



Measure What Matters: An Urgent Vision for Transparency in Missouri's Measurement System

December 2022



Foreword

This white paper was jointly commissioned by [Kansas City Action Fund \(KCAF\)](#) and [Quality Schools Coalition \(QSC\)](#) to outline the current state of Missouri’s K-12 measurement system and a set of recommendations and opportunities to improve it. Both launched in 2021, QSC and KCAF are advocacy organizations dedicated to supporting transparent and aligned public education systems that are critical to supporting student achievement in Missouri. This white paper is intended to provide actionable research and recommendations on a critical aspect of K-12 education – measurement – to empower Missourians to advocate for necessary changes at the legislative, policy, and practitioner levels.

“Our mission at Quality Schools Coalition is to improve education in Missouri by advocating for a policy and regulatory environment in which public schools flourish. We are inspired each day by educators working to raise academic outcomes for all students, improve the college and career readiness of our high school graduates and close achievement gaps based on race and income. We hope that this report will provide a path forward for all of us to continue these pursuits.”

-Dean Johnson, Quality Schools Coalition

This report was prepared by [Watershed Advisors](#).

KCAF, QSC, and Watershed Advisors would like to thank the many stakeholders across the state of Missouri who provided comments, feedback, support, and critiques to inform the contents of this white paper, including over 25 individuals representing leadership across district and charter schools and systems, government agencies, non-profit organizations, community based organizations, and other entities.

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Executive Summary



Missouri’s students are capable of achieving excellence and deserve a world-class education. When designed effectively, state measurement systems ensure schools live up to their promise to deliver a quality education for every student.

Missouri’s state measurement system does not effectively or transparently communicate its results. Currently, only three in ten Missouri students — and only one in ten Black Missouri students — are demonstrating fourth grade reading proficiency on the nation’s report card.¹ However, nearly all (99 percent) of Missouri school districts are accredited, the state’s current signal for quality. Further, the state does not transparently rate individual schools, leaving parents and stakeholders in the dark about the schools in their community. Missourians deserve a measurement system that better signals how schools serve all of their students and focuses educators on the actions that are most important in improving student outcomes. As Missouri works to recover from the pandemic and support students to engage meaningfully with grade-level content, now is the time to boldly pursue a measurement system that empowers students, families, and educators alike.

Missouri’s measurement system, the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), is in the first year of its sixth iteration (MSIP 6). State leaders are currently planning to shift to a new, seventh iteration based on stakeholder feedback. This report makes four key recommendations for the future of Missouri’s measurement system and provides a set of associated actions the state should take for each recommendation. Missouri should:

Now is the time to boldly pursue a measurement system that empowers students, families, and educators alike.



1. Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System by:

- a. Eliminating accreditation and replacing it with a single, unified rating system that measures both schools and LEAs;
- b. Basing the single rating system on academics, not paperwork; and by
- c. Using the single rating system to require specific research-based interventions for all low-performing schools.



2. Focus on Excellence by:

- a. Defining what an “A” school looks like;
- b. Continuing to value both academic achievement and growth for every school;
- c. Balancing nuance with simplicity in student growth measures;
- d. Simplifying the formula at every level; and by
- e. Incentivizing high value college and career pathways.



3. Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System by:

- a. Measuring school quality before grade 3; and by
- b. Incorporating a high school impact measure.



4. Empower Families with Actionable Information by:

- a. Improving school report cards; and by
- b. Including all schools in the ratings system.

For student outcomes to improve, Missouri needs a measurement system that is laser-focused on measuring what matters most for students. Missouri now has an opportunity to lead nationally, and these four recommendations set Missouri on the path to national excellence.



Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

Current State

Missouri runs two separate measurement systems: Missouri's federally-compliant Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) identification system, and the state's accreditation system (MSIP).

The two systems are not fully aligned, limiting coherence and the impact of the overall measurement system in Missouri.

Future State

Missouri has one system grounded in the state's priorities that effectively measures what matters most for students to reach their full potential.



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

Current State

Virtually all Missouri districts receive accreditation, despite many districts scoring well below the state's performance expectations for student achievement and growth.

Future State

Missouri has a clear and rigorous definition of excellence for every measurement indicator that focuses educators on the actions that matter most.



Recommendation 3: Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System

Current State

Missouri's education system focuses almost entirely on grades 3-12, missing an opportunity to focus educators on critical years of the student experience like K-2 and postsecondary.

Future State

Missouri has a robust measurement system that leads nationally on early learning and postsecondary measurement.



Recommendation 4: Empower Families with Actionable Information

Current State

Missouri publishes school and Local Education Agency (LEA) report cards through the Missouri Comprehensive Data System, but these can be difficult to find and interpret, especially for parents.

Future State

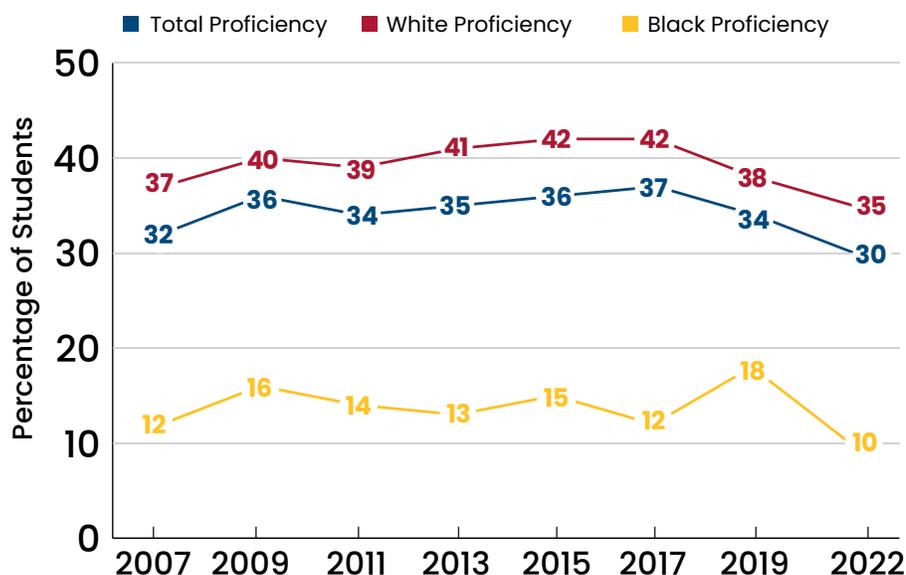
Missouri elevates ratings and increases their accessibility, empowering parents and community members to make more informed decisions on school quality.

Introduction

Measurement systems are one of a state education agency's primary levers to drive adult actions in schools and districts, creating immediate and sustained impact on student learning. Effective systems do this through three core elements:

1. **Rigorous, reliable, and fair ratings that reflect high expectations for all students;**
2. **Transparent and accessible public reporting; and,**
3. **Coherent rewards and interventions to incentivize research-based practices.**

Missouri NAEP Proficiency: Grade 4 Reading, 2007–2022



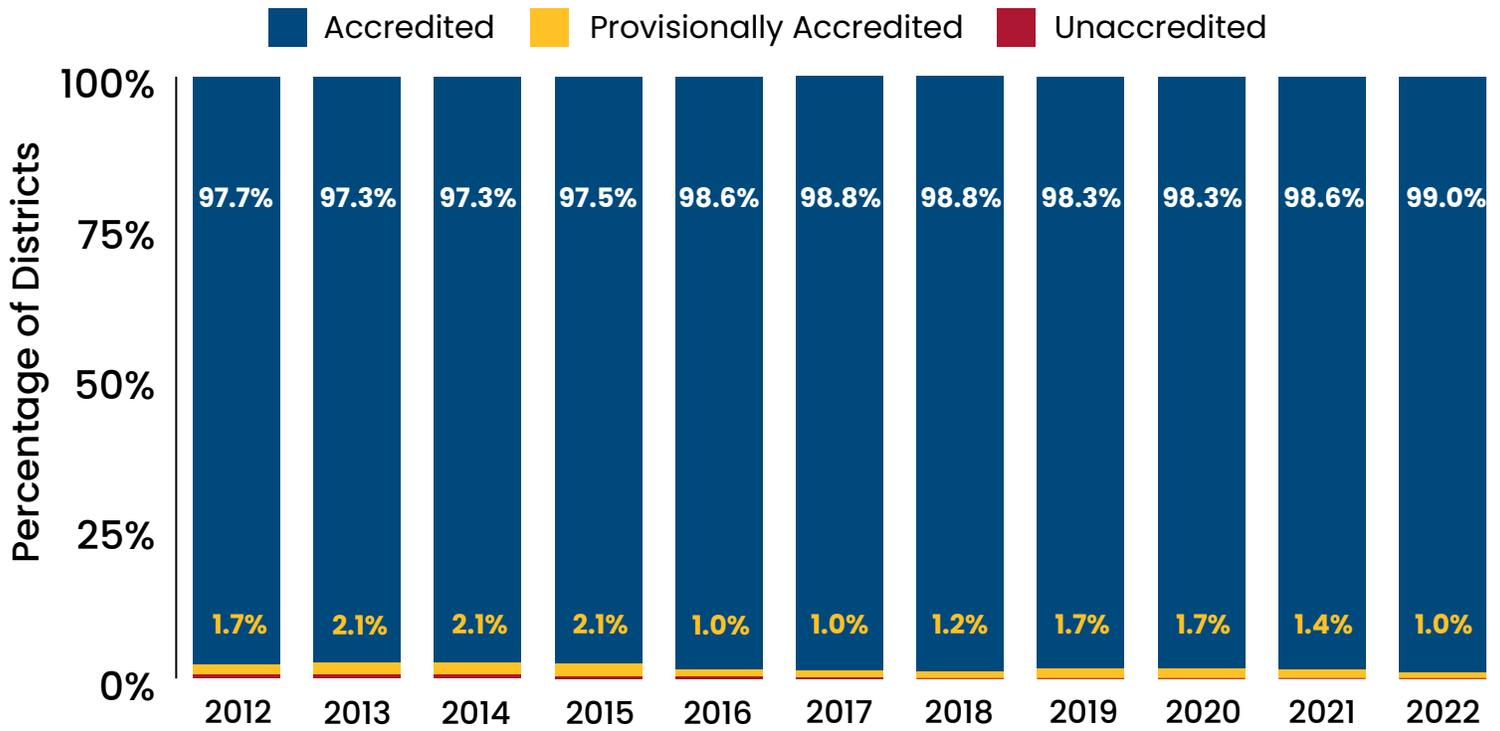
Pre-pandemic, Missouri ranked in the bottom half of states on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), declining in the number of students scoring proficient or better in every grade and subject over the preceding decade. The pandemic has exacerbated the situation for Missouri students. Supported largely by federal ESSER relief funds, the state spent over \$7 billion on education in FY2022²—but its most recent NAEP results show all Missouri students have lost ground, with historically disadvantaged students falling even further behind their peers.³ Since 2009, Missouri's white student group performance on NAEP 4th grade reading proficiency has dropped from 21st in the country to 40th. Additionally, the proficiency gap between white and Black Missouri students has grown since 2019 and is now 25 percent.

