

AGENDA

Public Awareness Subcommittee

May 18, 2015
3:00 PM
Blatt Building, Room 433

- I. Welcome & Introductions Mrs. Barbara Hairfield
- II. Action: Approval of Minutes – January 26, 2015
- III. Action:2014-15 School and District Report CardMrs. Dana Yow
Format Review
- IV. Action: Development of Single Accountability SystemMrs. Dana Yow
Review of Plan and EOC Staff
- V. Information: Families Read-at-Home Plan PublicationMrs. Dana Yow
- VI. Information: Family-Friendly Standards Update.....Mrs. Dana Yow
- VII. Other Business
- VIII. Adjournment

David Whittemore
CHAIR

Daniel B. Merck
VICE CHAIR

Anne H. Bull

Bob Couch

Mike Fair

Raye Felder

Margaret Anne Gaffney

Barbara B. Hairfield

Nikki Haley

R. Wesley Hayes, Jr.

Dwight A. Loftis

Deb Marks

John W. Matthews, Jr.

Joseph H. Neal

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.

Molly Spearman

Patti J. Tate

Subcommittee Members

Barbara Hairfield, Chair
Anne Bull
Sen. John Matthews
Mr. David Whittemore

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Public Awareness Subcommittee Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting
January 26, 2015

Subcommittee Members Present: Ms. Barbara Hairfield, Ms. Anne Bull, and Mr. David Whittemore

Staff Present: Ms. Melanie Barton, Ms. Bunnie Ward, Ms. Dana Yow, Dr. Rainey Knight, Ms. Hope Johnson-Jones, and Dr. Kevin Andrews

I. Welcome and introductions

Ms. Hairfield called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes from the March 24, 2014, Public Awareness subcommittee meeting were approved. David Whittemore made the motion to approve; Anne Bull seconded.

II. ACT Assessments Update

Dr. Mike DiNicola, Senior Account Manager of State Programs at ACT, provided an update on ACT assessments for the subcommittee. He discussed ACT Aspire, The ACT, and WorkKeys. The presentation provided information about the reporting capacity of the three ACT assessment products, information that is available at the classroom level, as well as interim and summative assessments and reporting. He showed the ACT Elementary Career Continuum, which links Aspire with the College Readiness Benchmarks, telling parents whether students are on track to be successful in college and careers. Subcommittee members asked Dr. DiNicola about what reports will look like for teachers, administrators, and parents for Aspire. He shared dynamic aggregate reporting levels for educators, which will allow them to get down to the granular level. At www.discoveractaspire.org, the public can find exemplar items; this is intended to be a public resource. The website actaspire.avocet.pearson.com is a teacher resource. Dr. DiNicola shared online resources, geared for various audiences, which he encouraged the EOC to make available. Ms. Yow shared a draft publication that the EOC had developed about ACT Aspire at the request of school districts. The flyer had previously been approved by Dr. DiNicola and ACT staff. SCDE staff shared an online FAQ resource that had been written by Sheila Graybill.

Ms. Hairfield asked how many states used the 11th grade test for accountability purposes. Dr. DiNicola is researching this question as well as looking into how 11th graders are classified in other states; the SCDE had asked him that question as well. Dr. DiNicola was also asked how many items does it take to make an item reliable and valid; he said he would check with ACT psychometricians.

III. State and Federal Joint Report Card

Ms. Barton walked the subcommittee through the criteria proposed for report card to be published for the 2014-15 school year, which was based on the cyclical review recommendations. The recommendations focus on criteria of knowledge, opportunities (access and quality), as well as outcome measures. Ms. Barton said many of the recommendations were based on what has been published by the CCSSO. Ms. Hairfield wants to remove ACT Science reporting for Aspire, as it is an optional test for schools.

IV. Information: Communications/Public Relations Plan FY 2014-15 Update

Ms. Yow went through the updated plan for the 2014-15 year, updating the subcommittee on the status of each tactic as well as any data related to each.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittee: Public Awareness Subcommittee

Date: May 18, 2015

INFORMATION/RECOMMENDATION

Format Review of 2014-15 School and District Report Cards

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Section 59-18-325(C)6 "The Education Oversight Committee must use the results of these assessments in school years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 to report on student academic performance in each school and district pursuant to Section 59 18 900. The committee may not determine state ratings for schools or districts, pursuant to Section 59 18 900, using the results of the assessments required by this subsection until after the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year; provided, however, state ratings must be determined by the results of these assessments beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. The Oversight Committee also must develop and recommend a single accountability system that meets federal and state accountability requirements by the Fall of 2016."

CRITICAL FACTS

The attached are drafts of formats for the school and district report cards to be published in November 2015 for school year 2014-15.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

November 2015 Report Card Publication

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost: none

Fund/Source:

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

Bethel Hanberry Elementary School

125 Boney Road
Blythewood, SC 29016



**South Carolina
State Report Card**

State and federal laws require public schools to release report cards to the public each year. This year, the report card has been updated to reflect changes in reporting directed by the SC Education Oversight Committee. Schools will not be rated for state accountability purposes until Fall 2017 when the state will transition to a single accountability system. The following reports student performance in school year 2014-15.

Grades:	PK-5 Elementary	Principal: Tracy M. Footman
Enrollment:	659 students	Superintendent: Debbie Hamm
School Phone:	803-691-6880	Board Chair:
School Website:	www.richland2.org/bhe	



WORLD CLASS SKILLS & LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Our school is helping all students develop the world class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the Graduate by...

