



GPS INDICATORS
ACHIEVING GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FRAMEWORK

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INTRODUCTION

This chart is designed to give policymakers, educators, and advocates a framework to evaluate how well states and districts address areas critical to the success of public schools.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the National Education Association renewed its commitment to advocate for a “great public school” for every student. Shortly thereafter, the Great Public Schools (GPS) Indicators Project was launched. The primary objective of the GPS Indicators Project is to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in states’ support of public schools. The Project’s goals are to: 1) develop criteria (i.e. characteristics or qualities of public schools, staff, and students) in seven critical areas; 2) identify appropriate ways to measure the key criteria; 3) and report on the status of these indicators in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

In 2010-2011, the GPS Indicators Project, with the assistance of an independent advisory panel consisting of leading researchers, developed an initial framework of indicators that would serve as a basis for analyzing state policies, practices, and outcomes related to the GPS criteria. Final indicators then were developed to measure progress under each criterion. These indicators draw upon qualitative and quantitative data gathered from a host of reliable resources.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The seven criteria—which represent general areas deemed critical to the success of public schools—are listed on the top row of the chart. The criteria are: 1) School Readiness; 2) Standards and Curriculum; 3) Conditions of Teaching and Learning; 4) Workforce Quality; 5) Accountability and Assessments; 6) Family and Community Engagement; and, 7) School Funding.

In the row below the GPS criteria you will find several subcriteria (e.g. Appropriate Student Assessments), each corresponding to a single GPS criterion. These subcriteria represent critical areas of policy or practice related to the criteria. The subcriteria are followed by the indicators that determine the extent to which states and schools address the GPS criteria.

NOTE: This chart is a living document; the categories and descriptions you see here may change as we obtain more information or feedback. NEA has provided policy materials to accompany and support our advocacy work for all children, including those in poverty, students with disabilities, and English language learners.

GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS CRITERIA

All students have a basic right to a great public school. Our vision of what great public schools need and should provide acknowledges that the world is changing, and public education is changing, too. Meeting these Great Public Schools (GPS) criteria require not only the continued commitment of all educators, but the concerted efforts of policymakers at all levels of government. We believe these criteria will:

- Prepare all students for the future with 21st century skills
- Create enthusiasm for learning and engage all students in the classroom
- Close achievement gaps and raise achievement for all students
- Ensure that all educators have the resources and tools they need to get the job done

These criteria form a basis for NEA's priorities in offering Congress a framework for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The reauthorization process must involve all stakeholders, especially educators. Their knowledge and insights are key to developing sound policies.

Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that they come to school every day ready and able to learn.

High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students.

Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.

A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce.

Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels.

Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement.

Sufficient, equitable, and sustainable funding.

Note: These criteria are taken from NEA's Positive Agenda for ESEA Reauthorization, adopted July 2006.
<http://www.nea.org/home/13193.htm>

School Readiness

ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD

MANDATORY FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN ATTENDANCE

TEACHER PREPARATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

COMPREHENSIVE SCREENING AND FOLLOW-UP

TRANSITIONAL ALIGNMENT

State defines early-learning standards for child development and state-funded preK.

State uses a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

State subsidizes Early Head Start, Head Start, and preschool.

Average per-pupil funding in preK.

Percentage of eligible students participating in QRIS-rated programs.

Percentage of eligible students enrolled in state-funded Early Head Start.

Percentage of eligible students enrolled in state-funded Head Start.

Percentage of eligible children under age six receiving child care that is either fully or partially paid for with a child care subsidy.

Percentage of families that spend no more than 10 percent of the regional median family income on quality care (3-5 stars).

Percentage of districts offering early education resources for the home (e.g. home visitation, early literacy, prenatal, social services).

Percentage of districts that track student progress from age zero-five.

Percentage of eligible students age zero-three enrolled in an early-intervention program.

Percentage of students demonstrating readiness at kindergarten entry.