Missouri will increase education funding to over \$10 billion in FY2023.⁴ It is crucial these funds are used effectively. Now more than ever, Missouri needs a measurement system that provides a clear picture of where students are, connects to what teachers are doing in the classroom, and incentivizes the strategies research shows help students learn. Missouri's measurement system has continually evolved since its initial iteration, and must continue to evolve to meet the post-pandemic reality today's students face.

Missouri has an opportunity to advance K-12 measurement policies that ensure high expectations for all students while making the system more coherent, equitable, and transparent. By following the recommendations outlined in this document, Missouri can do more than catch up to the rest of the nation's measurement systems: It can achieve transformational change and become a national leader by creating an innovative measurement system that meets the needs of today's students.

Now more than ever, Missouri needs a measurement system that provides a clear picture of where students are.

Missouri District Accreditation by Year, 2012–2022



Note: Less than one percent of districts have been unaccredited in every year since 2012

History

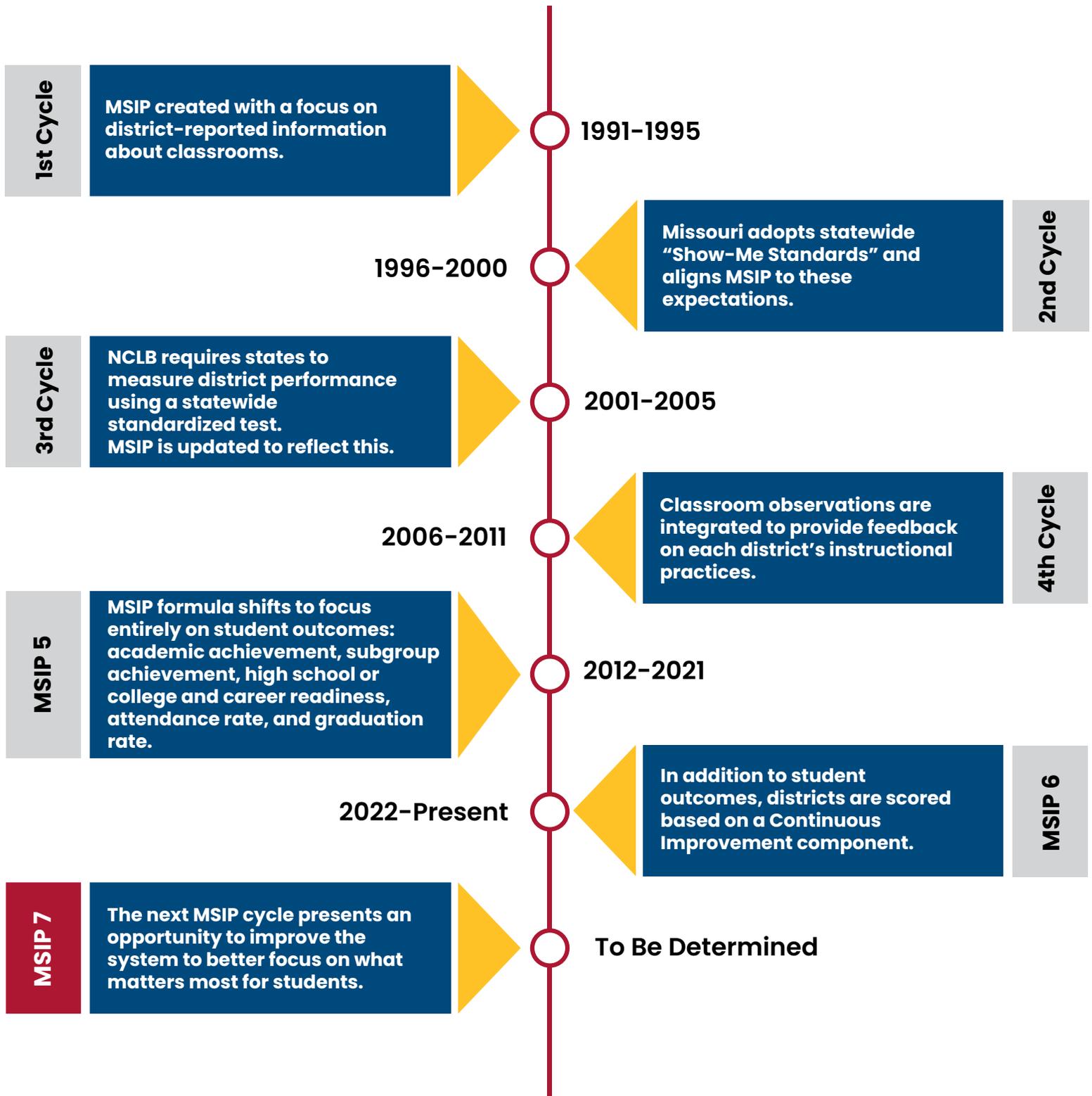
The Missouri General Assembly created the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) in 1990 with the purpose of accrediting and improving the state's school districts.⁵ MSIP was designed to be updated roughly every five years and is now on its sixth iteration (MSIP 6), which was approved just weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result is being reported for the first time with data from the 2021–2022 school year. The system has become more complex and has shifted its focus over time.

MSIP is used to assign schools and LEAs an overall Annual Performance Report (APR) score and determines accreditation decisions for traditional public school districts. MSIP 6 data is expected to be released for the first time in Winter 2022–2023, based on 2021–2022 school year results. The state will update accreditation classifications for the first time under the new formula in Fall 2024, based on 2022–2023 school year results.⁶

Historically, almost all districts are accredited. Indeed, in the rare instance that a district is classified as unaccredited, it often becomes a major news story.⁷ DESE has not yet published its first round of accreditation recommendations under MSIP 6, but since the first year of MSIP 5 in 2012, Missouri has never accredited less than 97 percent of its districts.⁸

Missouri's current measurement system does not transparently rate charter school performance, though charters enroll nearly 25,000 students across the state⁹ Missouri passed its first charter law in 1998, and the state's first charter school opened shortly thereafter. As of 2022, Missouri has 37 charter Local Education Agencies (LEAs), all located in Kansas City, St. Louis City, and St. Louis County.¹⁰ DESE evaluates charter LEAs on MSIP indicators and assigns an overall APR score, but they are not accredited by the State Board of Education. Charter LEAs in Missouri are accountable to their Sponsor, the organization approved by DESE to oversee school performance and decide on charter renewals, remediations, revocations, and closures.¹¹

History of MSIP



Academic Performance

On national measures of academic performance, Missouri performs near the middle of the country; however, annual national rankings mask declines in performance over the last decade and substantial gaps between student subgroups in the state.

On the most recent NAEP administration, Missouri ranked 35th among states for 4th grade reading and 28th for 4th grade math proficiency.¹² Though the state as a whole performs near the middle of the pack nationally, each of the state’s subgroups performs closer to the bottom compared to their peers across the country. For example, in 2009, Missouri’s white students ranked 21st in the country for grade 4 reading proficiency. That ranking has fallen with nearly every NAEP release since then, and the state’s white students now rank 40th in the country.

Missouri also has substantial subgroup disparities. Missouri’s Black student performance lags significantly behind white students in proficiency—only 10% of the state’s Black 4th graders are proficient in reading, compared to 35% of white 4th graders. That gap is 25% larger in 2022 than it was in 2019, when Missouri had the nation’s 4th-smallest Black/white proficiency gap. See Appendix A for more details on Missouri’s current and historical NAEP performance.

