a broad body of research supporting their use in secondary schools. For example, Diplomas Now partners with the school community and works with administrators and teachers to improve student attendance, behavior, and course performance. They develop a strategic plan, implement an early-warning system to identify struggling students, and regularly review data to foster continuous improvement. For these students, Diplomas Now provides additional academic support in areas of identified need and forms support groups and connects them with community resources, such as counseling, health care, housing, food, and clothing.<sup>79</sup> MDRC recently conducted a first-year process evaluation<sup>80</sup> of Diplomas Now and reports impressive results. For School Year 2013–14, Diplomas Now reports a 62 percent reduction in student suspension, a 58 percent reduction in students failing English, and a 54 percent reduction in students failing math.

### Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs

Research demonstrates that Advanced Placement (AP) students are more likely to enroll in a four-year college, perform better in college, return for a second year in college, and graduate from college than their non-AP peers.<sup>81</sup> Students—including women and underrepresented students—who take AP math or science exams are more likely to major in STEM (science, technology, mathematics, and engineering) fields.<sup>82</sup> Further, a recent study on students completing the International Baccalaureate (IB) program demonstrates postsecondary education outcomes for students from low-income families. Specifically, students from Title I schools in the IB Diploma Program (DP) enroll in college at the same rate as IB DP students from public schools generally, a rate of 82 percent.<sup>83</sup> Further, IB DP students from low-income families enroll in postsecondary education at a rate of 79 percent compared to the national average for students from low-income families, which is 46 percent.<sup>84</sup>

### Early College/Dual-Enrollment Programs

Research shows that participation in dual-enrollment courses, which allow students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously, can increase high school graduation rates and increase college enrollment and persistence. In [early college high schools](#), where students can earn both a high school diploma and an associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a bachelor's degree, 90 percent of students graduate from high school and 30 percent earn an associate's degree or other postsecondary credential while in high school.<sup>85</sup>

### Linked Learning

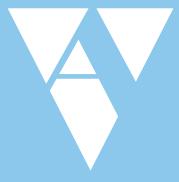
[Linked Learning](#) is an approach to high school redesign being implemented in California that integrates rigorous academics, career-based learning in the classroom, work-based learning in professional settings, and integrated student supports. [Research](#) from SRI International assessing the effect of Linked Learning on students' high school outcomes finds that students enrolled in high-quality Linked Learning pathways are more likely to graduate from high school than other students.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>2</sup> See ESSA, section 1111 (c)(3)(A).
- <sup>3</sup> See ESSA, sections 1111(c)(4)(D)(III) and (d)(3)(A)(i)(II).
- <sup>4</sup> The states are Alaska, Florida, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
- <sup>5</sup> CORE represents nine member school districts in California, including Fresno, Garden Grove, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, Sanger, and Santa Ana Unified. Combined, these districts serve more than 1 million students.
- <sup>6</sup> The states are Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin.
- <sup>7</sup> The states are Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.
- <sup>8</sup> The states are Arizona, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oregon (for the overall high school graduation rate and student subgroup high school graduation rate), and Vermont.
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- <sup>47</sup> Ohio Department of Education, ESEA Flexibility Request, p. 78, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/flex-renewal/ohrenwalreq2015.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2016).
- <sup>48</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Education, ESEA Flexibility Request, p. 53, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/flex-renewal/parenwalreq2015.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2016).
- <sup>49</sup> South Carolina Department of Education, ESEA Flexibility Request, p. 73, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/flex-renewal/screnwalreq2015.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2016).
- <sup>50</sup> Candice McQueen, Tennessee Department of Education, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, April 4, 2016.
- <sup>51</sup> Virginia Department of Education, ESEA Flexibility Request, p. 73, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/va4req32015.pdf> (accessed March 3, 2016).
- <sup>52</sup> Gil Mendoza, State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, March 30, 2016.
- <sup>53</sup> Cecilia E. Johnson, Arizona Department of Education, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, March 30, 2016.
- <sup>54</sup> Glenn Nuchi, Hawaii State Department of Education, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, February 16, 2016.
- <sup>55</sup> Jennifer Baird, Louisiana Department of Education, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, May 26, 2016.
- <sup>56</sup> Cindy Gregory, New Mexico Public Education Department, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, February 23, 2016.
- <sup>57</sup> Jason Wiens, Oregon Department of Education, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, March 7, 2016.
- <sup>58</sup> Amy Fowler, Vermont Agency of Education, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, April 19, 2016.
- <sup>59</sup> Angela Chamness, Illinois State Board of Education e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, April 5, 2016.
- <sup>60</sup> Cheryl Haviland, California Department of Education, e-mail message to Alliance for Excellent Education, March 22, 2016.
- <sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Statistical Methods for Protecting Personally Identifiable Information in Aggregate Reporting* (NCES 2011-603), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011603.pdf> (accessed March 21, 2016).
- <sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of Education, "Assistance to States for the Education of Children With Disabilities; Preschool Grants for Children With Disabilities; Proposed Rules," 34 C.F.R. 300, Vol. 81, No. 41, March 2, 2016, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-03-02/pdf/2016-03938.pdf> (accessed March 22, 2016).
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. 99.
- <sup>65</sup> Personally identifiable information includes but is not limited to the following: (1) student's name; (2) name of the student's parent or other family members; (3) address of the student or student's family; (4) a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record; (5) other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; (6) other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; (7) information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates (34 C.F.R. § 99.3).
- <sup>66</sup> See ESSA, section 1111(c)(3)(A)(iii).
- <sup>67</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *Statistical Methods*.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid. The report identifies "best practices" to avoid the unintended disclosure of personally identifiable information, including publishing the percentage distribution across categories of outcome measures with no underlying counts or totals; publishing a collapsed percentage distribution across categories of outcome measures with no underlying counts or totals; publishing counts but using complementary suppression at the subgroup level when a small subgroup is suppressed; limiting the amount of detail published for school background information; recoding the ends of percentage distributions; and recoding high and low rates. These recommendations "were selected with the goal of maximizing the amount of information that can be released while protecting personally identifiable student information through a relatively straightforward set of rules that can be easily implemented."