State requires that districts provide full-day, five-day/week kindergarten.

State requires mandatory attendance for all eligible students.

State funds full-day kindergarten, at minimum, at the same level as grades 1-12.

Percentage of eligible students in full-day, five-day/week kindergarten.

State policy has standards for preparation of early childhood educators.

State monitors the credentials, licenses, and certification of all early childhood educators.

State monitors the credentials, licenses, and certification of all preK-3 educators.

State provides professional learning and technical assistance to state-funded preK programs.

State provides financial support for those teachers seeking certification in early childhood education and development.

State subsidizes increased pay for those teachers certified in early childhood education and development.

Percentage of teachers of state-funded preK with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Percentage of kindergarten teachers licensed and/or certified in early childhood education and development.

Percentage of teachers seeking certification who receive financial support.

Percentage of teachers certified in early childhood education and development who are compensated on a higher pay scale.

State provides public health insurance (SCHIP) to all children from low-income families.

State has implemented streamlined procedures to facilitate enrollment in Medicaid and SCHIP.

State requires that all school-aged children are appropriately immunized before entering school.

State requires that all school-aged children undergo developmental and comprehensive child health screenings (e.g. ear, oral, vision).

Percentage of eligible children enrolled in SCHIP.

Percentage of children that have received immunizations.

Percentage of districts that conduct developmental and comprehensive child health screenings.

State policy outlines transition from early learning programs to elementary schools.

State provides funding for transition activities.

State subsidized early-learning programs are required to implement early childhood curricula that is aligned with state preK-grade 3 early-learning standards.

State subsidized early-learning programs are required to attend joint professional learning activities for childcare providers, preK, and kindergarten teachers.

Percentage of districts that conduct transition activities for preK students and their families.

Percentage of state-funded preK programs that implement early childhood curricula aligned with state preK-grade 3 early-learning standards.

Percentage of districts that provide joint professional learning activities for childcare providers, preK, and kindergarten teachers.

Percentage of districts that provide transition information to preK students and their families.

Standards and Curriculum

INTEGRATED AND CONTINUOUS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM CONTENT

APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

ACCOMMODATION AND DIFFERENTIATION

State policy requires educator involvement in developing content standards and curriculum guidelines.

State has an autonomous curriculum review board with a majority of active preK-12 educators.

State policy requires educator involvement in developing implementation plans for standards and curriculum.

State developed a plan to solicit feedback from classroom teachers and adjust curriculum guidelines and resources accordingly.

State policy mandates alignment among content standards, curriculum, resources, and assessments.

State provides high-quality resources that are aligned with standards and curriculum.

Percentage of schools that include educators in curriculum design.

Percentage of schools that include educators in implementation plan development for standards and curriculum.

Percentage of school personnel surveyed indicating alignment among standards, curriculum, resources, and assessments at the district level.

Percentage of school personnel surveyed indicating access to sufficient curriculum resources at the district level.

State developed a policy that requires alignment between curricular content and rigorous standards that address the needs of students of all abilities, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds in all academic subjects.

Percentage of districts that provide resources to help educators understand and apply content standards.

Percentage of districts that provide a specialized curriculum program for those students with disabilities who need it.

Percentage of districts that provide a specialized curriculum program for remediation.

Percentage of districts that provide a bilingual curriculum program.

Percentage of districts that provide a multicultural curriculum program for liberal arts subjects.

Percentage of districts that use the community as a contextualized learning environment.*

*Connect education to community through public libraries, zoos, parks, work experience opportunities, service learning, the school library, and afterschool programs.

State policy provides funding for job-embedded professional learning opportunities to help educators expand their instructional repertoire.

Percentage of districts that align professional learning with standards, curriculum, and assessments.

Percentage of districts that provide resources for job-embedded professional learning opportunities.

Percentage of educators who participated in job-embedded professional learning opportunities in the previous year.

Percentage of school personnel surveyed indicating alignment among professional learning, standards, curriculum, and assessments.