High school student performance data similarly shows a downward trend in recent years. Though Missouri’s average composite ACT score was slightly above the national average in 2022, the state’s average score has fallen by 1.5 points since 2015.¹³ Similarly, the state’s college enrollment rates fell steadily between 2011 and 2019, even as national enrollment rates rose slightly in that same period.¹⁴

The most recent MSIP results underscore the academic struggles Missouri has experienced over the previous decade. In 2019, well under half of all Missouri LEAs earned “On-Track” or “Target” ratings in ELA or Math, meaning that most LEAs did not meet the state’s standards for academic performance. On average, just over half of students in “On-Track” and “Target” districts are proficient in ELA and math—and in LEAs scoring “Floor” or “Approaching,” which is the majority of the state, well under half of students are proficient.¹⁵

Missouri’s students are capable of achieving excellence and deserve a world-class education. MSIP can be a powerful tool for Missouri to ensure all schools live up to their promise to deliver a quality education for every student.

NAEP Proficiency Rates, 2022

4th Grade Reading		
Student Group	MO (State Rank)	National
All Students	30% (35th of 51)	32%
White	35% (40th of 51)	41%
Black	10% (37th of 40)	16%

4th Grade Math		
Student Group	MO (State Rank)	National
All Students	34% (28th of 51)	35%
White	41% (38th of 51)	47%
Black	7% (38th of 40)	15%

State results are reported for subgroups only when sufficient numbers of students and adequate school representation are present. As a result, not every state is represented in the data.

MAP Proficiency Rates by LEA Level, 2019

English Language Arts (ELA)		
LEA Level	Avg. % Proficient	# of LEAs
Floor or Approaching	40.9%	343
On-Track or Target	56.8%	206
All LEAs	46.7%	553

Math		
LEA Level	Avg. % Proficient	# of LEAs
Floor or Approaching	31.8%	330
On-Track or Target	51.6%	217
All LEAs	39.4%	553

Findings & Recommendations

State agencies have powerful tools at their disposal to drive meaningful action for students. Measurement systems are one of these tools, and Missouri has not yet fully maximized the power and effectiveness of this tool. This white paper outlines four critical recommendations Missouri should take to strengthen its measurement system.

Recommendation

What Should Happen



1. Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

Missouri should focus on **effectively measuring what matters most** for students to reach their full potential, while **simplifying processes** for school and system leaders.



2. Focus on Excellence

Missouri's measurement system should establish a **clear and rigorous definition of excellence** for every measurement indicator to focus educators on the actions that matter most.



3. Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System

Missouri's measurement system should incorporate innovative measures with the **potential to move the state forward** beyond just grades 3-12.



4. Empower Families with Actionable Information

Missouri's measurement system should use **clear and simple school and district ratings and school report cards** to empower parents and community members to make **informed decisions** on school quality.





Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

With two separate measurement systems—one aligned to federal requirements, one aligned to state requirements—Missouri creates unnecessary red tape for school and system leaders and misses an opportunity to focus educators on the most important actions on behalf of students. **Moving forward, Missouri should focus on effectively measuring what matters most for students to reach their full potential, while simplifying processes for school and system leaders.**

Current State

Missouri runs two separate measurement systems: Missouri’s federally-compliant Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) identification system, and the state’s accreditation system (MSIP). The two systems do not always align, which limits coherence and the impact of the overall measurement system in Missouri.

Current State: State Accreditation

Accreditation is MSIP’s ultimate signal of district quality. Missouri’s accreditation system is prescribed by state law,¹⁶ and classifications may only be changed by the Missouri State Board of Education. Classification may be lowered at any time by the State Board due to superintendent non-certification, failure to comply with statutory requirements, significant changes in an LEA’s financial integrity, or other factors at the discretion of the Board.¹⁷ Under MSIP 6, accreditation follows a three step process, outlined below.

MSIP 6 Process

- Step 1 DESE annually produces Annual Performance Report (APR) scores for each LEA based on both Performance and Continuous Improvement. All Performance elements and some Continuous Improvement elements are reported in years 1 and 2 of MSIP 6 implementation. All elements in both Performance and Continuous Improvement will be included in the third year of implementation, when accreditation classifications are made. For a full list of indicators and weightings for MSIP 6, see Appendix B.
- Step 2 DESE uses multiple years of data when generating the APR. MSIP 6 will include a phase-in over three years.
- Step 3 DESE makes accreditation recommendations to the State Board of Education for their approval.

Accreditation Classifications	Criteria to Earn
Accredited with Distinction	The LEA earned 95.0% or more of the points possible OR are accredited and earns Exemplary ratings in at least three Continuous Improvement areas, including Effective Teaching and Learning
Accredited	The LEA earned 70.0% - 94.9% of the points possible
Provisionally Accredited	The LEA earned 50.0% - 69.9% of the points possible
Unaccredited	The LEA earned less than 50.0% of the points possible

Missouri’s accreditation ratings mask what is happening for students in each district and across schools. DESE does not grant accreditation ratings to individual schools. Without transparent and accessible public reporting on individual schools, in addition to districts, families and stakeholders lack access to accurate information about their community’s school. Charters are also excluded, leaving out 37 charter LEAs that serve collectively over 24,000 students across Missouri.¹⁸ Additionally, under MSIP 5, only five districts out of 517 were provisionally accredited in 2022, and no districts were unaccredited.¹⁹ MSIP 6 adds an additional accreditation level, Accredited with Distinction, but districts do not need to demonstrate exceptional academic outcomes to earn this classification.



Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

Current State: State Accreditation

As currently designed, Missouri’s measurement system includes several indicators that do not relate to student academics. LEAs are required to complete a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), which is not aligned with the improvement planning required for federally-identified CSI and TSI schools, focuses on process rather than substance, and requires significant effort for both LEA and state-level leaders. One Kansas City charter leader shared that “Creating reports and documenting actions takes a lot of time from school administrators,” and another Missouri school leader added that “so much of [what I’m required to submit] has nothing to do with our kids performing academically.”

CSIPs strain DESE’s capacity by requiring review of over 500 LEA improvement plans in addition to hundreds of improvement plans for federal accountability. DESE’s CSIP template is entirely open-ended, allowing districts to define their own priorities, data, and interventions. DESE uses a rubric to assess each LEA’s improvement plan, but LEAs receive little guidance about what the “right answers” should be. In addition to the burden that state improvement planning creates for educators, Missouri’s current improvement planning systems under state and federal measurement are misaligned.

Feature	State Measurement (MSIP)	Federal Measurement (ESSA)
Identifying Struggling Schools	<p>Accreditation decisions are informed by LEA performance on MSIP indicators. LEAs scoring below a cutoff APR score are named “Provisionally Accredited” or “Unaccredited.”</p> <p>MSIP 6 assigns performance levels based on indicator-specific cutoff scores established by DESE.</p>	<p>LEAs are identified for CSI²⁰ or TSI²¹ using a federal formula in compliance with ESSA.</p> <p>The federal formula and state formula use different measures and weights to identify struggling schools.</p>
Improvement Planning	<p>MSIP 6 requires every LEA to complete a CSIP, which encompasses no fewer than seven pages of detailed questions for LEA leaders to answer.</p>	<p>CSI schools must develop a plan for improvement that addresses the needs identified by the school which led to the CSI identification status. TSI schools must identify a plan for improvement in identified subgroups.</p> <p>Identified schools must complete a nine-page needs assessment,²² a two-page prioritization table,²³ and an eight-page improvement plan.²⁴ They may also complete lengthy audits for written curriculum,²⁵ instruction delivered curriculum,²⁶ and assessment.²⁷</p>



Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

Comparison of Missouri's State and Federal Measurement Indicators

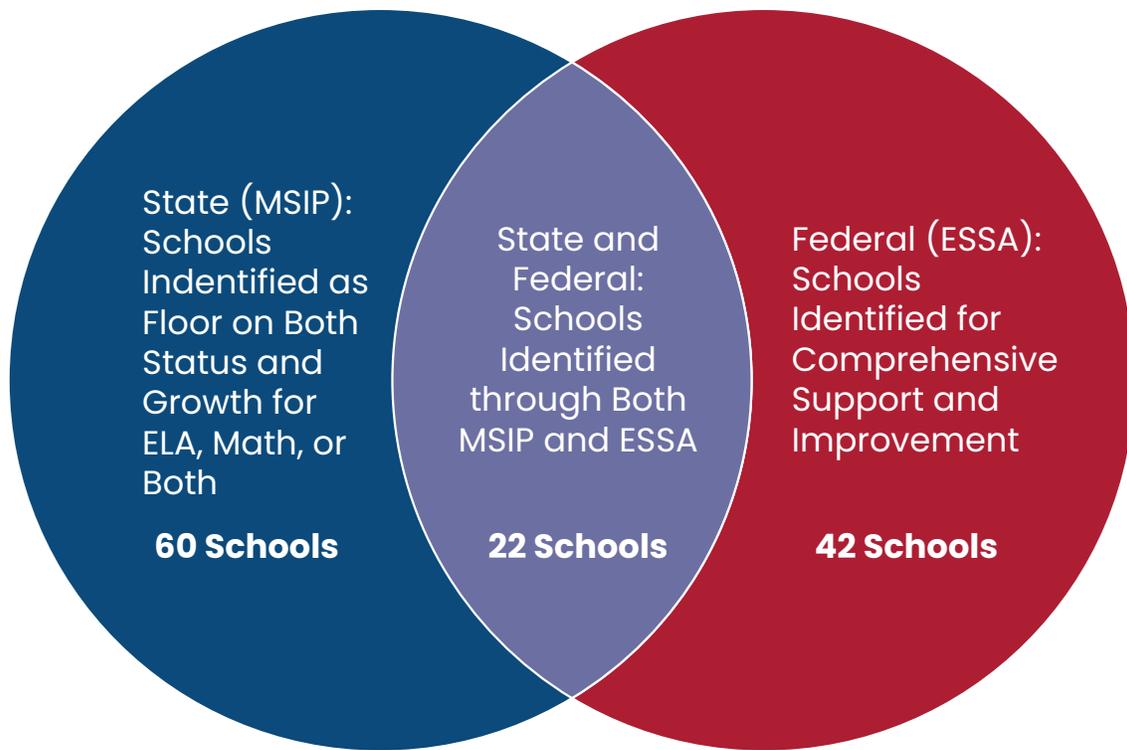
Measurement Indicator	State Measurement (MSIP)	Federal Measurement (ESSA)
Academic achievement status for all students and student groups	✓	✓
Academic achievement growth for all students and student groups	✓	✗
Success-Ready Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school readiness • CCR assessment • Advanced coursework 	✓	✗
Graduation rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-, 5-, 6-, or 7-year graduation rate 	✓	✓
Graduate follow-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College enrollment, trade or technical school, employment, military service 	✓	✗
Improvement planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous School Improvement Plan • Response to Standards • Climate and Culture Survey 	✓	✗
MSIP required documentation	✓	✗
Success-Ready Continuous improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School entry readiness • K-12 regular attendance • ICAP completion 	✓	✗ ²⁸
English language acquisition	✗ ²⁹	✓



Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

Missouri's federal ESSA system adds an additional layer for educators to understand. This system identifies the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools based on a formula that is distinct from MSIP. As a result, the federal formula and MSIP often communicate different signals about school quality. For example, MSIP assigns the lowest performance rating ("Floor") to 82 schools for both status and growth on ELA, math, or both;³⁰ 64 schools are identified for CSI through ESSA.³¹ Only 22 of those schools are the same. As a result, the two systems send different signals about which schools are in need of support.

Identification of Struggling Schools through State and Federal Measurement Systems, 2019





Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

To eliminate bureaucracy and establish a unified measurement system, Missouri should take three key actions:

- A. Eliminate accreditation and replace it with a single, unified rating system that measures both schools and LEAs.**
- B. Base the single rating system on academics, not paperwork.**
- C. Use the single rating system to require specific research-based interventions for all low-performing schools.**

A. Eliminate accreditation and replace it with a single, unified rating system that measures both schools and LEAs.

Almost all districts earn the same accreditation status under MSIP, and the state's multiple measurement systems limit coherence and miss an opportunity to focus educators on the most important actions on behalf of students. Missouri should eliminate accreditation entirely and instead focus educators on a single, unified rating system that is grounded in the state's priorities, compliant with ESSA, and inclusive of all schools. If accreditation cannot be eliminated, it should be revised such that all districts and schools are automatically accredited unless the state identifies egregious financial or operational concerns. Accreditation should not require any paperwork or bureaucratic burden beyond what systems are required to complete by law.

While half of all states use some kind of accreditation system, most do not include them as part of their measurement system.³² Even among states that do still use accreditation, the measurement system is set up to focus educators on the academic ratings system, rather than the accreditation process. For example, both Arkansas³³ and Texas³⁴ have accreditation but their school report cards feature A-F ratings based on academics.

Additionally, the single rating system should include all schools receiving public funds. DESE is responsible for overseeing a \$10.4 billion budget in FY2023,³⁵ which accounts for 22% of Missouri's overall operating budget.³⁶ Taxpayers deserve to know if those dollars are being spent effectively. Right now, accreditation only addresses traditional districts. It excludes school-level ratings, all charter schools, and other nonpublic schools that may receive public funds.

Two core purposes of effective measurement systems are to provide rigorous and fair ratings and to communicate transparently with families and community stakeholders. Replacing accreditation with a unified rating system that measures both schools and districts would support both of those goals. Missouri already calculates building-level results through APR scores, but does not make those scores available to the public. Assigning and publishing both school- and LEA-level ratings would give families and community stakeholders a simple, apples-to-apples comparison of how all schools and LEAs are serving students. A common rating system sets a clear bar of expectations for all of Missouri's students, regardless of the type of publicly-funded school they happen to attend.

“

[Letter grades] would go a long way to ensuring quality education for all Missouri kids.

”

- A Kansas City Business Leader



Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

B. Base the single rating system on academics, not paperwork.

Missouri's measurement system should first and foremost evaluate how well schools are academically preparing students for the next level. In measuring academics, Missouri should rate both schools and LEAs on both achievement and growth, as well as other indicators required under federal law, including graduation rate and English language acquisition. By doing this, Missouri can create one rating system that serves both state and federal purposes.

State Agency Levers for Ensuring Fiscal and Operational Compliance

- Program Monitoring and Compliance
- Fiscal Monitoring and Oversight
- Applications and Approval

To communicate this single, unified ratings system, Missouri should employ a summative rating system such as letter grades for both schools and LEAs. An A-F letter grade system (or other parent-friendly summative rating) would more clearly and simply communicate to families and communities how schools and LEAs are performing. Missouri's summative rating should be based on academics, not paperwork. However, that does not mean the state should stop reviewing paperwork-based inputs like CSIPs and climate and culture surveys. There are other ways Missouri could ensure LEAs continue to comply with these inputs beyond the measurement formula, including program monitoring and compliance, fiscal monitoring and oversight, and applications and approvals. See Appendix C for more details on each of these state agency levers.

Three-quarters of Missourians surveyed agree the state should establish a measurement system that emphasizes student achievement and growth and reports performance using an A-F letter grade scale.³⁷ Missourians of all backgrounds express strong support on both counts, across age, race, education status, and political leaning. By establishing a single rating system based on academics, not paperwork, and reporting results on an A-F letter grade scale, Missouri can meet a demonstrated demand for clear, actionable information about schools and LEAs.

C. Use the single rating system to require specific research-based interventions for all low-performing schools.

Supporting struggling schools to improve is a core purpose of effective measurement systems: state agencies can use measurement systems as a lever to incentivize research-based practices by establishing coherent rewards and interventions. Missouri should leverage the single, unified ratings system to identify successful and struggling schools. Interventions for struggling schools should increase in degree over time, ensuring that persistently struggling LEAs and schools are provided with the supports they need to improve and are given the time and opportunity to improve.



Recommendation 1: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

Example of Tiered Consequences – Massachusetts

Under Massachusetts' district and school measurement system, priority for assistance and the degree of intervention increases as performance worsens. The purpose of this system is "to hold districts and schools accountable for educating their students well and to assist them in improving the education they provide."



- For **all districts and schools**, Massachusetts reports an overall accountability percentile in addition to data on overall student performance and subgroups. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may conduct a review of any district, and every district is required to implement a self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- For **underperforming districts and schools**, the Department appoints a team of accountability personnel to support the development and implementation of a turnaround plan. The Department may also appoint a receiver for underperforming schools and require teachers at these schools to take a subject-area content assessment.
- For **chronically underperforming districts and schools**, consequences include requiring turnaround plans, appointing a receiver (i.e., takeover for chronically underperforming districts or schools), mandating content assessments and quarterly reports, and delivering reports to the State Board.

Finally, Missouri should mandate interventions for all struggling schools—not just the bottom five percent, as is the case for its federal ESSA system. When identified for intervention, schools and LEAs should be required to implement specific, research-based interventions with support from DESE. While MSIP 6 seeks to measure the educator actions that matter most for students through the continuous improvement component, the current measures leave out some of the most effective, proven measures for driving student learning. Missouri could measure district implementation of interventions like adopting high-quality instructional materials, aligned professional development, and ensuring access to high impact tutoring (see Appendix D for a more comprehensive list of examples).

As with letter grades and an emphasis on academic achievement and growth, Missourians support an intervention process for schools with consistently poor performance. Nearly two-thirds of Missourians surveyed are in favor of a system of clear interventions, with support spread across individuals of nearly all backgrounds.³⁹

Summary: Eliminate Unnecessary Bureaucracy with a Single Unified System

- ✓ Eliminate accreditation and replace it with a single, unified rating system that measures both schools and LEAs.
- ✓ Base the single rating system on academics, not paperwork.
- ✓ Use the single rating system to require specific research-based interventions for all low-performing schools.