World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

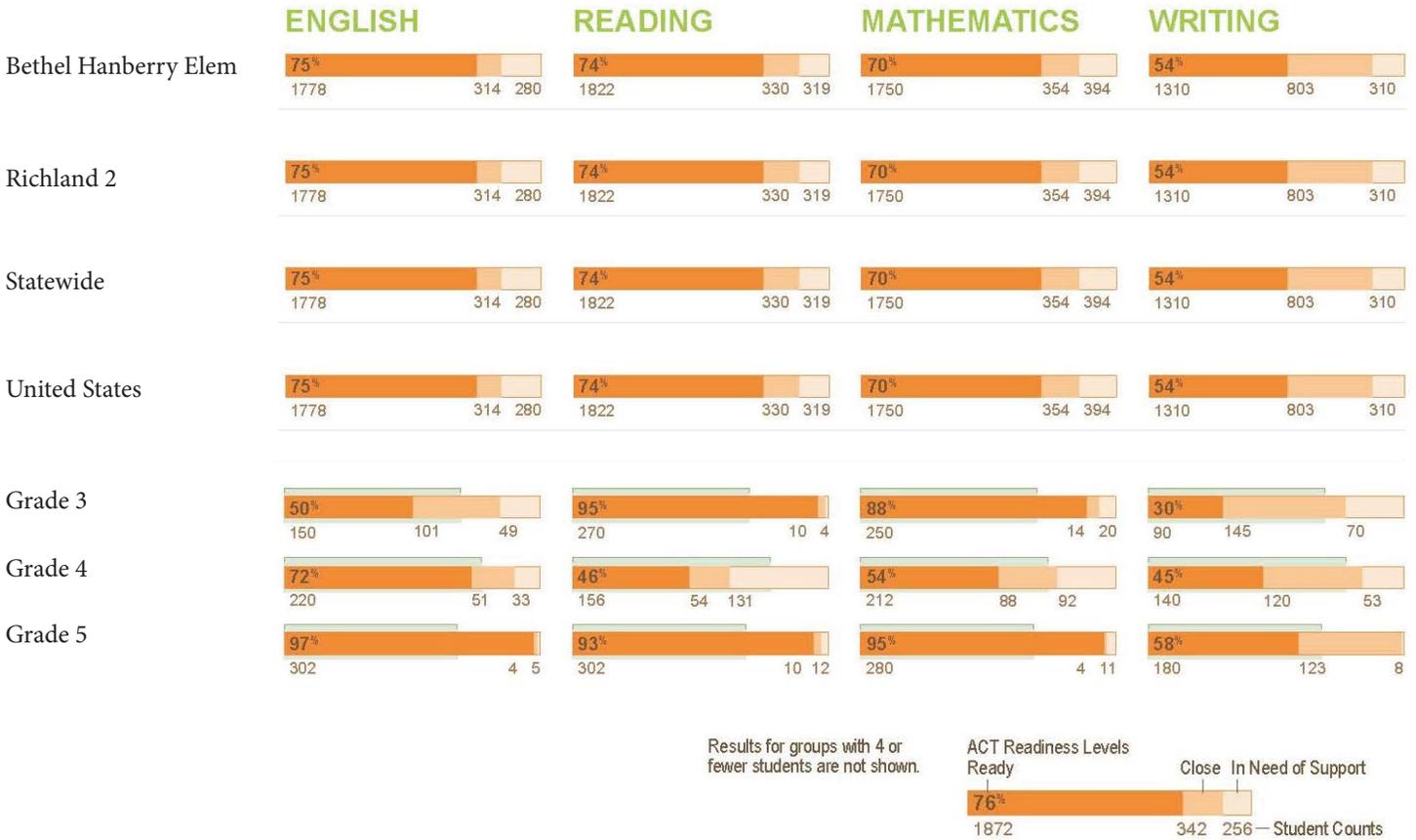
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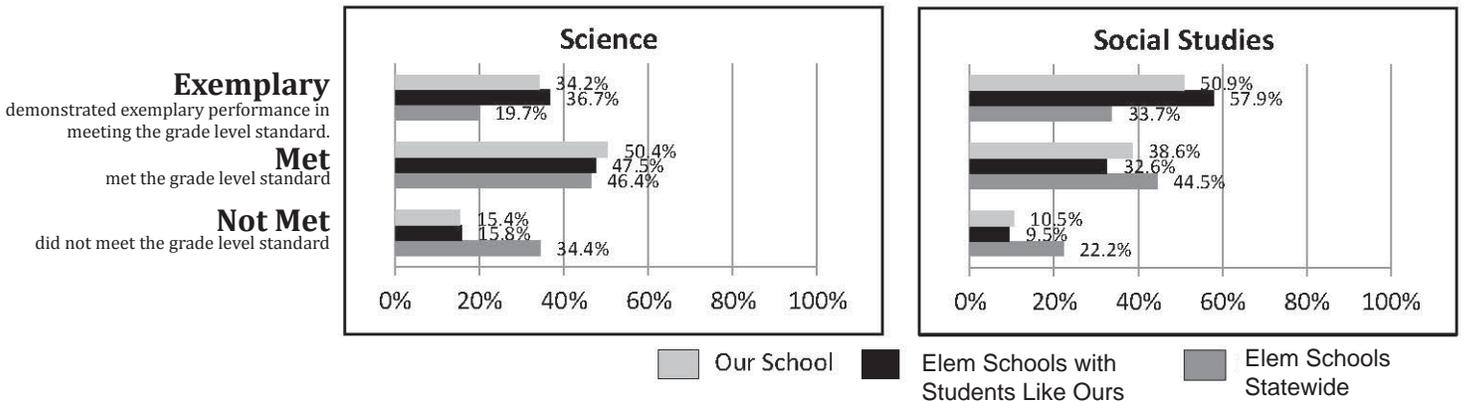
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KNOWLEDGE

The ACT Aspire assessment was given to students in grades 3-8 in Spring 2015. Students were assessed in the subject areas of Reading, English, Mathematics and Writing.



The SC Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was given to students in grades 4-8 in Spring 2015. Students were assessed in the subject areas of Science and Social Studies.



OPPORTUNITIES

	Our School	Change from Last Year	Elem Schools with students like ours
Students (n = 659)			
1st graders who attended full-day kindergarten			
Attendance Rate			
With disabilities			
Out of school suspensions or expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses			
Percentage of students served by gifted and talented programs			
Percentage of student retained			
Teachers (n = 42)			
Percentage of teachers with advanced degrees			
Percentage of teachers on continuing contract			
Teachers returning from previous year			
Teacher attendance rate			
Average teacher salary*			
Professional development days/teacher			
Ratio of teachers to technology devices			
Percentage of highly qualified teachers			
Percentage of teacher vacancies for more than 9 weeks			
School			
Principal's years at school			
Student-teacher ratio in core subjects			
Prime instructional time			
Opportunities in the arts			
Opportunities in foreign languages			
SACS accreditation			
Parents attending conferences			
Character development program			
Avg. age of books / electronic media in the school library			
Number of resources available per student in the school library media center			
Bandwidth capacity			
Percent of classrooms with wireless access			
Ratio of students to electronic learning devices			
Dollars spent per pupil**			
Percent of expenditures for instruction**			
Percent of expenditures for teacher salaries**			

* Includes current year teachers contracted for 185 days or more.
 ** Prior year audited financial data are reported.

OPPORTUNITIES

Evaluation of School Climate

Evaluations by Teachers, Students and Parents

	Teachers	Students*	Parents*
Number of surveys returned	37	117	72
Percent satisfied with learning environment	94.6%	81.2%	86.2%
Percent satisfied with social and physical environment	94.6%	76.7%	82.8%
Percent satisfied with school-home relations	100.0%	93.2%	67.6%

* Only students at the highest elementary school grade level and their parents were included.

Dent Middle School2721 Decker Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29206**South Carolina
State Report Card**

State and federal laws require public schools to release report cards to the public each year. This year, the report card has been updated to reflect changes in reporting directed by the SC Education Oversight Committee. Schools will not be rated for state accountability purposes until Fall 2017 when the state will transition to a single accountability system. The following reports student performance in school year 2014-15.

Grades:	6-8 Middle	Principal: David Basile
Enrollment:	1,273 students	Superintendent: Debbie Hamm
School Phone:	803-699-2750	Board Chair: Calvin Jackson
School Website:	www.richland2.org/dm	

**Profile of the SC Graduate****World Class Knowledge**

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

WORLD CLASS SKILLS & LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Our school is helping all students develop the world class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the Graduate by...

