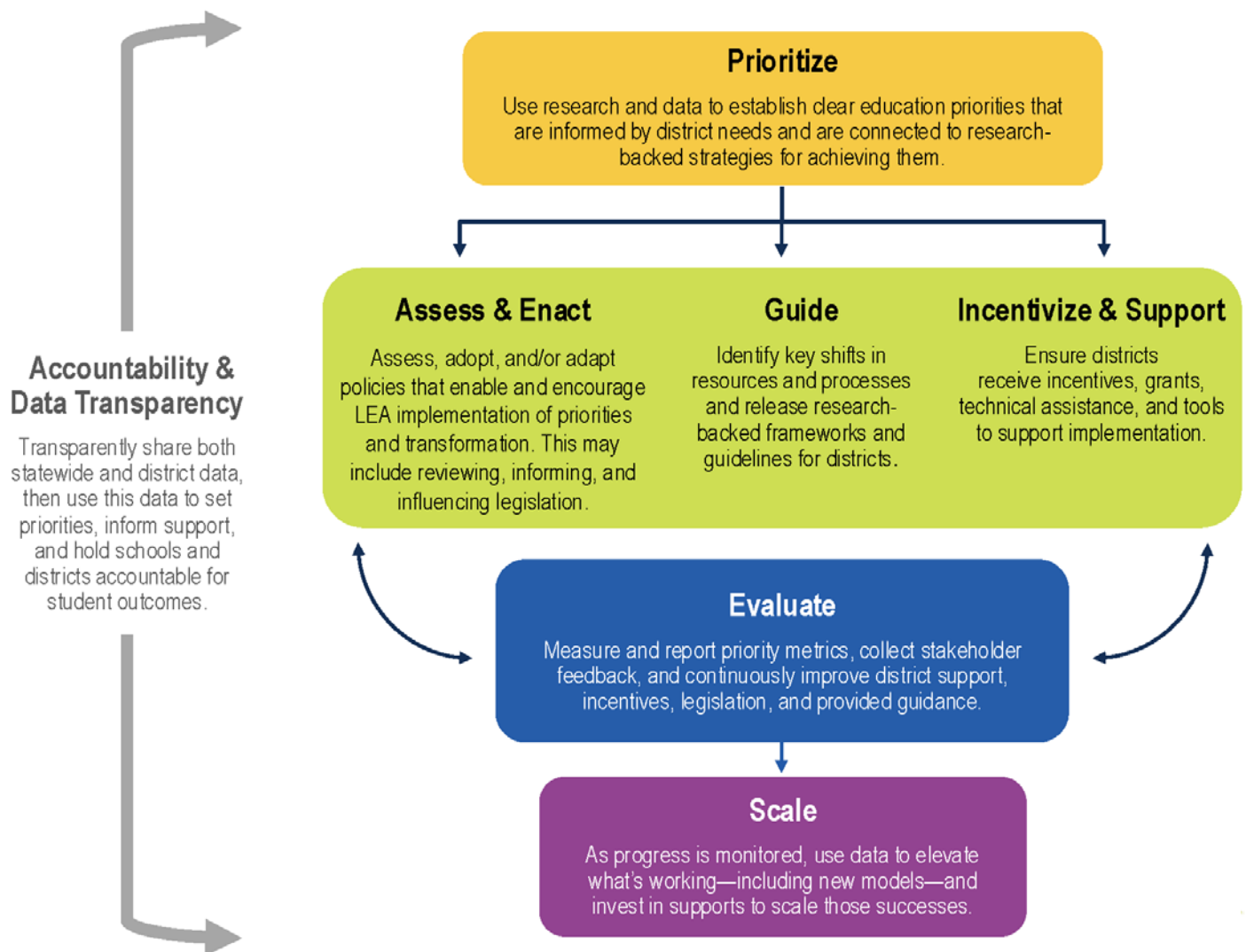




The State's Role in Championing District-Level Change

State education agencies (SEAs) are uniquely positioned to support districts in effectively implementing key statewide priorities. By providing critical resources and priority-aligned support, SEAs can ensure leaders have what they need to transform their districts and turn their priorities into reality. Here's how.

ERS Framework for How States Can Support School and District Implementation



Accountability and Data Transparency

To meet federal and state regulations, all states are required to report on a variety of district, school, and student metrics. Managing these large data sets enables SEAs to:

- Analyze how student needs (e.g., demographics and performance) and resource use (e.g., funding and staffing) intersect
- Identify cross-district trends to inform priorities and strategies
- Target efforts to the districts that need the most support

Prioritize

A central part of the SEA's role is to set and disseminate clear educational priorities. But not all SEAs define a theory of action that outlines how teams should implement those priorities at the state, district, and school level. It's like going on a road trip without a map—you're unlikely to get where you need to go. By developing a clear theory of action, SEAs can help districts:

- Establish and build toward core priorities
- Implement strategies at the state, district, and school levels
- Accurately assess the resource shift and investments key strategies require

Assess and Enact

SEAs typically play a larger role in implementing policies than they do in developing them. But they nonetheless offer a unique perspective on how policies can impact districts' success and whether policies promote or conflict with key priorities (for example, if instructional seat time requirements align with work-based learning priorities). As such, SEAs can:

- Assess the policy context to understand how adjustments can support district priorities
- Evaluate whether districts need policy revisions or new policies altogether to align with priorities
- Enact policy adjustments and promote district implementation

Guide

SEAs often share documents with districts leaders to provide guidance, recommendations, and requirements. When these documents are siloed within specific SEA departments, however, they often lack alignment with key priorities. Instead, SEAs can use guidance documents, frameworks, best practices, and other resources to clearly communicate what successfully implementing priorities looks like in practice. States can offer more strategic support by:

- Clearly communicating the school- and district-level resource shifts needed to support state education priorities
- Providing examples of what process shifts look like in practice
- Connecting requirements and policies to district priorities

Incentivize and Support

SEAs often hold the authority to design, implement, and make decisions about statewide incentives and grant programs. They can use that power strategically to:

- Provide technical assistance, tools, and resources to district leaders
- Align incentives to statewide priorities
- Support districts' implementation needs

Evaluate

Accountability and accreditation are core SEA functions, as states have a bird's-eye view into cross-district trends, performance, and needs. Using this statewide accountability system strategically, SEAs can:

- Measure and report on priority metrics
- Collect feedback from key stakeholders across the state
- Continuously improve district support, incentives, policies and guidance

Scale

Because SEAs can spot needs and trends across districts in their area, they're uniquely situated to elevate the ingredients to district success. SEAs can:

- Capitalize on opportunities to share best practices with districts statewide
- Offer grant programs or technical assistance to help foster those best practices
- Support districts in piloting innovative, out-of-the-box ways of working

About Education Resource Strategies

Education Resource Strategies (ERS) is a national nonprofit consulting organization. For over 20 years, we've empowered school system leaders to make transformative shifts in resources, structures, and practices so that all students—especially those with the greatest learning needs and those furthest from opportunity—attend a school where they can learn and thrive.

Learn more about how [ERS supports state leaders and education agencies here](#). If you're interested in discussing partnership opportunities, [please contact us](#) for more information.