State developed a policy that requires accommodations and differentiations in curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet the range of students' needs.

Percentage of districts that provide job-embedded professional learning to help educators provide accommodations to meet the range of students' needs.

Percentage of teachers with at least eight hours of professional learning on analyzing student data to differentiate instruction for students with disabilities, as needed.

Percentage of teachers with at least eight hours of professional learning on analyzing student data to differentiate instruction for students with limited English proficiency.

Percentage of teachers with at least eight hours of professional learning on analyzing student data to differentiate instruction for students with gifts and talents.

Percentage of districts that implement Response to Intervention (RTI).

Percentage of districts that implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Percentage of districts that implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports/Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS/PBS).

Conditions of Teaching and Learning

GUIDANCE AND SUPPORTS FOR INSTRUCTION

GUIDANCE AND SUPPORTS FOR LEARNING

EDUCATOR VOICE IN ACCOUNTABILITY

POSITIVE CLASSROOM ECOLOGY

POSITIVE SCHOOL ECOLOGY

State requires districts to obtain educator input on instructional minutes.

State developed a policy that provides resources for job-embedded planning, instructional support (e.g. mentoring), and collaboration.*

Percentage of schools that obtain educator input on instructional minutes.

Percentage of districts that provide resources for job-embedded planning, instructional support, and collaboration.

Percentage of districts that provide funding for educators to access professional learning that addresses new education research and technology that will help improve instruction or support for students.

Percentage of districts that maintain and support a professional library of education publications for staff.

Percentage of districts that survey educators on teaching and learning conditions.

Average number of instructional minutes at the district level.

*Resources include professional learning communities, professional learning teams, lesson study, cohort learning, mentoring, and induction.

State allocates funding towards comprehensive school guidance systems with standards and benchmarks that address the academic needs of all students.

State has developed a policy that requires supports for students' social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Percentage of districts that implement and track guidance standards and benchmarks for all students.

Percentage of districts that offer supports for students' social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Percentage of districts that provide a favorable student-to-specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) ratio.*

Percentage of districts that provide adequate professional learning time for SISPs.

Percentage of districts that provide adequate resources for SISPs to collaborate with teachers, education support professionals, parents, and students.

Percentage of districts that offer training and development for a student peer-support system.

Percentage of elementary schools that spend at least 150 minutes per week on physical education.

Percentage of eligible schools enrolled in free and reduced-price school breakfast and lunch programs.

Percentage of districts with outreach plans for harder-to-access student populations.

*Optimal ratios include: school counselors—250:1; school nurses—750:1; school psychologists—1000:1; school social workers—250:1.

State has an autonomous Standards Board, the majority of whom are active preK-12 educators.

State requires that all planning and decision-making bodies related to the educator profession include active preK-12 educators.

Percentage of districts that provide formal opportunities for educators to participate in district policy-setting (e.g. accountability systems and hiring and evaluation of administrators).

State developed a comprehensive cultural competency policy to increase educators' cultural and linguistic competence through preservice education, licensure, and ongoing professional learning.

State policy mandates class size limits based on subject matter and grade level.

Percentage of licensed teachers who have received preservice education in culturally relevant pedagogy.

Percentage of districts that allocate funds to increase educators' culturally relevant pedagogy.

Percentage of districts that track the relationship between student achievement and the amount of staff training/education in culturally relevant pedagogy.

Percentage of districts with class size limits based on subject matter and grade level.

Percentage of districts with teachers who have an average of fewer than 10 absences in a school year.

Percentage of districts with students who have an average of fewer than 10 absences in a school year (or less than 5 percent of the school year).

State developed a policy that requires annual reporting by district on school climate and student engagement.

State policy requires districts to collect and publicly report disaggregated subgroup data recording behavior and behavioral interventions leading to disciplinary exclusion from school.*

Percentage of districts that annually report on school climate and student engagement.