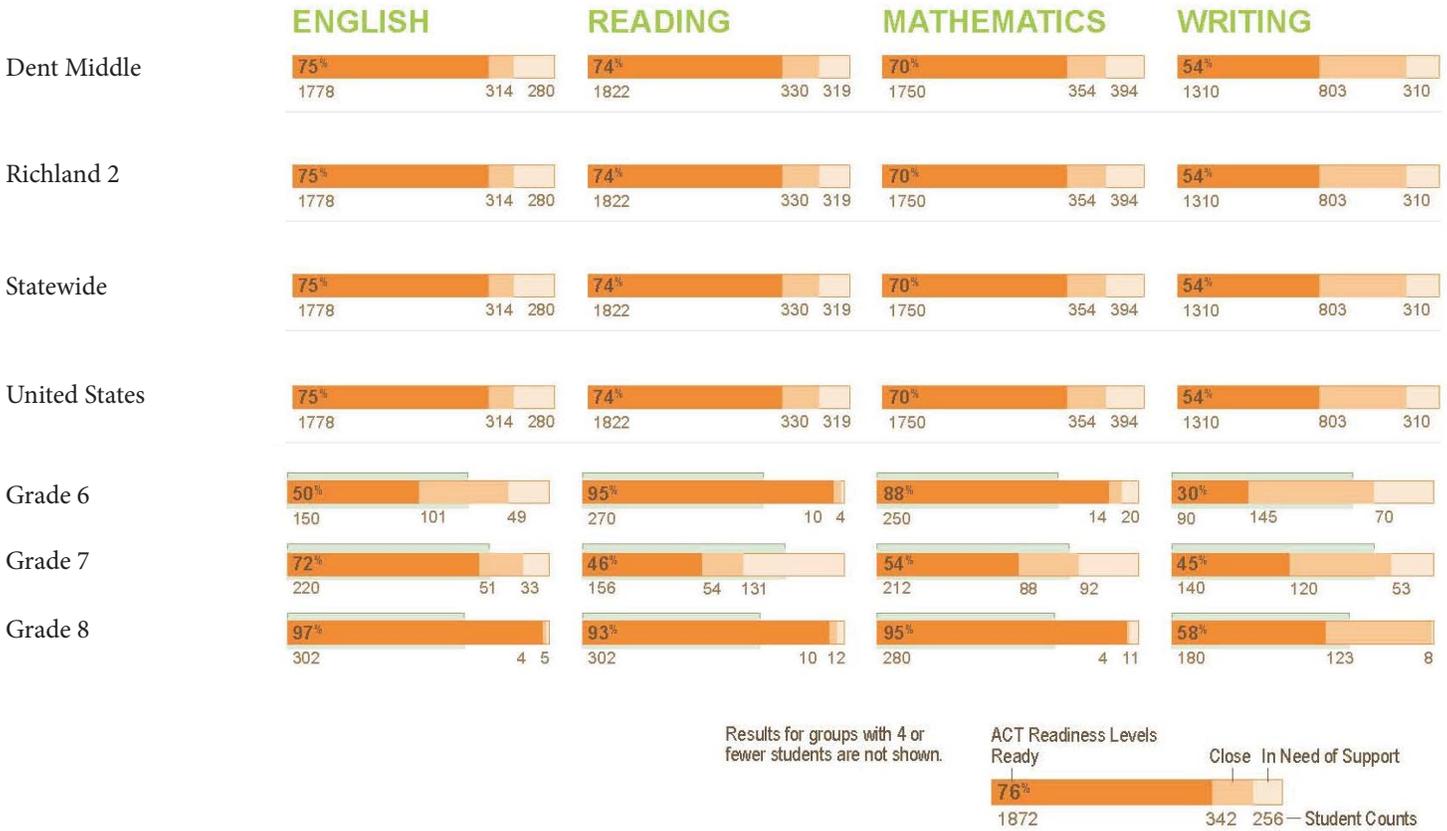
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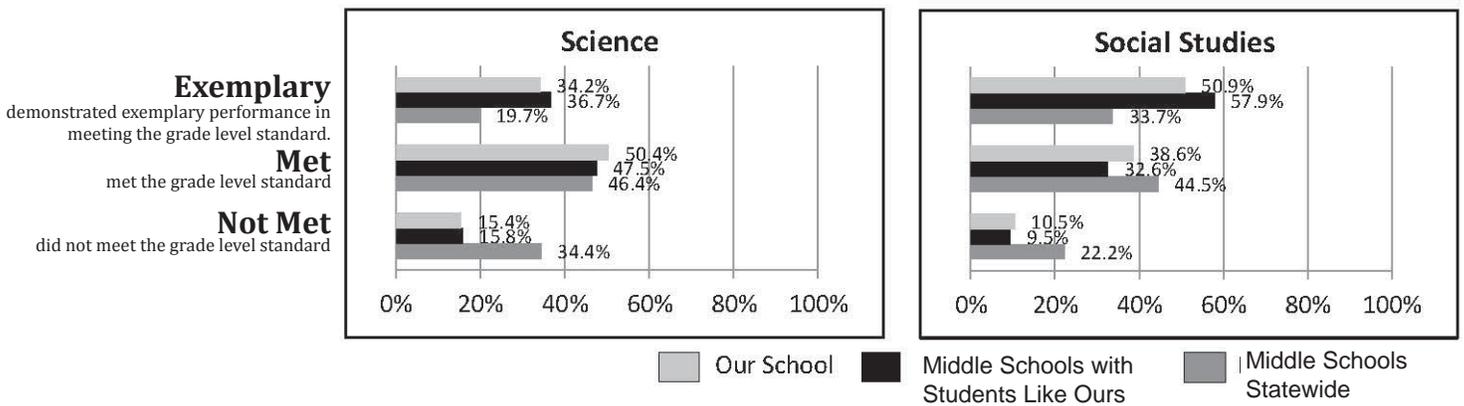
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The SC Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was given to students in grades 4-8 in Spring 2015. Students were assessed in the subject areas of Science and Social Studies.



End of Course Tests

Percent of tests with scores of 70 or above on:	Our Middle School	Middle Schools with Students Like Ours
Algebra 1/Math for the Technologies 2	100.0%	98.3%
English 1	N/A	98.3%
Biology 1	N/A	N/A
US History and the Constitution	N/A	N/A
All Subjects	100.0%	98.1%

OPPORTUNITIES

For students to meet the Profile of the SC Graduate

	Our School	Change from Last Year	Middle Schools with students like ours
Students (n = 1,273)			
Students (7th and 8th grade) enrolled in high school credit courses			
Attendance Rate			
With disabilities			
Out of school suspensions or expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses			
Percentage of students served by gifted and talented programs			
Percentage of student retained			
Annual dropout rate			
Teachers (n = 88)			
Percentage of teachers with advanced degrees			
Percentage of teachers on continuing contract			
Teachers returning from previous year			
Teacher attendance rate			
Average teacher salary*			
Professional development days/teacher			
Ratio of teachers to technology devices			
Percentage of highly qualified teachers			
Percentage of teacher vacancies for more than 9 weeks			
School			
Principal's years at school			
Student-teacher ratio in core subjects			
Prime instructional time			
Opportunities in the arts			
Opportunities in foreign languages			
SACS accreditation			
Parents attending conferences			
Character development program			
Avg. age of books / electronic media in the school library			
Number of resources available per student in the school library media center			
Bandwidth capacity			
Percent of classrooms with wireless access			
Ratio of students to electronic learning devices			
Dollars spent per pupil**			

* Includes current year teachers contracted for 185 days or more.

** Prior year audited financial data are reported.

OPPORTUNITIES**Evaluation of School Climate****Evaluations by Teachers, Students and Parents**

	Teachers	Students*	Parents*
Number of surveys returned	37	117	72
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Percent satisfied with social and physical environment	94.6%	76.7%	82.8%
Percent satisfied with school-home relations	100.0%	93.2%	67.6%

* Only students at the highest elementary school grade level and their parents were included.

Blythewood High School10901 Wilson Blvd.
Blythewood, SC 29016**South Carolina
State Report Card**

State and federal laws require public schools to release report cards to the public each year. This year, the report card has been updated to reflect changes in reporting directed by the SC Education Oversight Committee. Schools will not be rated for state accountability purposes until Fall 2017 when the state will transition to a single accountability system. The following reports student performance in school year 2014-15.

Grades: 9-12 High
Enrollment: 1,666 students
School Phone: 803-691-4090
School Website: www.richland2.org/bh

Principal: Dr. Brenda Hafner
Superintendent: Debbie Hamm
Board Chair: Calvin Jackson

**Profile of the SC Graduate****World Class Knowledge**

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

WORLD CLASS SKILLS & LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Our school is helping all students develop the world class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the Graduate by...

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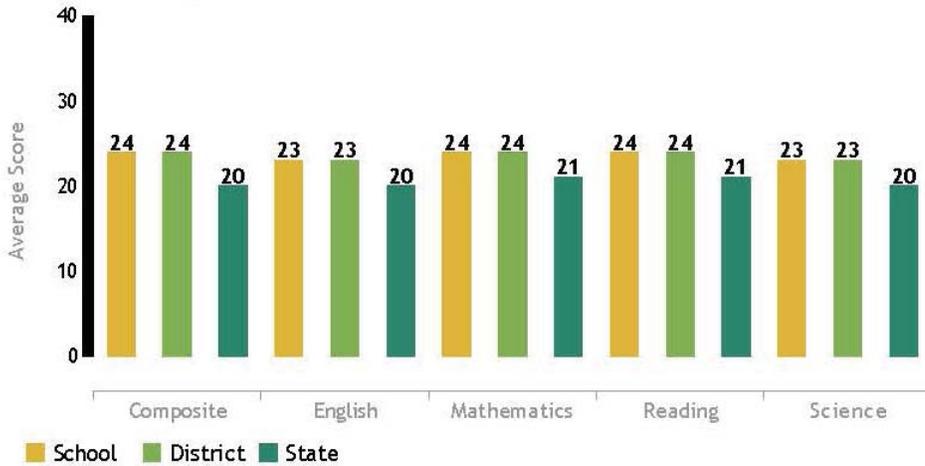
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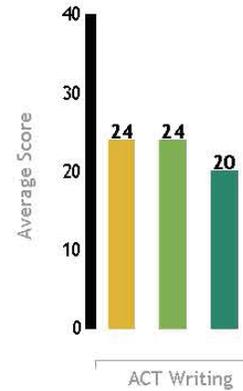
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KNOWLEDGE

Average ACT Score Achieved by Students: English, Math, Reading, Science, Composite of all four tests, 2015

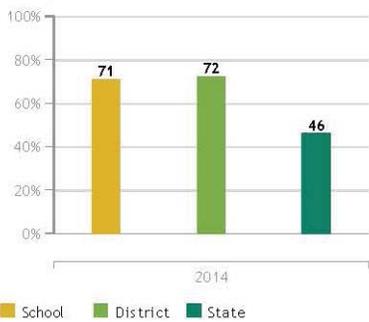


Average ACT Score Achieved by Students: Writing



The ACT, a college-readiness, assessment, was given to every South Carolina 11th grader. The ACT scores range from 0 to 36. A college-ready composite score of 21 or higher on the ACT shows that students have learned important academic skills that they will need in order to succeed in college and careers. The district and state averages are included for comparison. State averages for ACT data are based on regular public schools and do not include private schools in the state.

