

Identifying Gaps Between State Policy and Local School System Transformation

State Self-Assessment Tool

Q1: SYSTEMS

Does state policy allow or encourage school systems to develop and oversee a diverse array of autonomous schools?

ISSUE	RESOURCES	OUR STATE'S BARRIERS	LEGISLATION NEEDED	REGULATIONS TO CHANGE
Does the state allow local school systems to transform themselves and their schools, particularly in the wake of chronic underperformance?	<p>How states can amend collective bargaining laws that inhibit districts from giving all schools freedom to choose, evaluate, and manage their staff and resources.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 1, pages 2 - 4.</p>			
Does the state offer multiple pathways—in addition to authorizing charter schools—for creating autonomous schools?	<p>How states can give districts the authority to create traditional, district affiliated autonomous public schools. Moreover, how states that do allow such actions can encourage districts to take advantage of them.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 1, pages 4 - 5.</p>			
Do the state's charter school laws promote adversarial or complementary relations between charter schools and local school systems?	<p>How state law can avoid setting up charter schools as adversaries against districts and traditional public schools, create zero-sum games for access to funding and facilities, and set up different accountability frameworks to limit local flexibility.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 1, pages 5 - 7.</p>			

State Self-Assessment Tool

Q2: SCHOOLS

Does state policy allow schools in an empowerment community to have meaningful decision-making authority and flexibility?

ISSUE	RESOURCES	OUR STATE'S BARRIERS	LEGISLATION NEEDED	REGULATIONS TO CHANGE
Can traditional public schools select their own staff?	<p>How to change state laws that reserve hiring and staff assignment to the state or district (including through collective bargaining agreements). And how to make teachers district employees under mutual consent hiring.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 2, pages 2 - 4.</p>			
Can traditional public schools select the terms of staff compensation and working conditions?	<p>How to amend state law that allows or compels compensation and working conditions to be controlled by the district, not individual schools.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 2, page 5.</p>			
Can traditional public schools make decisions about school design? (Instructional design, staffing patterns, tradeoffs between staff and materials.)	<p>How states can promote school-level initiative and innovation by changing statutory provisions for learning time, educator training, and student transportation.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 2, pages 5 - 7.</p>			
Can traditional public schools easily enter into contracts with external providers?	<p>How procurement regulations can be changed to facilitate traditional public schools' entering into contracts with external providers.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 2, pages 7 - 9.</p>			

State Self-Assessment Tool

Q3: FAMILIES

Does state policy support informed choice and equity of access for families?

ISSUE	RESOURCES	OUR STATE'S BARRIERS	LEGISLATION NEEDED	REGULATIONS TO CHANGE
<p>Does the state provide for a robust choice environment?</p>	<p>How the state can support an array of school choice options, e.g. charter schools, other non-traditional public schools, inter and intra-district transfer policies, and publicly funded private school options.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 3, pages 2 - 3.</p>			
<p>Are the choices simple and navigable?</p> <p>(Simple in contrast to choices that involve too many uncoordinated items and processes. Navigable in terms of a straightforward selection process among options that are easy to sort through and understand.)</p>	<p>How the state can ensure that all parents, including those with low incomes, understand the options available, can readily express their preferences, understand admissions processes, and arrange physical access once their child has been admitted to a school.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 3, pages 3 - 4.</p>			
<p>Is geography a limiting factor?</p> <p>(Geography may limit choices either because the distribution of quality schools is uneven or because distance or transportation makes it hard for some students to get to quality schools.)</p>	<p>How state policy can support development of good schools in all localities, require development of new schools where quality is high, and allow students from under-served places to attend school elsewhere.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 3, pages 4 - 5.</p>			

State Self-Assessment Tool

Q4: FUNDING

Does state policy allow or encourage the use of studentbased allocation such that funds may be distributed across schools based on the students actually attending those schools?

ISSUE	RESOURCES	OUR STATE'S BARRIERS	LEGISLATION NEEDED	REGULATIONS TO CHANGE
<p>Is the amount and method of district funding simple and understandable?</p>	<p>How the state can help districts track their own spending, compare real-dollar spending at different schools, and ensure like funding for like students.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 4, pages 2 - 3.</p>			
<p>Do education funds follow students to the school they attend, with few restrictions?</p>	<p>How state reporting and allocation requirements can allow funds to follow the student to the school they attend and have few restrictions on use.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 4, pages 3 - 4.</p>			
<p>Are charter schools treated fairly and equivalently to traditional public schools with respect to funding?</p>	<p>How state law and policy can ensure that students in charter schools benefit from the same levels of real-dollar funding as similar students in traditional public schools.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 4, pages 4 - 5.</p>			
<p>Is school reporting on expenditures both manageable and expected?</p>	<p>How state policy can allow and encourage schools to report their actual spending by student, classroom, grade level, and program.</p> <p>Resources: see Big State Policy Question 4, pages 5 - 7.</p>			