Percentage of districts that have data-driven, site-based school climate and student engagement plans.

Percentage of districts that collect and publicly report disaggregated subgroup data recording behavior and behavioral interventions leading to disciplinary exclusion from school.*

Percentage of districts that implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS/PBS).

Percentage of districts reporting that bullying occurred among students on a daily or weekly basis.

Percentage of districts that allocate resources toward interventions around student safety issues (e.g. LGBT bullying and harassment).

Percentage of districts that educate all school personnel on intervention techniques in incidents of student bullying and harassment.

Percentage of districts that survey students on school climate.

Percentage of public school employees in each job category who have received in-service training on culturally relevant pedagogy.

*These disciplinary actions include in-school/out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, arrests, and referrals to law enforcement.

Workforce Quality

HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND LICENSURE

LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND STABILITY

EDUCATOR QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS (ALL SCHOOL PERSONNEL)

State developed a policy to utilize NCATE/CAEP and InTASC standards to accredit/approve educator preparation programs and license educators.

Percentage of districts that mandate successful completion of an induction program to move from initial to full licensure status.

Percentage of teacher preparation programs working with local school districts to recruit high-achieving high school graduates to pursue careers in education.

Percentage of programs that use classroom-based performance assessments to determine candidate preparedness prior to program completion.

Percentage of programs that survey graduates about their preparedness to serve as the teacher-of-record.

Percentage of programs that provide training for cooperating teachers.

Percentage of programs that require school-based experiences beyond a semester of student teaching.

State policy provides for voluntary national certification and endorsements that promote teacher leadership opportunities.

State policy includes a state-level endorsement/certificate for teacher leaders.

State policy codifies Model Teacher Leader Standards and/or other standards for teacher leadership.

State provides funding for teacher and school leadership programs.

State policy promotes ongoing training and support for principals.

State policy codifies principal retention.

Percentage of teacher leaders with a leadership endorsement/certificate.

Percentage of districts that provide teacher leadership training.

Percentage of districts that have differentiated pay structures for clearly defined roles and responsibilities that account for hybrid/ varied educator roles within a school.

Percentage of districts with "peer assistance" and "peer assistance and review" teams.

Percentage of districts that use multiple measures to evaluate administrators and school leaders.

Percentage of districts that provide ongoing training and support for principals.

Percentage of districts that track principal retention.

State policy mandates multi-professional collaboration on educator support and evaluation systems staffed by active preK-12 educators.

State policy requires that evaluations be based on multiple measures of performance to determine effectiveness.

State policy requires school districts to track the equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders.*

Percentage of districts that design, monitor, and implement evaluation systems based on state framework in partnership with educators and their associations.

Percentage of districts with performance evaluations employing multiple measures.

Percentage of districts that provide educators support based on formative and summative evaluation results.

Percentage of districts with evaluations aligned with induction.

Percentage of districts that track the distribution of effective teachers and leaders.

*Teachers with full licensure and rated effective in their positions according to multiple measures of performance.

State policy supports recruitment of promising future educators including underrepresented populations.

State developed a policy that provides funding for educators' on-going, relevant, and job-embedded induction support and professional learning.

State provides funding and technical assistance to strengthen professional learning in high-poverty, high-minority areas with emphasis on cultural competency and mentoring.

State tracks educator shortages.

Percentage of districts with plans to recruit educators from underrepresented populations.

Percentage of districts with plans to recruit and retain accomplished educators.

Percentage of districts with professional learning plans, including induction and mentoring, for teachers, ESPs, and SISPs.

Percentage of districts that implement job-embedded planning, instructional support, (e.g. mentoring), and collaboration.*

Percentage of districts that provide extra resources and assistance for those in harder to staff areas.

Percentage of districts that begin cultivation and recruitment a year prior to the present school year.

Percentage of districts with educator shortages.

Percentage of teachers teaching out of field.

Percentage of teachers who leave the profession after 5 years.