Percent of Students at School Ready for College Course Work



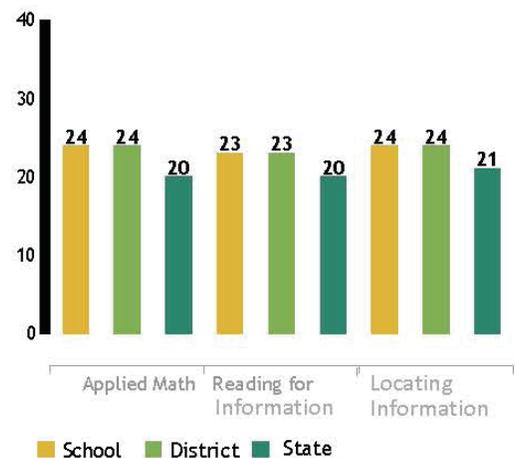
Percent of Students meeting ACT Benchmarks, 2015				
English	Math	Reading	Science	All 4 subjects
60.4	39.2	39.2	32.9	24.2

ACT benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject-area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses.

The percentage of students who achieved a combined score of at least 21 on the ACT are classified by ACT as being Ready for College Coursework. The district and state average is displayed on the left for comparison.

ACT WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system measuring “real world” skills that employers believe are critical in the workplace. The assessment is given to every South Carolina 11th grader. The assessment consists of three subtests: Applied Math, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. Students can earn certificates at the Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze level on WorkKeys assessments. Students earn a National Career Readiness Certificate if they earn a minimum score of Silver.

Percent of Students Earning Platinum, Gold or Silver on WorkKeys, 2015



KNOWLEDGE

End of Course Tests

Percent of tests with scores of 70 or above on:	Our High School	High Schools with Students Like Ours*	State
Algebra 1/Math for the Technologies 2	86.6%	85.6%	
English 1	89.9%	81.9%	
Biology 1/Applied Biology 2	90.6%	89.2%	
US History and the Constitution	79.8%	76.9%	
All Subjects	87.5%	83.9%	

* High Schools with Students Like Ours are high schools with in 5% above or below the index for the school.

OUTCOMES

School Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

All	Gender		Race/Ethnicity						LEP	Migrant	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian				
87.5												
	85.3	89.7	90.1	77.2	81.3	94.2			71.7	54.3	71.8	78.5

School Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

All	Gender		Race/Ethnicity						LEP	Migrant	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian				
87.5												
	85.3	89.7	90.1	77.2	81.3	94.2			71.7	54.3	71.8	78.5

State Graduation Rate

Four-Year	Five-Year
70.0	70.0

Percentage of Seniors Eligible for LIFE Scholarship

Our School	District	State
60.4	60.4	60.4

Percentage of Students from 2014 Graduation Class Enrolled in a two- or four-year college in Fall 2014

Our School	District	State
60.4	60.4	60.4

OPPORTUNITIES

	Our School	Change from Last Year	High Schools with students like ours
Students (n = 1,666)			
Attendance Rate			
Served by gifted and talented program			
With disabilities			
Out of school suspensions or expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses			
Number of online or blended (50% online) courses offered			
Enrolled in AP/IB programs			
Successful in AP/IB programs			
Career/tech students in co-curricular organizations			
Enrollment in career/technology courses			
Students participating in work-based experiences			
Number of seniors who have completed FASFA forms			
College applications completed			
Number of students enrolled in dual enrollment courses			
Number of dual enrollment courses offered			
Success rate of students in dual enrollment courses			
Annual dropout rate			
Dropout recovery rate			
Percentage retained			
Teachers (n = 99)			
Percentage of teachers with advanced degrees			
Percentage of teachers on continuing contract			
Teachers returning from previous year			
Teacher attendance rate			
Average teacher salary*			
Professional development days/teacher			
Ratio of teachers to technology devices			
Percentage of highly qualified teachers			
Percentage of teacher vacancies for more than 9 weeks			

OPPORTUNITIES

	Our School	Change from Last Year	High Schools with students like ours
School			
Principal's years at school			
Student-teacher ratio in core subjects			
Prime instructional time			
Opportunities in the arts			
Opportunities in foreign languages			
SACS accreditation			
Parents attending conferences			
Character development program			
Avg. age of books / electronic media in the school library			
Number of resources available per student in the school library media center			
Bandwidth capacity			
Percent of classrooms with wireless access			
Ratio of students to electronic learning devices			
Dollars spent per pupil**			
Percent of expenditures for instruction**			
Percent of expenditures for teacher salaries**			

Evaluation of School Climate

Evaluations by Teachers, Students and Parents

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Percent satisfied with school-home relations	100.0%	93.2%	67.6%

* Only students at the highest elementary school grade level and their parents were included.

Richland 2 School District

6831 Brookfield Rd.
Columbia, SC 29206



South Carolina State Report Card

State and federal laws require public schools to release report cards to the public each year. This year, the report card has been updated to reflect changes in reporting directed by the SC Education Oversight Committee. Schools will not be rated for state accountability purposes until Fall 2017 when the state will transition to a single accountability system. The following reports student performance in school year 2014-15.

Grades:	PK-12 District	Superintendent: Debbie Hamm
Enrollment:	26,783 students	Board Chair: Calvin Jackson
District Phone:	803-787-1910	
District Website:	www.richland2.org	



Profile of the SC Graduate

World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

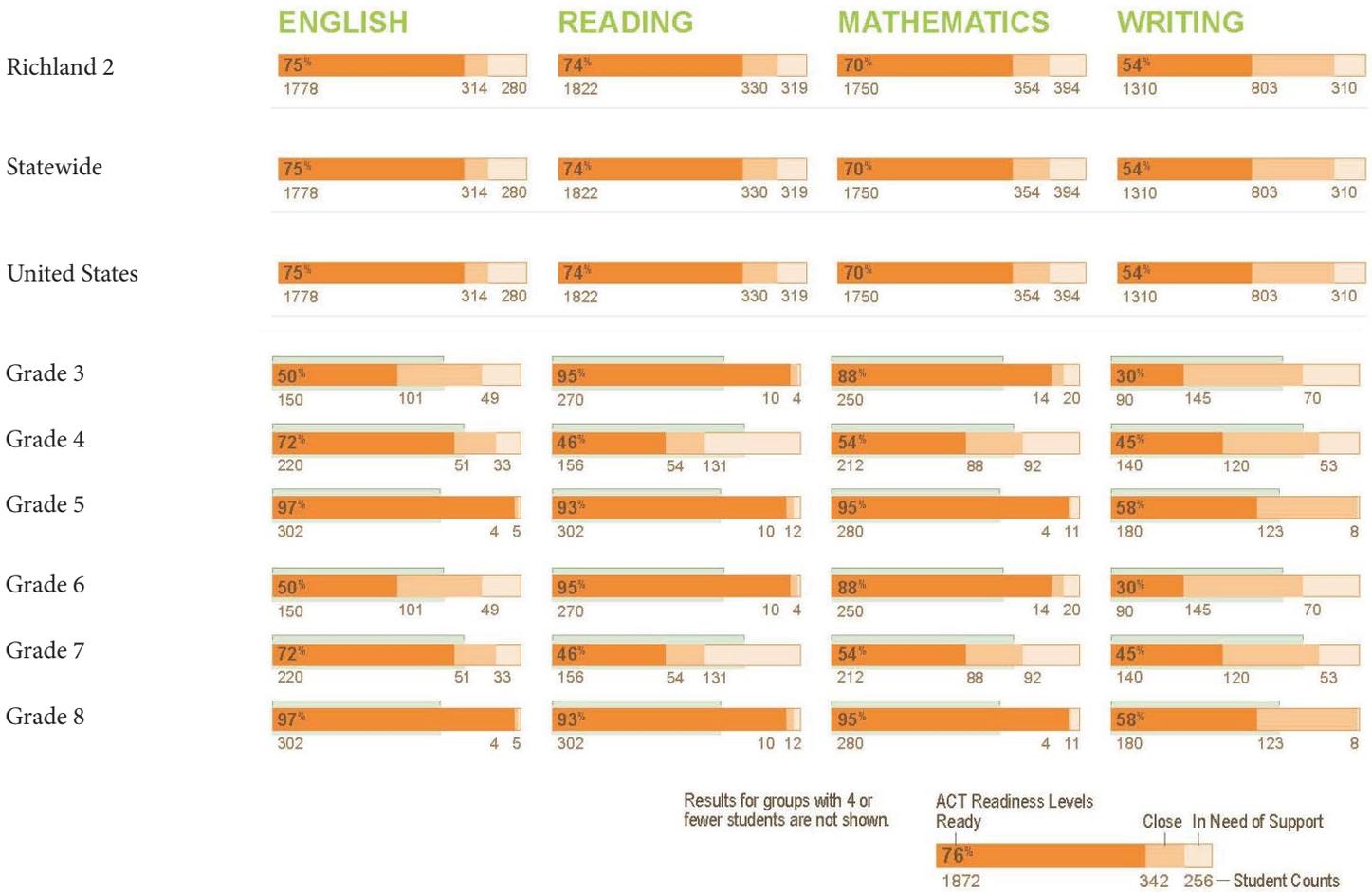
- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