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

Missouri’s ratings system could do more to transparently signal rigorous expectations for every student, school, and LEA. **Going forward, Missouri’s system should establish a clear and rigorous definition of excellence for every measurement indicator.**

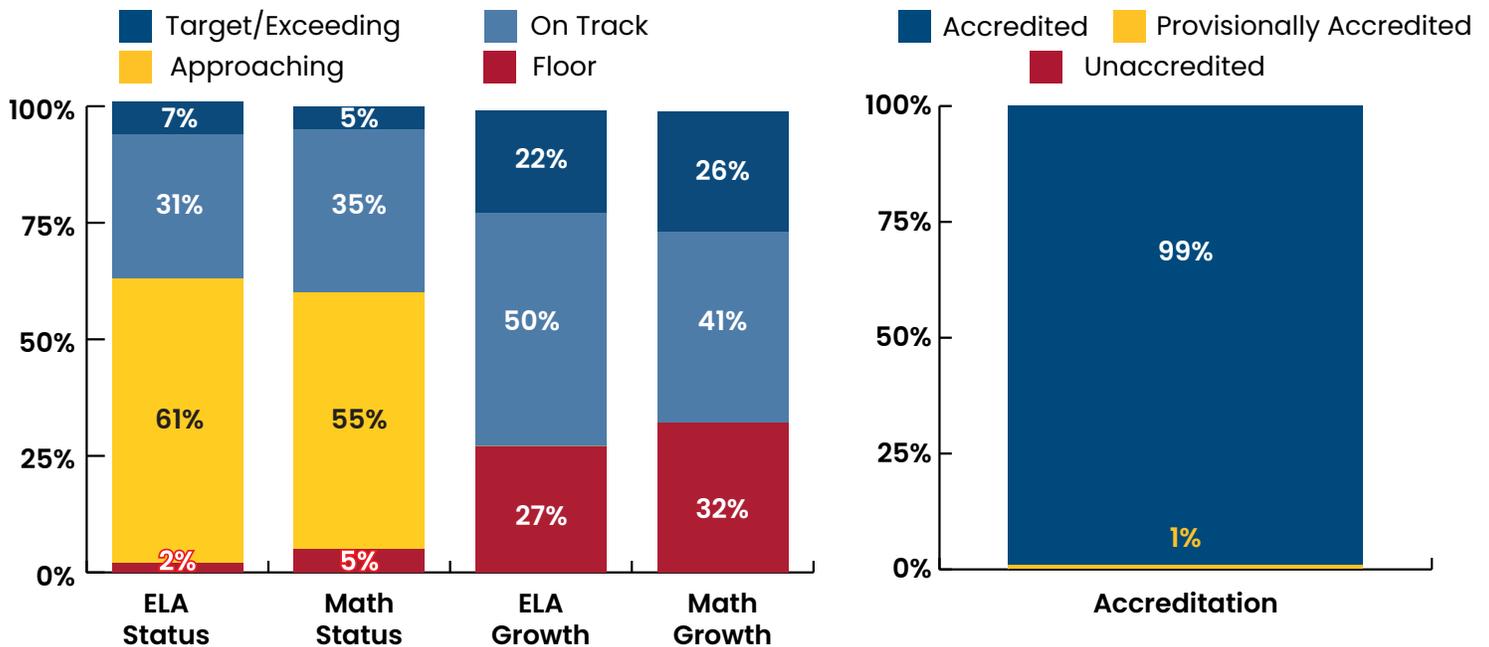
Current State

Current State: Academic Achievement and Accreditation

Under MSIP 6, there are major disconnects between the classification levels schools and districts earn and aggregate student performance. MSIP 6 places each school and district into a classification level based on their students’ performance and growth on MAP tests. “Floor” represents the lowest achievement level, with “Approaching,” “On-Track,” and “Target” (or “Exceeding,” for growth) representing increasingly stronger performance. However, only about half of students in districts scoring “On-Track” or “Proficient” are proficient on MAP tests for ELA and math.⁴⁰

There is virtually no relationship between academic achievement on standardized tests and an LEA’s measurement rating in Missouri. In 2022, 512 out of 517 districts (99%) were accredited.⁴¹ At the same time, fewer than half of districts were rated “On-Track” or better for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math achievement, the state’s bar for proficiency. As a result, Missouri’s accreditation ratings are not a transparent signal of LEA quality for families and community stakeholders. Further, while MSIP 6 brings about a meaningful improvement from MSIP 5 in the form of the Accredited with Distinction rating, Missouri’s measurement system could do more to meaningfully reward schools and districts making significant gains with their students.

LEA Performance on Achievement Status and Growth (ELA and Math), 2019 and Accreditation Status, 2022



Accreditation is an especially poor signal of district quality, as nearly every district in the state is accredited despite districts showing widely different academic achievement on state tests.



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

“
[For teachers, MSIP is] overwhelming. Even when we [focus on the] priorities, it can still be daunting. **”**
 – A Missouri Charter School Leader

Current State: MSIP Performance Indicators

Though almost all districts earn the same overall accreditation status, MSIP evaluates districts across multiple performance indicators. Missouri currently measures both achievement status and student growth. On achievement status, Missouri awards points for student scores on state assessments in ELA, math, science, and social studies. Schools and LEAs can earn APR points without meeting a rigorous standard for student performance. “On-Track” schools and LEAs are awarded 9 of 12 possible APR points for ELA and math, but half of students in “On-Track” schools and LEAs are not proficient in those subjects.

On growth, Missouri uses a Value Added Measure (VAM), which assesses a school or LEA’s impact on student achievement using advanced statistics and data points across multiple school years. While VAM assesses how well

schools and LEAs are serving students of all backgrounds and ensures that the formula measures more than just indicators correlated with poverty rates, it can be a black box for families and educators. Growth and academic achievement status are weighted equally in school and LEA APR scores under MSIP 6, with additional weight for both growth and achievement of students in historically disadvantaged groups.

At the high school level, Missouri’s College and Career Readiness (CCR) indicators measure multiple pathways to postsecondary success, including college, technical school, career, and military. These indicators focus educators on ensuring students have valuable credentials regardless of their postsecondary pathway, but some indicators (like ACCUPLACER, WorkKeys, and ASVAB) are only relevant for students on particular pathways. Schools and LEAs can earn points for a student taking any of these tests. MSIP’s CCR indicators also award points for students completing Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs) but does not differentiate their rigor or value for students; an IRC aligned to high-wage, high-demand employment earns the same amount of APR points as an IRC that is not in demand in Missouri. MSIP also awards points for students earning any two stackable credentials,⁴² which do not have to be related to each other or aligned to a high-wage or high-demand career path. See Appendix B for a detailed summary of the MSIP formula, including all indicators.

Missouri’s measurement formula is so complex that stakeholders repeatedly express that only a handful of people in the state truly understand the calculations behind it. For example: to calculate academic achievement status in APR scores, MSIP 6 uses a multi-step formula that disconnects student performance on MAP tests from the final score. See the MSIP 6 comprehensive guide for details on calculating APR scores for each indicator.⁴³

Additionally, as noted previously, Missouri does not grant accreditation ratings to schools. This, in combination with the rating system’s complex formula, obscures the connection between ratings and student performance and limits the system’s transparency.

“
By most accounts, MSIP is a laborious process, where nearly all districts get all or most points. **”**
 – A Missouri Charter System Leader



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

Focus on Excellence: Actions

Five specific actions will help Missouri orient its measurement system towards excellence:

- A. Define what an “A” school looks like.**
- B. Continue to value both academic achievement and growth for every school.**
- C. Balance nuance with simplicity in student growth measures.**
- D. Simplify the formula at every level.**
- E. Incentivize high value college and career pathways.**

A. Define what an “A” school looks like.

Effective state measurement systems set the bar for what excellence looks like in every LEA, school, and classroom. To do this, Missouri should first determine what to measure and, for each measure, define what an “A” (or the highest rating) represents for students. This will enable Missouri to transparently connect the measurement system to the student experience and to focus educators on achieving the best for every student.

State Example: Defining What an “A” Looks like in Louisiana⁴⁴



Measure	What does it take to earn an “A”?
Student performance on state assessments	Students reach proficiency or better.
Student growth	Students are on track to reach proficiency, regardless of where they started at the beginning of the year.
ACT	Students average an ACT score of 21 or higher (out of 36).
College and career readiness	Students earn a high-value college or career credential.

B. Continue to value both academic achievement and growth for every school.

As Missouri moves to the next version of MSIP, the measurement formula should value both academic achievement and growth for every school, and it should weight growth more significantly in schools serving students who start the farthest behind. Missouri currently gives extra weight to the scores of students in historically disadvantaged student groups.

Across the country, states are taking multiple paths to integrate growth meaningfully and fairly into their measurement systems. Additionally, as Missouri considers new approaches to assessment, such as through-year models, it will also need to explore other ways of measuring and reporting student growth.



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

State Examples: Integrating Growth into Measurement



Texas

Using “rules” to create flexibility in the role of growth in overall ratings:

- Texas measures school progress two ways: academic growth (using a gain score model) or relative performance.⁴⁵ 70% of schools’ A–F rating is based on whichever score is highest: achievement, academic growth, or relative performance.
- Texas also caps the overall progress indicator score if a school or LEA scores especially low on one of the two measures. If one score is less than 60 (out of 100), the school or LEA cannot score higher than an 89 for the progress indicator—even if the higher of the two scores is 90 or above.⁴⁶



Nebraska

Implementing a new type of assessment to allow for within-year growth measures:

- Nebraska has switched to a through-year assessment model, which would allow them to measure growth both across years and within a single school year.⁴⁷

Growth: Why It Matters



Missouri’s students have lost major ground in both ELA and math since the pandemic began, both compared to previous Missouri results and other states.⁴⁸ If Missouri wants to propel forward in the coming years, it needs to do everything it can to focus educators on accelerating learning for the students who are farthest behind.