*Collaborations include professional learning communities, professional learning teams, lesson study, cohort learning, mentoring, and induction.

State law provides bargaining rights for public education employees over terms and conditions of employment.

State law provides bargaining rights for public education employees over education policy that advances student support and learning.

State law provides bargaining rights for public education employees over dues deduction.

Percentage of districts represented by unions with collective bargaining rights.

Percentage of district contracts that include procedures for dispute resolution.

Percentage of districts with binding arbitration.

Percentage of district contracts with defined benefit plans that provide replacement of at least 75 percent of final salary, protects against inflation, and is guaranteed by the state.

Percentage of districts that permit educators to bargain length of day/year.

Percentage of districts that permit educators to bargain preparation periods.

Percentage of districts that permit educators to bargain class load/size.

Percentage of districts that permit educator dues deduction, agency fee, and PAC deduction.

Percentage of districts that use the NEA professional growth salary scale.

Percentage of districts that offer financial incentives for teachers to earn National Board certification.

Percentage of districts that offer incentives for teachers to take on differentiated or hybrid roles.

Percentage of districts offering starting salaries at or above \$40,000 for teachers and \$28,000 for ESPs.

Accountability and Assessments

APPROPRIATE STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

ADEQUATE SCHOOL CAPACITY

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

State developed a policy that requires the use of both formative and summative student assessments that adhere to the principles of UDL.

State assessment systems include multiple sources of evidence and employ multiple measures of student growth.

State developed a policy that requires that stakeholders responsible for the analysis and usage of assessment results be involved in assessment design and development.

State requires that districts provide resources and job-embedded professional learning for teachers to become proficient users of formative and summative assessment data.

Percentage of districts that use both formative and summative student assessments that adhere to the principles of UDL.

Percentage of districts that use assessments that employ multiple measures of student growth.

Percentage of districts that involve teachers in assessment design and development.

Percentage of districts that provide resources and job-embedded professional learning for teachers to become proficient users of formative and summative assessment data.

Percentage of districts that release assessment results in time to inform learning.

State has policies and programs to ensure positive achievement outcomes for all students, including strategies to reduce learning gaps.

State has policies and programs to prevent dropouts.

State has policies and programs to increase the number of students who graduate and are college and career ready.

State tracks annual growth in percentage of students, by subgroup, who participate in SAT and ACT.

State tracks annual growth in percentage of state high school students, by subgroup, who graduate.

Percentage of districts that track student post-secondary pursuits.

Percentage of districts that offer programs with 21st century interdisciplinary themes (e.g. global and financial literacy).

Percentage of students attending school each day at the district level.

Percentage of students, at the district level, participating in rigorous coursework aligned with college- and career-ready standards (e.g. dual enrollment, Honors, Advanced Placement, IB).

State has a comprehensive, aligned, and integrated information management system that enables districts and schools to analyze, evaluate, and continuously improve student, educator, and school performance.

Percentage of districts that train school personnel to interpret data system results to inform and improve instruction and identify needed supports.

Percentage of districts that routinely produce monthly data reports on student performance by class and subject.

State collaborates with educators to develop school performance indicators.

State monitors indicator results and offers support to low-performing schools.*

Percentage of districts that publish comprehensive school performance data.

Percentage of districts categorized as "low-performing" receiving state support.

*Support includes needs assessments, on-site evaluations, assistance and training in data analysis, additional funding for the school improvement planning process, professional learning, and school support teams.

Family and Community Engagement

COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES TO IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT

INCLUSIVENESS AND OUTREACH TO FAMILIES

CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY AND EQUITY

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (WRAP-AROUND SERVICES)

STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

State policy supports family engagement as a driver of student academic performance and vital component of meeting school improvement goals.

State policy provides employer incentives for parents and/or caregivers to participate in school-related activities.

State requires annual reporting at the district level on family and community engagement.

State provides districts with technical assistance and support to address engagement strategies.