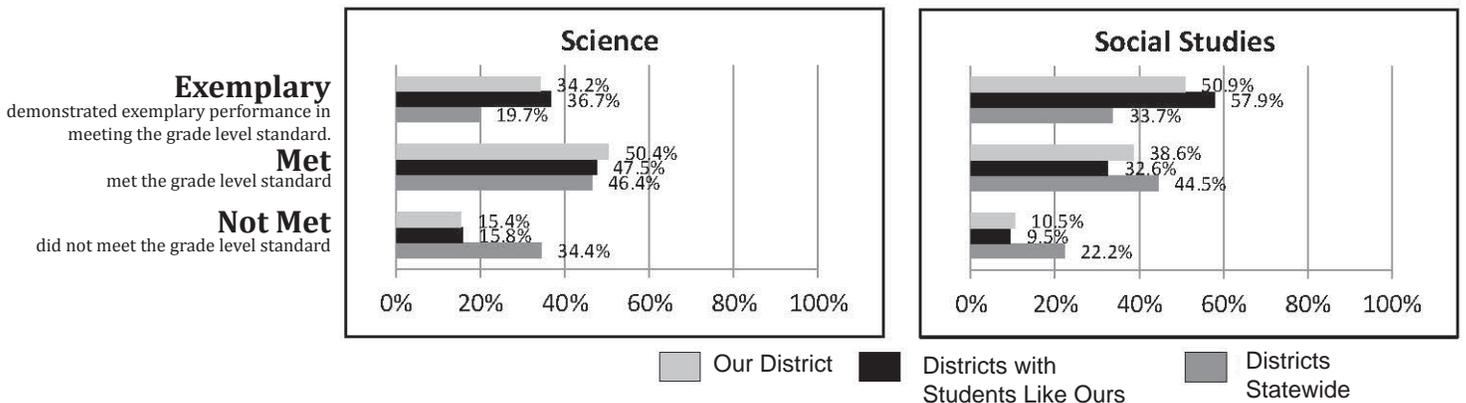
- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

KNOWLEDGE

The ACT Aspire assessment was given to students in grades 3-8 in Spring 2015. Students were assessed in the subject areas of Reading, English, Mathematics and Writing.



The SC Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was given to students in grades 4-8 in Spring 2015. Students were assessed in the subject areas of Science and Social Studies.



KNOWLEDGE

Science PASS

Our District: Percent Met and Above for each grade level

4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade

Social Studies PASS

Our District: Percent Met and Above for each grade level

4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade

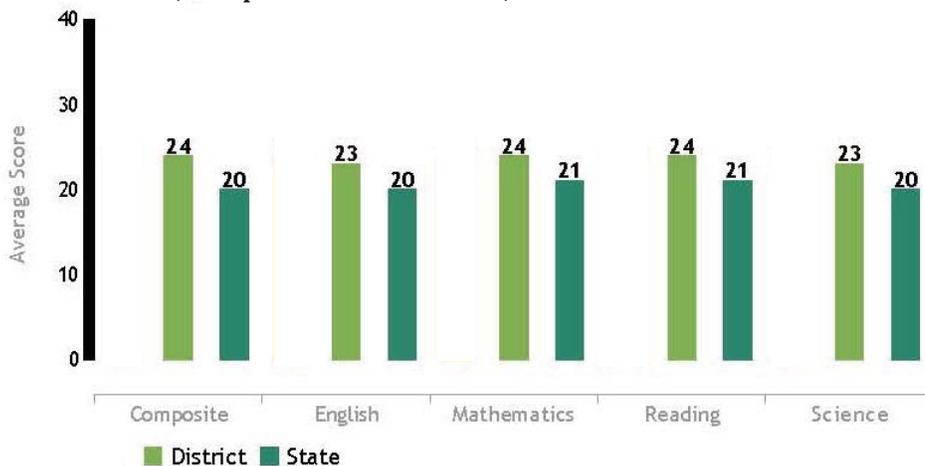
End of Course Tests

Percent of tests with scores of 70 or above on:	Our District	Districts with Students Like Ours	State
Algebra 1/Math for the Technologies 2	86.6%	85.6%	
English 1	89.9%	81.9%	
Biology 1/Applied Biology 2	90.6%	89.2%	
US History and the Constitution	79.8%	76.9%	
All Subjects	87.5%	83.9%	

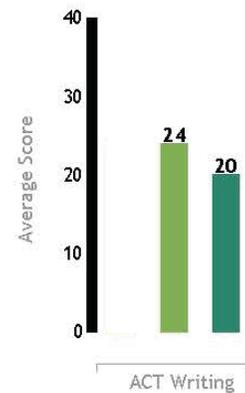
* High Schools with Students Like Ours are high schools with in 5% above or below the index for the school.

The ACT, a college-readiness, assessment, was given to every South Carolina 11th grader. The ACT scores range from 0 to 36. A college-ready composite score of 21 or higher on the ACT shows that students have learned important academic skills that they will need in order to succeed in college and careers. The district and state averages are included for comparison. State averages for ACT data are based on regular public schools and do not include private schools in the state.

Average ACT Score Achieved by Students: English, Math, Reading, Science, Composite of all four tests, 2015

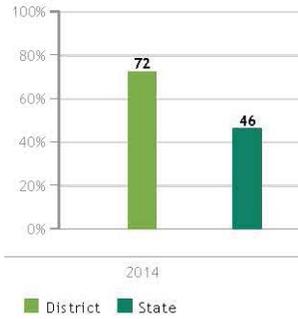


Average ACT Score Achieved by Students: Writing



KNOWLEDGE

Percent of Students in District Ready for College Course Work



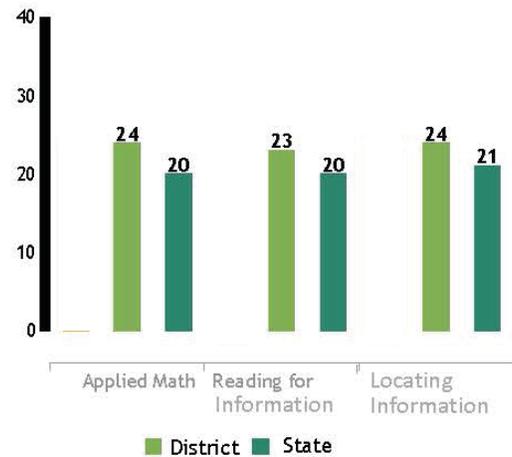
Subject	Math	Reading	Science	All 4 subjects
English	39.2	39.2	32.9	24.2

ACT benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject-area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses.