- Measuring achievement status only captures how students do at a single moment in time.
- Measuring growth captures the progress students make over time.
- Measuring growth rewards educators for ensuring every student meets their full potential, not just those who can do well on standardized tests.
- In combination with measuring achievement, measuring growth provides a more complete picture of how well schools and LEAs support student learning.



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

C. Balance nuance with simplicity in student growth measures.

To balance nuance with simplicity, Missouri should include multiple growth measures in its rating system. Different types of growth measures answer different questions about how schools and LEAs are supporting student learning and accomplish different purposes. The table below outlines different ways states measure growth, how those measures work, what they can help explain, and what it means in terms of students.

Measure ⁴⁹	How It Works	What It Tells Us	What The Measure Tells (Examples)
Value-Added Model (VAM)	Analyzes past performance and current context to predict how a student will score on state assessments. A student's actual score is then compared to their predicted score. Can control for past student achievement and student characteristics like special education or English learner status.	The extent to which a school impacted a student's growth compared to similar students at other schools.	Patrick's school helped him improve more than other schools helped similar students.
Student Growth Percentiles (SGP)	Compares a student to other students in the state who received a similar past score ("academic peers"). That student is then given a percentile based on their current year performance relative to their academic peers.	The extent to which a teacher impacted a student's growth relative to peers with similar past academic trajectories.	Patrick's growth was better than 70% of his peers.
Value Tables	Compares student performance levels (e.g., basic and proficient) relative to prior year performance levels.	The extent to which a student progressed from one achievement level to another.	Patrick moved from below basic to basic based on the state's cut scores.
Gain Scores	Examines the difference between a student's current year scale score and prior year scale score.	The amount of scale score points a student improved by.	Patrick scored 50 points higher than last year.
Growth to Standard	Compares the difference between a student's current year score against a learning target set based on their prior performance and a predefined long-term target (like earning proficiency by eighth grade).	The extent to which a student is "on track" based on an individualized target.	As a 4th grader, Patrick is 100 points away from proficiency and is on track to be proficient by the end of the next two years.



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

Missouri’s current growth measure, VAM, considers students’ past performance and the performance of their school or LEA to determine expected growth. The state’s VAM model reflects Missouri’s vision for a measurement system that values the unique context of every school and LEA. Missouri should continue to include VAM in its measurement system. However, because each growth measure answers a slightly different question about student learning and educator effectiveness, there are tradeoffs to choosing one measure over any other.

To ensure MSIP can provide more accessible, actionable information for all stakeholders, Missouri should also add a simple growth measure to the MSIP formula using a different method that is easier for educators and parents to understand. In addition, Missouri should provide a suite of resources and support to educators, parents, and other stakeholders to make sense of how growth measures are calculated and what they mean in terms of students and educators.

Balancing Nuance and Simplicity in Growth: Arizona

Arizona uses multiple measures for growth: a student growth percentile (SGP) and a “Growth to Target” measure. Each accounts for 25% of Arizona’s A-F letter grade calculations.



Growth to Target measures use commonly-used language to ensure families can understand the indicator. It focuses educators on a clear goal: helping students reach an annual target set at the beginning of the year.

- Arizona defines Growth to Target as “students’ ability to reach their annual target” and awards more points for lower-performing students reaching their target.

Student growth percentiles (SGP) use statistics to show how schools served students with the same academic starting point and provide a more nuanced picture of growth. It reflects the impact educators had on student performance each year by controlling for students’ prior performance.

- Arizona defines student growth percentiles as “students’ performance in the prior year and their growth in the current year compared to their peers.”

Explaining Growth: State Resources

Several states provide public resources to help educators, families, and other stakeholders understand what the state’s growth measure is and how to interpret it.



- Tennessee uses a value-added measure to calculate growth. The state maintains a webpage with an easy-to-understand description of the growth measure, a resource clarifying common misconceptions about growth reporting, and examples of how schools can use growth to improve.



- Oklahoma uses value tables to calculate growth scores. The state publishes a short “Report Card Indicator Spotlight” resource for families and educators that includes a visual illustration of the growth calculation and responses to frequently asked questions.



Recommendation 2: Focus on Excellence

D. Simplify the formula at every level.

The most effective measurement systems are simple—they use straightforward calculations that can be replicated by educators to transparently connect individual student outcomes to the overall score. In order to simplify its formula, Missouri should be able to show how each student contributes to the score of their school and LEA in a way that is more easily understood by educators.

E. Incentivize high value college and career pathways.

Every student deserves access to opportunities that will prepare them for life after high school graduation. Missouri should build on its past College and Career Readiness (CCR) efforts by defining the experiences and credentials that matter most for postsecondary preparation (i.e., defining what excellence looks like for CCR), and then ensuring the system rewards students who participate in those experiences and earn those credentials. Missouri’s measurement system should encourage educators to provide those opportunities for students.

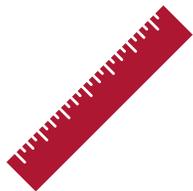
Missouri has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring all students graduate high school prepared for their postsecondary future. That commitment is reflected in MSIP’s CCR, which incentivizes school and district leaders to provide access to meaningful opportunities.

While these metrics are not all rigorous or equally valuable for students, MSIP’s emphasis on CCR sets a strong foundation to ensure all students are able to access the resources and opportunities they need to prepare for life after high school.



Summary: Focus on Excellence

- ✓ Define what an “A” school looks like.
- ✓ Continue to value both academic achievement and growth for every school.
- ✓ Balance nuance with simplicity in student growth measures.
- ✓ Simplify the formula at every level.
- ✓ Incentivize high value college and career pathways.



Recommendation 3: Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System

Missouri’s education system starts well before third grade and continues after grade 12, but MSIP focuses almost exclusively on grades 3-12. Valid, reliable measures exist both before third grade and after twelfth grade. **Going forward, Missouri should strive to be a national leader on early childhood and postsecondary measurement by piloting and scaling new measures with the potential to move the state forward beyond just grades 3-12.**

Current State

Grades K-2 are critical for children’s development,⁵³ but the only MSIP 6 measure tied to grades K-2 is a small weight tied to completion of Kindergarten Entry Assessments (KEA). The state measures grades 3-12 through MSIP 6. Missouri’s Office of Childhood is currently piloting a Quality Assurance Report (QAR) to measure quality in early childhood classrooms, with the goal of ensuring that all children can access high-quality early childhood care and education.⁵⁴

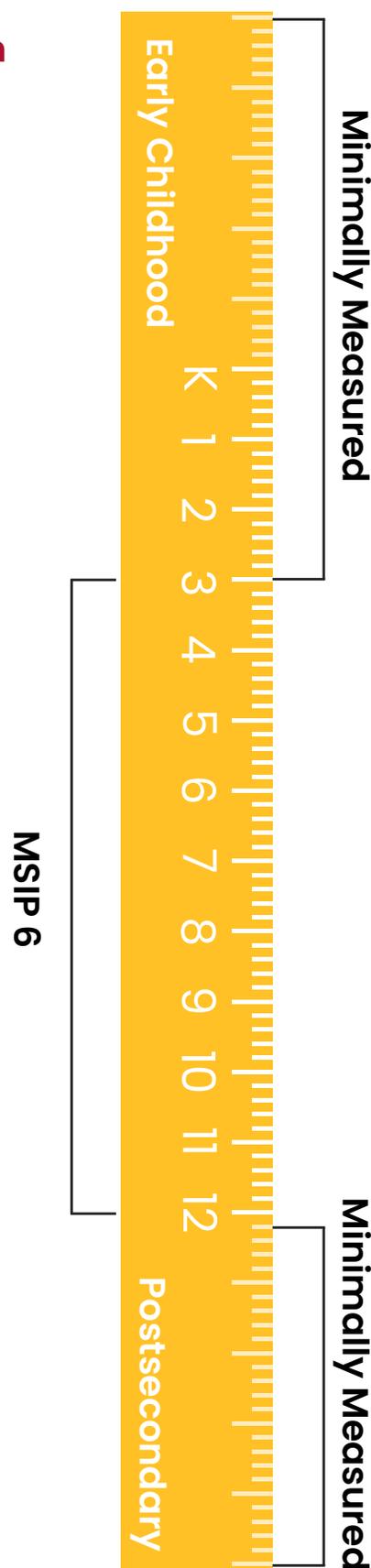
At the other end of the education spectrum, MSIP 6’s Follow-Up Rate of Graduates focuses educators on the most important metric for high school success: what happens to students after graduation. The indicator awards points to LEAs whose students attend college, enroll in a trade or technical school, start a job, or enlist in the U.S. military. However, data collection is a major challenge and this indicator relies heavily on self-reported data from LEAs.

Schools offer students much more than just what is currently measured. Increasingly, states are exploring opportunities to extend their ratings systems to capture the full education system, from early years through high school and beyond. Missouri should be invested in leading innovative ways to better capture these experiences and others. No state’s system effectively measures what should be true for students in grades K-2 and beyond high school or guides educators on how to support strong outcomes in those years. Missouri can lead the way by piloting and scaling innovative measures in K-2 and postsecondary.

Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System: Actions

Building a robust early childhood through postsecondary system will require investment and time. Missouri can start with two specific steps:

- A. Measure school quality before grade 3.**
- B. Incorporate a high school impact measure.**





Recommendation 3: Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System

A. Measure school quality before grade 3.

The experiences that children have prior to kindergarten entry and in K-2 classrooms are crucial for development of early literacy and numeracy skills, and Missouri’s measurement system can be among the nation’s leaders in reflecting the importance of these early years. There are rigorous, valid tools that Missouri could use to measure what matters most in early childhood settings and in grades K-2. Two examples Missouri could begin leveraging today are CLASS® and literacy screeners.

Missouri is one of few states in the country without a formal quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) to measure and support quality improvement in early childhood settings, like preschool classrooms and child care programs. Similar to measurement systems for K-12 schools and districts, a QRIS can be a powerful lever for policymakers to influence the quality of experiences that children have before starting school. Missouri’s newly consolidated Office of Childhood is piloting the Quality Assurance Report (QAR), which can be scaled over time to function as a system that defines, measures, and supports improvement of quality in early childhood classrooms. As Missouri develops these systems, the state should ensure alignment across early childhood and K-12 settings.

In addition to improving its early childhood rating system, Missouri should identify age-appropriate, high-quality assessment tools to implement in early elementary classrooms statewide and use those tools to measure and hold LEAs accountable for student progress. The measurement system should reinforce Missouri’s investment in early-years literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading.

CLASS® is a strong example of these tools. CLASS® measures the effectiveness of teacher-child interactions. It has been validated in thousands of classrooms,⁵⁵ and is currently in use throughout the United States and in other parts of the world. Trained observers use a uniform, developmentally appropriate rubric to evaluate classroom quality along three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.⁵⁶ A growing body of research demonstrates the validity of CLASS® across a broad set of cultural contexts, and CLASS® 2nd Edition includes updates intentionally written to make meaningful interactions more equitable, inclusive, and accessible. In a measurement system, a focus on CLASS® signals the importance of instruction in early grades and would put a renewed emphasis on supporting teachers to deliver strong instruction.

CLASS® In Action



Dallas Independent School District uses CLASS® across nearly 2,000 classrooms in grades PK-2. Researchers at Southern Methodist

University found that students in classrooms rated highly on CLASS® outperform their peers in lower-quality classrooms.⁵⁷



Louisiana mandates every publicly-funded early childhood provider to participate in the state’s unified quality rating system using the CLASS®

tool. The state aligns all relevant quality improvement initiatives and strategies to CLASS®. Since implementation in 2016, there has been steady improvement in ratings over time, with 92% of EC providers rated Proficient or higher in school year 2019-2020.⁵⁸



Massachusetts works with the American Institutes of Research (AIR) to carry out CLASS® observations for underperforming schools, informing state

support efforts for those schools. AIR found a positive relationship between the schoolwide observation instructional observation scores in each domain and student growth in both ELA and math.⁵⁹



Recommendation 3: Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System

While CLASS® ensures students are in a responsive, language-rich classroom, it does not signal whether students have mastered the foundational literacy and numeracy skills needed to succeed in later grades. Screeners, on the other hand, are a more effective way to measure these skills. Missouri should leverage literacy and numeracy screeners to better understand and focus educators on student performance in grades K-2. Both literacy and numeracy are important, but Missouri should focus first on literacy, following the lead of many other states across the country.

B. Measure school quality before grade 3.

Missouri should build on its demonstrated commitment to supporting high school students’ postsecondary outcomes by incorporating a high school impact measure into its measurement system. Unlike MSIP’s “Follow Up Rate of Graduates” measure which only captures self-reported data on student outcomes, high school impact measures more accurately assess the degree to which a high school contributes to its students’ postsecondary success.⁶⁰

High school impact measures incentivize educators to not only focus on graduation, but also to prioritize all students’ future readiness. These measures can control for factors outside of a high school’s control—like the student body’s 8th grade test scores, absences, and suspensions; the proportion of students with limited English proficiency; and the proportion of students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch—to build a better picture of which schools are supporting their students’ postsecondary and workforce prospects. Building a high school impact measure will take time and commitment, but it creates a meaningful measure for stakeholders.

“ [MSIP could be improved by adding] better college and career readiness measures. ”

– A St. Louis Nonprofit Leader

Promotion Power in Louisiana and D.C.

One specific high school impact measure Missouri should consider is “promotion power,” developed by Mathematica in partnership with Louisiana and the District of Columbia.⁶¹ Promotion power differs from the postsecondary outcome measures currently tracked in MSIP because it is designed to signal the degree to which each school advances its students’ postsecondary success. The model is similar to how Missouri measures growth using VAM, but it focuses on high school students and their post-high school outcomes.

Summary: Create an Early Childhood through Postsecondary System



Measure school quality before grade 3.



Continue to value both academic achievement and growth for every school.



Recommendation 4: Empower Families with Actionable Information

State measurement systems are a critical source of information for educators, families, and community members. Missouri publishes school and LEA report cards through the Missouri Comprehensive Data System (MCDS),⁶² but these can be difficult to find and interpret. **Going forward, Missouri should follow best-practice research about school report cards, elevating ratings and increasing accessibility to empower parents and community members to make informed decisions on school quality.**

Current State

Report cards are available through the MCDS, and though they include a lot of data on school and LEA performance, data points like assessment results and student growth are not showcased front-and-center. For families seeking to learn about their child’s school or LEA, and for educators working to boost student learning, report cards are not as useful as they could be. In a recent survey of Missouri educators and education leaders, zero stakeholders said that families in Missouri have the information they need to evaluate the academic performance of schools in the community.⁶³ Policymakers are not able to assess the performance of schools and LEAs in their district. Moreover, report cards are not available for all schools in the state: Missouri passed the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program in 2021, but non-public schools receiving funds through this program are not required to participate in MSIP.⁶⁴

“

Parents have no idea what any of it means.

”

- A St. Louis Nonprofit Leader

Missouri does calculate summative ratings for schools and LEAs through MSIP (the APR score), but it does not publish those ratings in public-facing report cards. Only districts are given a public signal of overall quality through accreditation, which does not extend to schools.

“ A typical community member cannot reasonably evaluate a school’s performance based on [the existing formula]. ”

- A Missouri Charter School Leader

Missouri’s reporting system falls short on several reporting best practices identified by Learning Heroes, an organization that aims to inform and equip parents to best support their children’s educational and developmental success.⁶⁵

Reporting Best Practice	MSIP Status
Academic and non-academic measures	✓
Context, including definitions and district comparisons	✗
Easy-to-understand reports	✗
Summative ratings	✗
Progress over time	✗



Recommendation 4: Empower Families with Actionable Information

Empower Families with Actionable Information: Actions

Missouri can take two steps in the short term to ensure parents are equipped with actionable information:

- A. Improve school report cards.**
- B. Include all schools in the ratings system.**

A. Improve school report cards.

Missouri’s measurement system should use clear, simple school and district ratings (i.e., letter grades) and school report cards to allow parents and community members to make informed decisions regarding school quality and to elevate the importance of the measurement system for educators. A recent survey of Missouri stakeholders showed that over 85 percent of respondents believe it is very important for Missouri’s state measurement system to communicate accurate information about school and district quality to parents, but over half of those same respondents believe Missouri is not currently meeting that goal.⁶⁶

To more effectively empower parents and community members to make informed decisions regarding school quality, Missouri should publish school report cards that are easily accessible, parent-friendly, and highlight school ratings. Where possible, Missouri should report both aggregate and disaggregate data so that stakeholders can understand both how schools and LEAs perform on overall indicators but also on the individual components that make up that indicator (e.g., reporting assessment results like AP and IB separately in addition to an aggregate CCR assessment measure).

“

Reporting could be done more efficiently and information could be communicated more clearly.

”

– A Kansas City Charter Leader

School and LEA Report Cards: Florida



Florida’s school and LEA report cards prominently elevate a summative rating and allow users to explore additional information on each component of the overall grade (including academic achievement, learning gains, acceleration (i.e., high school or CCR readiness), and graduation rate).

Florida balances nuance with simplicity by leading with top-line measures while providing more detailed data breakdowns for those who want a closer look. Florida also puts school and LEA performance in context by showing clear comparisons to the rest of the state on key metrics. Report cards for multiple years are easy to find in each school and LEA’s report card, and several metrics show charts for performance over time. Report cards include non-academic indicators like equitable access to quality educators and per-pupil expenditures as well.



Recommendation 4: Empower Families with Actionable Information

B. Include all schools in the ratings system.

It is not enough to only publish report cards for some districts and schools in the measurement system. Families and community stakeholders should be empowered with actionable information on all schools in their vicinity, including charter schools and non-public schools receiving public funds. Families and communities deserve to understand how all of the schools receiving public funds in their community are doing.

Summary: Empower Families with Actionable Information

- Improve school report cards.
- Include all schools in the ratings system.



Conclusion

As Missouri implements MSIP 6 and looks ahead to the future under MSIP 7, it has an opportunity to adapt to a system that better prioritizes what matters most for students. Four key actions underpin this opportunity:

- ✓ By eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy, Missouri will ensure educators focus more on the actions and interventions that research shows improves outcomes for children;
- ✓ By defining a high bar for excellence and aligning indicators accordingly, Missouri's measurement system will better capture the experiences and data points that most meaningfully translate into positive student outcomes;
- ✓ By expanding beyond conventional measures and capturing critical moments at the beginning and end of a student's K-12 experience, Missouri will become a national leader in measurement with a more complete and robust system; and
- ✓ By ensuring families have easy access to the information they need in an easy-to-understand format, all Missourians will be more empowered to make informed decisions for their families.