Percentage of districts that annually report on family and community engagement.

Percentage of schools that develop data-driven, site-based family and community engagement plans.

Percentage of schools that have a formal agreement with a community partner.

Percentage of districts that have received state-funded technical assistance and support to address engagement strategies.

State mandates family and community outreach.

State maintains an information sharing system readily available to families and communities in multiple formats and languages.

Percentage of districts that hire and train school/community liaisons who enhance outreach efforts with knowledge of a community's history, language, and cultural background.

Percentage of districts that share information on academic standards, school procedures, and student progress data in multiple formats and languages.

Percentage of districts that collect parent and caregiver feedback.*

*Methods of collection include surveys, focus groups, parent governing councils, etc.

State developed a policy that provides resources to school districts to engage families and the community on school district policies, processes, and procedures.

Percentage of districts that engage families on district policies, processes, and procedures.

Percentage of districts that hosted a meeting and/or training for families and the community in the previous year.

State provides resources for an integrated system of academic enrichment and social services to support children's intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and linguistic development.

Percentage of districts that provide access to extended onsite services for students and families. (e.g. school library, computer facilities, gym).

Percentage of districts that maintain partnerships/collaborations to provide development activities for caregivers.

Percentage of districts that maintain partnerships/collaborations to offer support for at-risk youth.*

Percentage of schools with family resource and/or service centers.

Percentage of schools that maintain partnerships/collaborations to provide access to family support services/social services.

*Support includes summer school, after-school programs, mentoring, and tutoring.

State policy provides resources for professional learning in family and community engagement for all school personnel.

Percentage of school personnel who have participated in professional learning designed to improve family and community engagement.

Percentage of districts collaborating with higher education institutions to infuse family and community involvement in education into teacher and administrator preparation programs.

Percentage of educators who have taken coursework on family and community engagement.

School Funding

SUFFICIENCY OF FUNDING

EQUITY IN FUNDING

PRODUCTIVE USE OF FUNDS

FUNDING SUSTAINABILITY

State determines the cost necessary for each student to meet state content and performance standards and updates costs as significant changes are made to its standards.*

State incorporates findings of its cost study into its education finance system.

State solicits educator input for cost study.

State has an independent body of stakeholders comprised of active preK-12 educators and administrators that annually assesses, establishes, and provides oversight for school funding.

State guarantees each school district a sufficient foundation level.

State conducts cost-adjustments based on student needs, demographics, and resources (e.g. comparable wage index) to ensure sufficiency.

Districts with comparable student populations receive similar funding levels.

Percentage of districts that conduct cost-adjustments based on student needs, demographics, and resources (e.g. comparable wage index) to ensure sufficiency.

*Acceptable methods for costing out: "professional judgment" approach, the "resource cost" model, "evidence-based" model, or the "successful school district" method.

State policy codifies equity in funding.

State uses "pupil weights" in its base formula to ensure equity.

State uses a "reward-for-effort" approach.

State mandates districts report on the distribution of state-certified teachers, ESPs, and SISPs.

State mandates districts report on average per-student expenditures disaggregated by federal, state, and local dollars.

Variance level of per-pupil funding among comparable districts.

Percentage of districts using "pupil weights" in its base formula to ensure equity.

Percentage of districts that report on the distribution of state-certified teachers, ESPs, and SISPs.

State uses performance incentives to ensure productive use of funds by school districts.

State requires annual district level compliance audits.

Percentage of districts with a district level consortium to bring down costs of bulk items.

Percentage of districts that post an up-to-date budget plan online.

State funds for capacity building to ensure sustainability.

State holds public events to inform government officials and voters of sustainability issues.

State implements measures to broaden its tax base.

The annual dollar amount of state tax expenditures.

Percentage of districts that hold public events to inform government officials and voters of sustainability issues.

Percentage of districts that implement measures to broaden their tax base for local school districts.

Percentage of districts with multi-year school budgets.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.



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