- <sup>69</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, ESEA Flexibility Request, p. 55, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/flex-renewal/marenewalreq2015.pdf> (accessed April 20, 2016).
- <sup>70</sup> California CORE Districts, "The School Quality Improvement Index & the CORE Data Collaborative," PowerPoint presentation, January 11, 2016, <http://coredistricts.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CORE-Data-Collaborative-v3-1-21-16.pdf> (accessed April 20, 2016).
- <sup>71</sup> Mississippi Department of Education, "Highlights of Mississippi's ESEA Flexibility Request," <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/highlights/ms.doc> (accessed April 20, 2016).
- <sup>72</sup> Virginia Department of Education, "Highlights of Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Request," [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal\\_programs/esea/flexibility/highlights.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/flexibility/highlights.pdf) (accessed March 21, 2016).
- <sup>73</sup> Alaska lowered its n-size from 26 to 5. Arizona lowered its n-size from 40 to 30. Connecticut lowered its n-size from 40 to 20. California's CORE districts lowered their n-size from 100 to 20. Florida lowered its n-size from 30 to 10. Georgia lowered its n-size from 30 to 15. Idaho lowered its n-size from 34 to 25. Illinois lowered its n-size from 45 to 10. Maine lowered its n-size from 20 to 10. Minnesota lowered its n-size from 40 to 10 for reporting purposes and to 20 for accountability purposes. Mississippi lowered its n-size from 30 to 10. Nevada lowered its n-size from 25 to 10. North Carolina lowered its n-size from 40 to 30. Pennsylvania lowered its n-size from 30 to 11. Rhode Island lowered its n-size from 45 to 20. South Carolina lowered its n-size from 40 to 30 and Texas lowered its n-size from 50 to 25.
- <sup>74</sup> See ESSA, section 1111 (e)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII).
- <sup>75</sup> H. S. Bloom and R. Unterman, *Sustained Progress: New Findings About the Effectiveness and Operation of Small Public High Schools of Choice in New York City* (New York, NY: MDRC, 2013); and American Institutes for Research, *Findings from the Study of Deeper Learning: Opportunities and Outcomes* (Washington, DC: Author, 2014).
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>78</sup> M. Roderick et al., *Preventable Failure: Improvements in Long Term Outcomes When High Schools Focused on the Ninth Grade Year* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2014), <https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/On-Track%20Validation%20RS.pdf> (accessed March 10, 2015).
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- <sup>80</sup> W. Corrin et al., *Laying Tracks to Graduation: The First Year of Implementing Diplomas Now* (New York, NY: MDRC, 2014).
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- <sup>82</sup> K. D. Mattern, E. J. Shaw, and M. Ewing, *Advanced Placement Exam Participation: Is AP Exam Participation and Performance Related to Choice of College Major?*, (Washington, DC: College Board, 2011), <http://research.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/publications/2012/7/researchreport-2011-6-ap-participation-performance-major-choice.pdf> (accessed March 21, 2016).
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- <sup>84</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>85</sup> M. Webb and C. Gerwin, *Early College Expansion: Propelling Students to Postsecondary Success, at a School Near You.* (Washington, DC: Jobs for the Future, 2014), [http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Early-College-Expansion\\_031414.pdf](http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Early-College-Expansion_031414.pdf) (accessed January 7, 2015).



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