Methodology for the CEP Report

Many States Have Taken a “Backloaded” Approach to No Child Left Behind Goal of All Students Scoring “Proficient”

The information in this policy brief comes from the state accountability plans posted on the ED Web site at http://www.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html?src=gu. For eight states (Alabama, California, Hawai’i, Indiana, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma, and Virginia) and the District of Columbia, the AMO information was not available on the ED Web site, so we retrieved the information directly from the relevant state department of education Web site. All the data were retrieved in January 2008.

We sorted the state AMO trajectories into three categories. States with incremental trajectories require steady movement toward the 100% goal in 2014. The objectives for the percentage proficient might increase each year, or every two or three years, in roughly equal increments throughout the 12-year period. States with backloaded trajectories require less progress in the early years followed by substantially higher gains in the years closer to 2014. States that backload either require larger jumps in their AMOs later in the 12-year time period, or require more frequent increases toward the end of the time period. For instance, some states might require a four percentage point increase every two years initially, and then require a four point increase each year later in the trajectory. States in the blended category (there were only two) had trajectories that were not easily categorized as incremental or backloaded, because their trajectories did not show a clear pattern of annual increases.