The percentage of students who achieved a combined score of at least 21 on the ACT are classified by ACT as being Ready for College Coursework. The district and state average is displayed on the left for comparison.

ACT WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system measuring “real world” skills that employers believe are critical in the workplace. The assessment is given to every South Carolina 11th grader. The assessment consists of three subtests: Applied Math, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. Students can earn certificates at the Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze level on WorkKeys assessments. Students earn a National Career Readiness Certificate if they earn a minimum score of Silver.

Percent of Students Earning Platinum, Gold or Silver on WorkKeys, 2015



OUTCOMES

All	Gender		Race/Ethnicity						LEP	Migrant	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian				
87.5	85.3	89.7	90.1	77.2	81.3	94.2			71.7	54.3	71.8	78.5

All	Gender		Race/Ethnicity						LEP	Migrant	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian				
87.5	85.3	89.7	90.1	77.2	81.3	94.2			71.7	54.3	71.8	78.5

OUTCOMES

State Graduation Rate	
Four-Year	Five-Year
70.0	70.0

Percentage of Seniors Eligible for LIFE Scholarship	
District	State
60.4	60.4

Percentage of Students from 2014 Graduation Class Enrolled in a two- or four-year college in Fall 2014	
District	State
60.4	60.4

OPPORTUNITIES

	Our District	Change from Last Year	Districts with students like ours
Students (n = 26,783)			
Attendance Rate			
Served by gifted and talented program			
With disabilities			
Out of school suspensions or expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses			
Number of online or blended (50% online) courses offered			
Enrolled in AP/IB programs			
Successful in AP/IB programs			
Career/tech students in co-curricular organizations			
Enrollment in career/technology courses			
Dual enrollment student count			
Students participating in work-based experiences			
Number of seniors who have completed FASFA forms			
College applications completed			
Number of students enrolled in dual enrollment courses			
Number of dual enrollment courses offered			
Success rate of students in dual enrollment courses			
Annual dropout rate			
Dropout recovery rate			
Percentage retained			
Enrolled in adult education GED or diploma programs			
Completions in adult education GED or diploma programs			
Teachers (n = 1,867)			
Percentage of teachers with advanced degrees			
Percentage of teachers on continuing contract			
Teachers returning from previous year			
Teacher attendance rate			
Average teacher salary*			
Professional development days/teacher			
Ratio of teachers to technology devices			
Percentage of highly qualified teachers			
Percentage of teacher vacancies for more than 9 weeks			

OPPORTUNITIES

	Our District	Change from Last Year	Districts with students like ours
District			
Superintendent's years at districts			
Student-teacher ratio in core subjects			
Prime instructional time			
Opportunities in the arts			
Opportunities in foreign languages			
Number of schools with SACS accreditation			
Parents attending conferences			
Bandwidth capacity			
Percent of classrooms with wireless access			
Percent of students served by one-to-one computing			
Ratio of students to electronic learning devices			
Dual enrollment courses offered			
Dual enrollment success rate			
Dollars spent per pupil**			
Percent of expenditures for instruction**			
Percent of expenditures for teacher salaries**			
Average administrator salary			

Evaluation of School Climate

Evaluations by Teachers, Students and Parents

	Teachers	Students*	Parents*
Number of surveys returned	37	117	72
Percent satisfied with learning environment	94.6%	81.2%	86.2%
Percent satisfied with social and physical environment	94.6%	76.7%	82.8%
Percent satisfied with school-home relations	100.0%	93.2%	67.6%

* Only students at the highest elementary school grade level and their parents were included.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittee: Public Awareness Subcommittee

Date: May 18, 2015

INFORMATION/RECOMMENDATION

Development of Single Accountability System

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Section 59-18-325(C)6 "The Oversight Committee also must develop and recommend a single accountability system that meets federal and state accountability requirements by the Fall of 2016."

CRITICAL FACTS

The attached is a draft plan for review that outlines involvement of stakeholders in the development and communication of a single accountability system.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

January – March 2016

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost:

Fund/Source: Public Awareness/Operating Budget

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

Legislative directive: EOC must develop and recommend a single accountability system by Fall 2016 (Act 200)

1. Goal: More effectively communicate new accountability system : Focus on goals of college and career readiness for students

Guiding Question: How can we more effectively communicate the performance and opportunities that exist within public schools and districts, making the system meaningful while maintaining transparency?

Audience: ALL education stakeholders – parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the public.

Proposed Public Engagement Process

Timeframe: January-March 2016

Form and convene **Accountability System Design Working Groups** – Three regional groups (members designated by EOC, State Board of Education members, district superintendents, business and community leaders, higher education stakeholders)

Designees should include parents, educators, community stakeholders, students, school district PIOs, school district technology coordinators, parent liaisons, ESOL liaisons, special education parents, etc.

Working groups will consider the guiding question, determining how the state and federal education accountability system will be BLENDED using the EOC-adopted framework for schools and districts. They will also make recommendations regarding the communication of the system and the possibility of developing a dynamic online tool for the public.

RATING STATES, GRADING SCHOOLS

WHAT PARENTS AND EXPERTS SAY STATES SHOULD CONSIDER TO MAKE SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS MEANINGFUL

Ohio School Report Cards

2012-2013 Report Card for Hillview Elementary School

Achievement
This grade combines two results for students who took the state tests. The first result answers the question - How many students passed the state test? The second result answers the question - How well did the students do on the state test?
Performance Index: 83.4%
Indicators Met: 100.0%
Grade: **B**

Gap Closing
This grade shows how well all students are doing in your school in reading, math, and graduation. It answers the question - Is every student succeeding, regardless of income, race, culture or disability?
Annual Measurable Objectives: 100.0%
Grade: **A**

K-3 Literacy
This grade answers the question - Are more students learning to read in kindergarten through the third grade? The 2014 report card will report some results. The 2015 report card will display one grade for kindergarten through grade 3.

Arizona Department of Education

SCHOOL REPORT CARD 2013
John Huppenthal, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Research and Evaluation Section
(602) 542-5151 / reportcards@azed.gov

Red Mountain High School
Mesa Unified District
7301 East Brown Road
Mesa, AZ 85207
(480) 472-8000 office
(480) 472-8008 fax
www.rmpsaz.org/rmhs

Test Results for Spring 2013

Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)

Subject	2011	2012	2013
Math	75	78	83
Read	87	90	91
Write	77	80	84

Norm Referenced

Subject	2012	2013
Math	85	85
Read	74	74
Language	69	62

Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)
Coming Soon

On campus Incidents: 34
13 incidents associated with drug possession.
5 incidents of assault.

Arizona English Language Learners Assessment (AZELLA)

ELL Reclassification Rate: NA

School Performance Measures

Attendance Rate	
Promotion Rate**	96.3%
Dropout Rate	94.0%
Four-Year Graduation Rate*	1.3%
Five-Year Graduation Rate*	86.8%
	89.3%

* Graduation Rate does not apply to K-8 Schools
** Promotion Rate is based on self-reported data (October 1 Enrollment and year-end number of students promoted)
NA - Not Applicable

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Education Commission
of the States

AUGUST 2014

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Citation: Marga Mikulecky and Kathy Christie, *Rating States, Grading Schools: What Parents and Experts say States Should Consider to Make School Accountability Systems Meaningful* (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, May 2014).

This paper is available online at: www.ecs.org/docs/rating-states,grading-schools.pdf.

Note: American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are included in the ECS school [accountability database](#), but their numbers are not included in this paper.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parents and policymakers have long sought to measure the quality of their public schools and to report that publicly in ways that are fair and equitable. In recent years, with a renewed focus on student outcomes, this effort has become a very public and sometimes acrimonious debate.

With this project, ECS sought to answer three key questions from various stakeholders in a way that assists parents and policymakers in creating school accountability systems or “report cards” that are transparent and effective.

The key questions we asked:

- ✦ *Of researchers* – Are the report cards easy to find?
- ✦ *Of parents* – Are the report cards easy to understand?
- ✦ *Of experts* – What indicators are essential for measuring school and district performance?

