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CURRENT TO FUTURE STATE
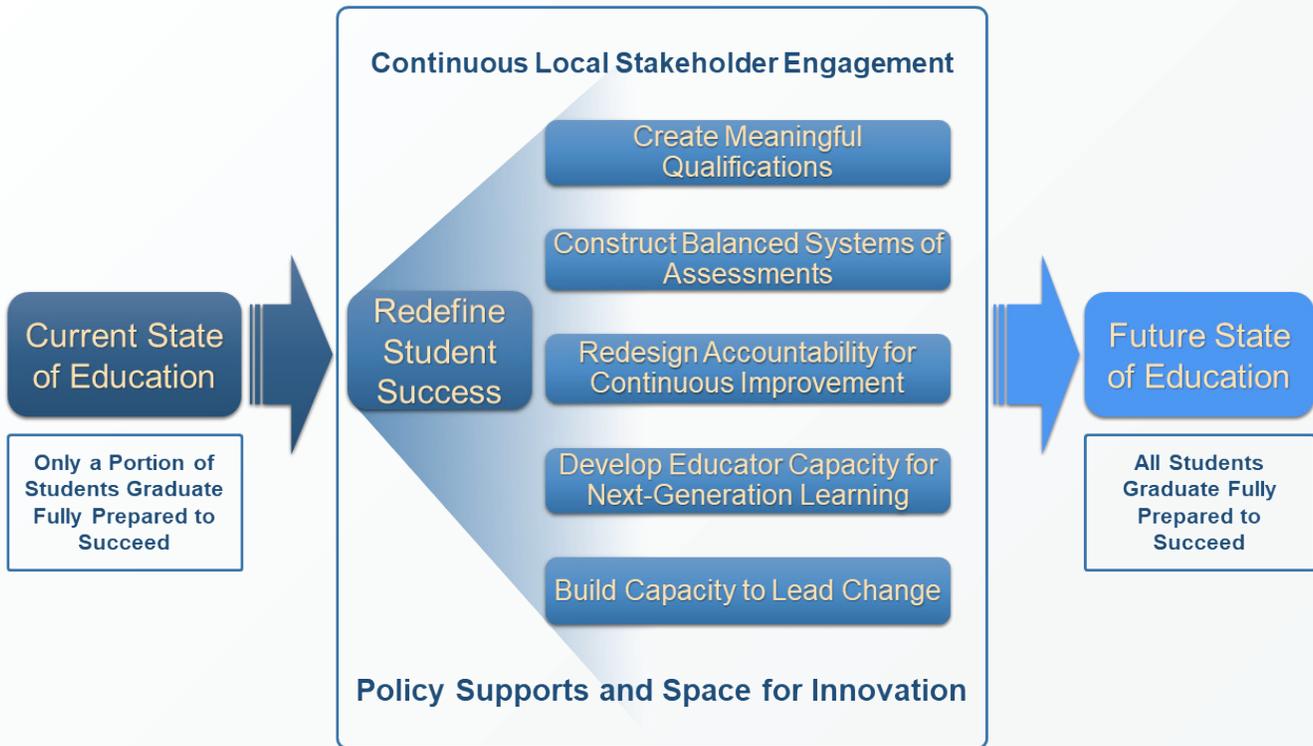## Issues and Action Steps for State Policy to Support Personalized, Competency-Based Learning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

iNACOL published the report *Current to Future State: Issues and Action Steps for State Policy to Support Personalized, Competency-Based Learning* in January 2018 to provide state policymakers with a set of action steps to drive transformation of education systems. These policy actions are designed to ensure every student graduates with the knowledge, abilities and dispositions necessary to achieve success, to contribute to their communities and to advance society.

As highlighted in the figure, "Current to Future State of Education," to move from the current, inequitable state of education to a future-focused, equity-driven state of education, where all students graduate prepared to succeed, the report outlines the following issues to tackle:

» Redefining student success,
» Creating meaning qualifications,
» Constructing balanced systems of assessments,
» Redesigning accountability for continuous improvement,
» Developing educator capacity for next-generation learning, and
» Building capacity to lead change.

Current to Future State of Education

Continuous Local Stakeholder Engagement

Current State of Education

Only a Portion of Students Graduate Fully Prepared to Succeed

Redefine Student Success

- Create Meaningful Qualifications
- Construct Balanced Systems of Assessments
- Redesign Accountability for Continuous Improvement
- Develop Educator Capacity for Next-Generation Learning
- Build Capacity to Lead Change

Policy Supports and Space for Innovation

Future State of Education

All Students Graduate Fully Prepared to Succeed

To revolutionize education systems for the long-term, these action steps must be created through a process of continuous improvement with engagement of local stakeholders. School and community leaders have:

» The best understanding of what their communities need,
» The biggest stake in the success of the transformation, and
» The responsibility of implementing the required changes and reforms.