Missouri should act with urgency to incorporate these recommendations into its measurement system to ensure more equitable outcomes for all students across the state.



Appendix A: Missouri NAEP Data

2022 Data and Historical Trends

The nation's report card showed in 2022 that students across the country have lost ground in both reading and math, Missourians included. Fewer of Missouri's 4th and 8th graders were proficient in math and reading in 2022 than in 2019, declining substantially after a decade of relative stability.

Nearly every state in the country has a gap in NAEP proficiency rates between Black and white students. From 2019 to 2022, Missouri's gaps for grade 4 reading and math increased dramatically. While the Black-white gaps for grade 8 reading and math both shrunk, it was driven largely by steep declines in white student proficiency that outpaced the declines of Missouri's Black 8th-graders.

NAEP White/Black Proficiency Gaps Over Time: Reading, 2007–2022

Year	Grade 4				Grade 8			
	White Proficiency	Black Proficiency	White/Black Proficiency Gap	Proficiency Gap National Ranking*	White Proficiency	Black Proficiency	White/Black Proficiency Gap	Proficiency Gap National Ranking*
2007	37%	12%	-25%	16	37%	10%	-27%	25
2009	40%	16%	-24%	21	38%	14%	-24%	16
2011	39%	14%	-25%	23	40%	12%	-28%	33
2013	41%	13%	-28%	32	41%	13%	-28%	25
2015	42%	15%	-27%	21	41%	14%	-27%	20
2017	42%	12%	-30%	29	40%	19%	-21%	4
2019	38%	18%	-20%	4	37%	12%	-25%	17
2022	35%	10%	-25%	17	32%	10%	-22%	15

* "Proficiency Gap National Ranking" illustrates where Missouri ranked nationally in terms of the size of the proficiency gap between white and Black students. A lower ranking in this column means Missouri had a relatively small proficiency gap compared to other states, whereas a higher ranking signals a larger gap between Black and white performance.

NAEP White/Black Proficiency Gaps Over Time: Math, 2007–2022

Year	Grade 4				Grade 8			
	White Proficiency	Black Proficiency	White/Black Proficiency Gap	Proficiency Gap National Rank	White Proficiency	Black Proficiency	White/Black Proficiency Gap	Proficiency Gap National Rank
2007	45%	12%	-33%	20	36%	6%	-30%	23
2009	46%	17%	-29%	12	39%	11%	-28%	18
2011	48%	14%	-34%	23	36%	8%	-28%	16
2013	46%	13%	-33%	18	38%	12%	-26%	11
2015	44%	15%	-29%	12	36%	11%	-25%	8
2017	47%	14%	-33%	24	35%	10%	-25%	9
2019	45%	15%	-30%	14	36%	11%	-25%	8
2022	41%	7%	-34%	22	28%	7%	-21%	6

Appendix B: MSIP 6 Indicators

DESE defines Performance as “concrete, quantifiable measures of educational achievement, growth, and career-readiness at various points along the K-12 spectrum” and Continuous Improvement as “how LEAs are working to improve, based on current best practices for improving student outcomes, as well as the LEA’s own self-identified needs, strengths, and areas for improvement in a local context”.⁶⁷

	Indicator	Description	% of APR Score
Performance Indicators	Overall Academic Achievement: Status	Indexed performance of all students in a school/district on ELA, math, science, and social studies tests administered as part of the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP).	16%
	Student Group Academic Achievement: Status	Indexed performance of the Student Group, Missouri’s historically underperforming student groups (Black students, Hispanic students, students with disabilities, low-income students, and English learners) in a school/district on ELA, math, science, and social studies MAP tests.	8%
	Overall Academic Achievement: Growth	Estimate of the systemic contributions of LEAs and schools to the growth of all students. Differences between predicted outcome scores and observed outcome scores for each student determine each LEA’s or school’s effect on student achievement growth.	16%
	Student Group Academic Achievement: Growth	Estimate of the systemic contributions of LEAs and schools to the growth of the Student Group.	8%
	Success-Ready	College and Career Readiness (including CCR Assessment and Advanced Coursework) for high schools or High School Readiness for K-8 schools.	10%
	Graduation Rate	Graduate rate reported with 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-year adjusted cohort graduation rates.	10%
	Follow-up	Extent to which students of an LEA or school pursue gainful opportunities after graduation, including college enrollment, trade/technical school, employment, and/or military service. College enrollment data are provided by the National Student Clearinghouse. Other data are largely self-reported.	2%
Continuous Improvement Indicators	Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)	Each LEA’s plan outlining goals and strategies to improve student learning and outcomes. This document guides the work of the LEA and is reviewed by the local school board to measure progress. The plan may include the LEA’s strategy guide, the DESE template, or additional documentation.	15%
	Response to Standards	LEA’s self-reflection on their own performance relative to MSIP 6 standards and indicators. Provides an opportunity for LEAs to “tell their story” and highlights the strengths and/or weaknesses of their school community.	4%
	Climate and Culture Survey	Representation of each LEA’s engagement with internal stakeholders, students, and parents to understand all perspectives and to use that information to support the LEA’s continuous improvement.	2%
	MSIP Required Documentation	Required supporting documentation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Audit Report • Annual Secretary of the Board Report • Required MOSIS/Core Data collections 	3%
	Success-Ready	Inputs representing factors that help create an environment conducive to learning for each individual student, including attendance, career and academic planning assistance (ICAP completion), and assessment of kindergarten students for school-readiness.	6%
	Total		100%

Appendix C: State Agency Levers for Ensuring Fiscal and Programmatic Compliance

States have several levers at their disposal to ensure LEAs comply with federal and state requirements. These levers can drive educator behavior in powerful ways and do not have to be integrated into measurement to be successful.

Compliance Lever	Explanation	Examples
Program Monitoring and Compliance	As part of their general supervision system, states are federally required to oversee if each LEA complies with federal programs requirements. While requirements vary by program, monitoring and compliance include levers to influence LEA actions including federal and public reporting, technical assistance, and/or intervention and corrective actions. This is in addition to any state-specific monitoring and compliance requirements.	Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), states are federally required to annually assess each LEA's performance and compliance data to determine specific needs for technical assistance or intervention in special education. ⁶⁸
Fiscal Monitoring and Oversight	States are required to monitor fiscal compliance of LEAs to ensure federal and state awards are used for authorized purposes, in compliance with statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award. To ensure LEAs' fiscal compliance, states approve reimbursement requests, perform annual risk assessments and fiscal audits, and review single audit reports. This gives state agencies a large degree of insight into the priorities LEAs fund.	LEAs spending over \$750,000 in federal funds undergo a single audit. ⁶⁹ Federal Title I funds are subject to a "supplement-not-supplant" requirement, which means they must add to existing state and local funds. These funds cannot be used to support costs the school or district would have paid for from their existing budgets. ⁷⁰
Program and Fiscal Application Approvals	States offer LEAs education funding on a conditional basis. LEAs receive federal and some state funding, provided they meet requirements outlined in statutes and regulations. To ensure LEAs meet those programmatic and fiscal requirements, states review and approve LEA applications and budgets for state and federal funding.	Through the Missouri Postsecondary Advising Initiative, LEAs can apply to DESE for ESSER funds to hire and train a dedicated college and career advisor. ⁷¹ DESE establishes a set of grant requirements with which every applying LEA must comply. If an LEA does not meet all grant requirements, DESE can deny their application for grant funding. ⁷²

Appendix D: Research-Based Interventions for LEAs

When a school is identified for intervention, its LEA should be required to implement specific, research-based interventions with support from DESE. Interventions for struggling schools should increase in intensity over time, ensuring that persistently struggling schools are provided with the interventions and supports they need to improve and given the time and opportunity to improve. Louisiana is one state that elevates research-based interventions in work with schools and LEAs.⁷³ Among others, those interventions could include:

LEA Intervention	Explanation
High-quality instructional materials	Purchase and support teachers to use state-reviewed, high-quality instructional materials.
High-quality teacher professional development	Ensure teachers receive curriculum-aligned training at the beginning of the school year and throughout the year to support classroom instruction.
High-quality assessments	Purchase and support teachers to use assessments embedded into high-quality curriculum, including end-of-course and interim assessments.
School models that support English learners and students with disabilities	Support English learners and students with disabilities to access programming that meets their unique needs. Unlock funding for specialized supports, including disability screens for children ages 3–5, coordinated transitions for students with disabilities, and high-quality curricula for students with disabilities and English learners.
Educator leadership and advancement	Support the most effective teachers to become mentors and content area leaders.
Improvement zone	Identify a cohort of struggling schools and target additional resources for those schools. Designate an Improvement Zone Leader to oversee additional supports.
Increased access to high-quality early childhood resources	Expand the number of available early childhood seats in the community by increasing funding and enrollment planning. State ensures early childhood sites are trained on proven methods for ensuring quality, like CLASS®.
High-impact tutoring	Support student learning recovery by expanding access to high-impact tutoring.
STEM coursework	Expand access to rigorous Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) courses that support students to learn the skills needed for employability and postsecondary success.
Postsecondary preparation and planning	Support all students to develop and execute an Individualized Graduation Plan (IGP), including by providing access to postsecondary planning and/or support for career transitions.

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