The responses, in brief:

Researchers agreed upon eight state report cards as easy-to-find, informative and readable. Their top three picks are in bold:

- ✦ **Arizona**
- ✦ **Delaware**
- ✦ **Massachusetts**
- ✦ **Illinois**
- ✦ **Kentucky**
- ✦ **Maine**
- ✦ **Ohio**
- ✦ **Louisiana**

Parents identified six state report cards as the best of the 50 states, based on ease of reading, providing sufficient data and overall usefulness. Their top three picks are in bold:

- ✦ **Delaware**
- ✦ **Arkansas**
- ✦ **District of Columbia**
- ✦ **Ohio**
- ✦ **Illinois**
- ✦ **Wisconsin**

Experts selected five indicators they see as essential for any state’s school accountability system:

- ✦ **Student achievement**
- ✦ **Student academic growth**
- ✦ **Achievement gap closure**
- ✦ **Graduation rates**
- ✦ **Postsecondary and career readiness**

The co-authors of this report then reviewed ECS’ 50-state [accountability database](#), released in January, and identified 14 states that are both including all five essential indicators in calculating their state school reports and publicly reporting all five indicators. Those 14 states:

- ✦ **California**
- ✦ **Nevada**
- ✦ **Pennsylvania**
- ✦ **Colorado**
- ✦ **New Mexico**
- ✦ **Tennessee**
- ✦ **Florida**
- ✦ **North Carolina**
- ✦ **Utah**
- ✦ **Kentucky**
- ✦ **Ohio (final element coming in 2015)**
- ✦ **Wisconsin**
- ✦ **Louisiana**
- ✦ **Oklahoma**

Interestingly, different states excelled in different aspects considered in this project. At ECS, we believe states can improve their education systems by learning from each other. We hope this report assists in those continuing efforts.

INTRODUCTION

State leaders are striving to increase transparency about how well their public schools are educating children. The result is an increase in the information about schools' challenges and successes being shared with their communities through annual reports, often in the form of "report cards." This wave of accountability makes it important — now more than ever — to analyze which measures best signal the quality of schools and how that information is effectively shared and used to improve performance.

Transparency is important but, unlike in years past, it is not itself the end goal. Ultimately, today's accountability systems are designed to hold schools responsible for their contribution to students' postsecondary success and to equip parents with the information they need to insist upon change if they don't believe their children are being well-served. Valid metrics are necessary if policymakers are to implement meaningful school ranking systems and, subsequently, school improvement plans that parents and others can trust.

This report includes input from three different groups in an attempt to help state policymakers create accessible, useful and effective school report cards.

The key questions and responding groups:

- 1. *Are the report cards easy to find?***
Experienced researchers at the Education Commission of the States (ECS) were asked to find selected state report cards online to determine the accessibility of the cards.
- 2. *Are they understandable to parents?***
More than a dozen parents were asked to rate the report cards on a 1-5 scale in the categories of "easy to read," "provides sufficient data" and "useful."
- 3. *What are best practices?***
Finally, a dozen experts convened to discuss the essential metrics for any accountability system, key considerations for policymakers and important decision points.

ACCOUNTABILITY EFFORTS: A NATIONAL EVOLUTION

State school accountability systems, and their goals, have evolved over the years:

- ✦ **Accountability 1.0 (1900–80) – Accreditation:** Initially based on inputs such as staff degrees and numbers of library books, this version evolves in the 1980s into a focus on performance.
- ✦ **Accountability 2.0 (1990–2001) – Standards-Based Accountability:** State lawmakers set academic standards and begin state testing, sometimes with rewards and/or sanctions. Florida launches the first state school report cards, grading schools from A to F.
- ✦ **Accountability 3.0 (2001–10) – No Child Left Behind:** Federal lawmakers mandate state testing and outline incentives and consequences with an unprecedented level of detail. Parents in some states receive report cards with two sets of ratings, state and federal.
- ✦ **Accountability 4.0 (2010–present) – Race to the Top:** With the renewal of NCLB stalled in Congress, President Obama entices states to implement reforms, such as linking student test scores to teacher evaluations, with Race to the Top grants.
- ✦ **Accountability 5.0 (2013–present) – Standards, Round 2:** States adopting standards such as the Common Core are figuring out new assessments and tweaking accountability systems to measure and report results.

Door plates to D's: Common indicators of today's report cards

States have long sought to publicly report school quality but the measures used to determine quality look much different today than they did 100 years ago. As early as 1897, the state of Minnesota enacted a law requiring schools to meet certain minimum requirements to receive state aid. In 1907, Illinois began awarding door plates to schools it deemed "superior." And by 1925, 30 state departments of education were publicly reporting on factors such as the number of teachers with academic and professional qualifications and the frequency of community meetings.¹

Today, every state annually publishes individual district and school report cards to provide a snapshot of how well that district and school is educating its students. The metrics used vary but the focus has clearly shifted from inputs, such as the number of library books in a school, to outcomes, such as student academic growth on state exams. Door plates have given way to report card rating systems including A-F grades, 1 to 5 stars, numerical index scores, colors such as green

for good schools and red for struggling schools, or various descriptors, such as a "continuous improvement" or "reward" school.

Researchers at the Education Commission of the States compiled a 50-state database of what's measured and reported by each state. What's measured and what's reported are not necessarily identical. States may measure various data and use that information in calculating a final letter grade, index score, color or descriptor. But not all data collected by all states is factored into such calculations; some states simply report out additional information for the public to see.

As part of this report, ECS convened a School Accountability Advisory Group to discuss which measures should be included in every state's accountability system. The members, listed in the appendix, identified five essential indications. The indicators, and the states currently measuring and reporting those indicators according to the ECS [accountability database](#), are shown below.

STATES AND THE FIVE ESSENTIAL INDICATORS FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

Data from ECS' 50-state database on school accountability systems show which states are using the indicators:

Indicator Used for School Accountability	No. of States Measuring	No. of States Reporting
<i>Student achievement</i>	50 + Washington, D.C.	50 + D.C.
<i>Student academic growth</i>	42 + D.C.	34 + D.C.
<i>Achievement gap closure</i>	36 + D.C.	39 + D.C.
<i>Graduation rates</i>	50 + D.C.	50 + D.C.
<i>Postsecondary and career readiness</i>	20 (explicit mention; 25 if count proxies for readiness)	13 (30 + D.C. if count proxies for readiness)

Source: Education Commission of the States, http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/accountability/stacc_intro.asp.²

What's the difference between what's measured and what's reported?

What's measured refers to data that states use in calculating their school performance ratings. What's reported refers to data that states make publicly available but do not necessarily include in those calculations. Twenty-three states include all five essential indicators in measuring school performance: Alabama (2015-16), Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

What is meant by postsecondary and career readiness indicators or their proxies?

Some states explicitly refer in their accountability laws to postsecondary and career readiness indicators while others use indicators that serve to suggest such readiness, including college-going rates and ACT/SAT results.

Communication and trust: Two factors that matter, but aren't rated

ECS' review of school accountability systems found calculations used by states to reach a school's final grade or rating are rarely simple, often relying on algebraic equations and other mathematical formulas. While this may be necessary to ensure numerous indicators are represented and to create the most accurate ratings, such formulas can be difficult to communicate clearly to the public.

Teachers, parents and communities like to have a basic understanding about how a school's grade was derived. Weights and proportions matter. States can measure carefully selected indicators of quality but if the indicators are weighted incorrectly — at least, according to some observers — the result can be a grade or rating that some members of the public see as inaccurate and, worse, intentionally so.

Trust is an issue. This is not surprising since the results of school ratings can range from accolades to staff firings to closures. Letter grades are easiest for parents and other constituents to understand. But if a clear rating sits atop a hill of measures that communities don't trust, questions are likely to follow.

Where does it go wrong? Here are some common complaints:

- ✦ The metrics aren't right. For example, too much emphasis is placed on test performance and/or too few subjects are tested.
- ✦ The metrics, weights, measures and formula do not accurately reflect school performance.
- ✦ Composite scores are seen as less transparent and nuanced than separate indicators.
- ✦ Communication about how the grades are determined is vague or inconsistent.
- ✦ Even a rocket scientist can't figure out the formula.
- ✦ The metrics, weights, formula and report card do not reflect public values.

Creating a robust, valid and easy-to-understand report card is harder than it sounds. State legislatures and departments of education have worked years to create such report cards — only to be rewarded with a cacophony of criticism from their constituents. The rest of this paper is divided into three sections — researchers, parents and experts — that seek to help state policymakers get it right.