Additionally, these action steps are supported by enabling state policies and mechanisms, such as innovation zones and credit flexibility policies, that provide support and space for innovation.

Current to Future State: The Action Steps

Redefine Student Success

The first step is to move beyond narrow definitions of success based on time spent in classrooms, regardless of actual learning, to future-focused profiles of student success based on demonstrated mastery of core knowledge and skills. The concept of graduate profiles is a recent approach that communities and state leaders have taken to collaboratively redefine student success from the limited definitions of the

past, toward the future. State leaders need to work closely with local leaders to clearly define what students need to know and be able to do upon graduation to ensure students are prepared for college, career and civic life with the knowledge, skills and mindsets for healthy and prosperous futures.

Create Meaningful Qualifications

There is a need to analyze how high school transcripts can work toward transforming learning. Diplomas should represent mastery of demonstrated knowledge and skills. Currently, most U.S. high school transcripts reflect credit for academic subjects based on meeting minimum seat-time requirements and a passing grade, which may or may not signify mastery of content. There are alternatives to time-based credits and transcripts. States, communities and schools are re-evaluating what students need to know and be able to do for college and career readiness by creating qualifications with clearly identified outcomes and competencies. With meaningful qualifications in K-12 education, students would graduate ready to succeed after high school, fostering internal motivation in students and reducing remediation costs across education systems.

Construct Balanced Systems of Assessments

There is also a need to rethink the purpose and role of assessment in education. State leaders can build balanced systems of assessments to certify student mastery of

knowledge and skills and provide timely feedback on where students are in their learning. To do that, Chattergoon and Marion's 2016 research explains that balanced systems of assessment must first have coherence, compatibility with "the models of how students learn content and skills over time" and that "the entire system is working toward a common set of learning goals." Second, balanced systems need a theory of action that articulates how each part of the system relates to the others. Finally, balanced assessments are efficient and transparent, in that they provide stakeholders with the full range of information, in a timely fashion. With these three characteristics, balanced systems of assessments support next generation teaching and learning.

Redesign Accountability for Continuous Improvement

State leaders now have considerably more authority and autonomy over the design of their school accountability systems. This creates the opportunity to redesign accountability systems for continuous improvement toward equity and excellence, empowering stakeholders with multiple, balanced measures and dashboards. Additionally, leaders can build capacity, trust and professionalism in the system, leading to reciprocal accountability, where all participants recognize their obligations and commitments in relation to each other, to the students and to their communities.

Develop Educator Capacity for Next-Generation Learning

Transforming K-12 education systems to student-centered learning requires teacher capacity for personalized, competency-based education. State policymakers need to develop educator capacity for next-generation learning by modernizing educator preparation and development systems and increasing workforce diversity. To do this, state educational leaders and stakeholders need to revisit the policies and structures of accreditation for teacher preparation programs, educator licensure and certification standards, teacher professional development and educator quality competencies.

Build Capacity to Lead Change

Finally, state leaders need to build system and school leadership capacity for change through personalized and competency-based preparation and professional development systems and increase workforce diversity. A core requirement of education leadership needs to be the belief that all students have the ability to succeed. Leaders should make decisions for students that are informed by the learning sciences and designed to help each student succeed. Leaders across the education system need the support, preparation, vision and ability to transform to next-generation learning across the country.

Learn More

The iNACOL report *Current to Future State: Issues and Action Steps for State Policy to Support Personalized, Competency-Based Learning* provides a roadmap for state policymakers to move to a future state of education that can work for all students.

For more information or technical assistance, contact the staff at iNACOL Center for Policy Advocacy:

» Susan Patrick, CEO, iNACOL and Co-Founder, CompetencyWorks: spatrick@inacol.org
» Maria Worthen, Vice President for Federal and State Policy, iNACOL: mworthen@inacol.org
» Dale Frost, State Policy Director, iNACOL: dfrost@inacol.org
» Natalie Truong, Policy Director, iNACOL: ntruong@inacol.org

Send us a message regarding federal or state policy here.

Learn more at iNACOL.org, read our iNACOL blog and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

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The mission of iNACOL is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all.

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