



## RESOURCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Resource accountability is one part of the broader education-accountability system needed to monitor and ensure constitutional compliance, to support the effective provision of a high-quality education for all, and to provide the data necessary to enable continuous improvement in schooling. As Darling-Hammond and colleagues write,

In a country where school funding inequities are severe, inadequate resources deny genuine accountability to many families. If we really expect all children to achieve college and career-readiness, governments at all levels must be accountable for fairly allocating and wisely using resources—dollars, curriculum and learning tools, well-qualified educators, time, and safe, healthy environments for learning—to accomplish these goals. Measures of resource adequacy must become part of the accountability system, along with indicators of system performance that allow the public to understand what is being invested and with what results.<sup>1</sup>

They call for resource standards that “allocat[e] adequate resources in relation to students’ learning needs.” In states where courts have ruled that students have a constitutional right to an adequate education, such resource standards must be aligned with the court rulings. In New York, for example, the decision in *CFE v. State of New York*, requires, among other things, equitable access to up-to date curricula, instructional materials, adequately trained teachers, reasonable class sizes, and additional supports for students with particular needs. A valid accountability system should ensure that *all schools* have sufficient resources in all of these areas.

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has the potential to promote more balanced and effective accountability systems by giving states more flexibility than did its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB.) ESSA gives states primary responsibility for designing the system by which they will hold their public schools accountable and by which they will identify and support the lowest-performing schools. It requires states to use multiple measures of student academic performance, and permits the inclusion of at least one measure of “school quality or student success,” such as “student engagement, educator engagement, student access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate and safety.”<sup>2</sup>

The downside of ESSA’s flexibility, however, is that it does not mandate that states meet specific achievement targets for students. Unlike NCLB, which set the (albeit narrow and unrealistic) goal of all students reaching proficiency on state math and reading tests, ESSA allows states to determine what outcomes students and schools are expected to achieve. In the absence of federally mandated targets, state-court decisions that define the level of education, the

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<sup>1</sup>Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). *Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm*. Stanford, CA: SCOPE Policy Brief, p 4.

<sup>2</sup> 20 U.S.C.A. §6311(c) (4) B (VI).

types of outcomes, and the resources that states are obligated to provide for their students take on even more centrality and importance.

For a detailed proposal for state resource accountability system, see, Campaign for Educational Equity, [Ensuring Resource Accountability](#).