IT'S COMPLICATED: ATTEMPTING TO OVERCOME "COMPOSITION BIAS"

An issue with nearly every performance indicator is composition bias. Simply stated, this refers to the correlation between a school's student demographics and its performance levels. Attempts to resolve this concern have resulted in greater attention to academic growth, rather than absolute performance levels, and a number of more complicated accountability systems.

For example, states may use regression analysis, a statistical process for estimating the relationships among variables, to determine the weight to give poverty. Or a state may use value-added modeling, charting student progress over time, in an attempt to determine teaching contributions to student growth. While these techniques may be used to improve accuracy, they can be difficult to easily explain in communications about accountability systems.

WHAT'S THE SECRET FORMULA? IT HAS TO BE UNDERSTANDABLE!

Examples of easy-to-understand state report card formulas include Louisiana, one of the top states selected by researchers and experts.

HOW ARE SCHOOL GRADES CALCULATED?

Starting with the 2012-2013 school year, the Louisiana Department of Education has improved the way schools are graded by aligning with higher standards, rewarding the gains schools have already made, and focusing on students below grade level. This means:

A 120-200		A 100-150
B 105-119.9		B 85-99.9
C 90-104.9		C 70-84.9
D 75-89.9		D 50-69.9
F 0-74.9		F 0-49.9

EASIER TO UNDERSTAND SCALE
(100+ = A)
(<50 = F)

OLD SCALE

NEW SCALE

OLD CALCULATION

- ELEMENTARY (K-6)**
90% Tests + 10% Attendance
- MIDDLE (K-8)**
90% Tests + 5% Attendance + 5% Dropout
- HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)**
70% Tests + 30% Graduation Rate
- COMBINATION SCHOOL**
Average of: (K-8 SPS x # Students) + (HS SPS x # Students)

NEW CALCULATION

- ELEMENTARY (K-6)**
100% Tests
- MIDDLE (K-8)**
95% Tests + 5% High School Credits Earned by End of Freshman Year
- HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)**
25% ACT Composite + 25% End of Course + 25% Graduation Rate + 25% Quality of Diploma
- COMBINATION SCHOOL**
Average of: (K-8 SPS x # Students) + (HS SPS x # Students)

WHAT HAS IMPROVED THIS YEAR?

NO POINTS BELOW GRADE LEVEL

PLACES VALUE ON RIGOROUS TESTING

+ PREPARES KIDS FOR POST SECONDARY

FIRST TIME

PROGRESS with **=** **UP TO 10 BONUS POINTS**

Struggling Students

= "A" schools earn 5 bonus points or grows 5 points from old system.
= "B-F" schools earn 10 bonus points or grows 10 points from old system.
 * Cannot be in school improvement.

Source: <http://www.louisianaschools.net/docs/test-results/8-19-13-report-card-infographic.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES | PAGE 5

SECTION I: RESEARCHERS

Are the report cards easy to find?

Researchers with the Education Commission of the States were assigned to find state report cards online in an effort to see how easy the cards are to locate. They were given the name of a particular school in a particular state and asked to find its most recent report card. One goal was to ascertain the level of computer skill required to find the state-issued cards. In many cases, private school-rating websites such as [GreatSchools.org](#), [city-data.com](#) or [50Can.org](#) came up first in computer searches, while serious diligence and technical understanding were needed to find the state-sponsored reports.

The three researchers were asked to rate each report card from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 3 (excellent)

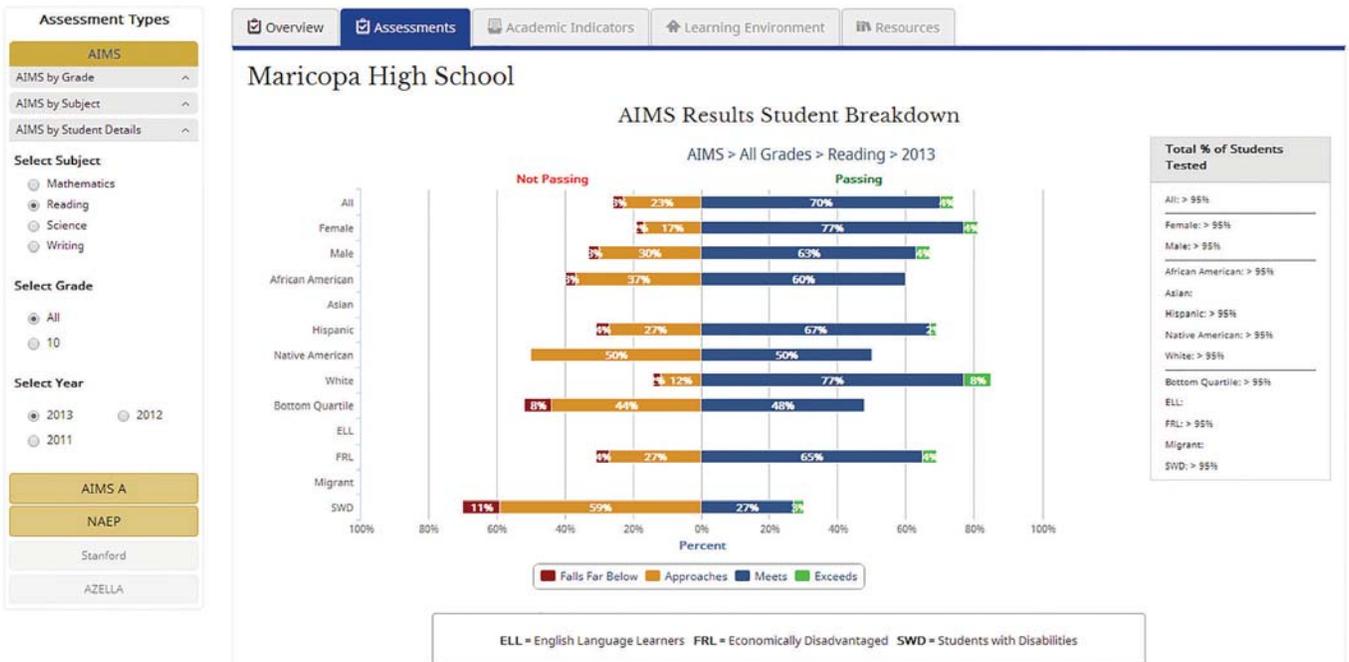
in the following categories: Findable, Readable, Understandable and Graphics. For the latter category, the question was “Were graphics used well to convey the information?” Even those experienced in online research had difficulty: “I wasn’t able to find school-level report cards,” lamented one while another noted, “Could not find using a Google search – lots of confounding search results.” They identified eight report cards as above average in all categories: [Arizona](#), [Delaware](#), [Illinois](#), [Kentucky](#), [Louisiana](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Maine](#) and [Ohio](#). Of those, they agreed Arizona, Illinois and Ohio had overall the best easy-to-find, informative and readable report cards.

RESEARCHERS’ RATINGS: “THESE STATES DO IT BEST!”

ARIZONA

Summary: This report card received excellent ratings in nearly all categories. It was particularly noted for being easy to find and to understand, though the PDF version of the card was not rated as highly.

“The simple format is very reader-friendly. All the essential information is present and easy to process ... The graphics are well-done and convey information at a glance.”



ILLINOIS

Summary: Given top marks in most categories, this report card was particularly noted for being easy to understand and for its use of graphics. Also praised: Links allowing readers to “drill down” to learn more.

“I really like the overview on the first page with the snapshot and basic graphs. It made the basic information very easy to understand and to digest. I also liked how the graphics were interactive.”

CANTON HIGH SCHOOL

1001 N MAIN ST CANTON, IL 61520 1118
(309) 647-1820

Grades: 9-12
District: CANTON UNION SD 66

Principal: Mrs Robin Tonkin
Superintendent: Roy Webb

Are students ready for college and careers?

	2012-2013	2011-2012	IL Average
Graduation Rate, 4-Year: Percentage of students who graduated within 4 years	87%	79%	83%
Graduation Rate, 5-Year: Percentage of students who graduated within 5 years	81%	82%	87%
Ready for College Coursework: Percentage of students meeting or exceeding college readiness benchmarks on the ACT	35%	39%	46%
Post-Secondary Enrollment: Percentage of graduates who enroll at colleges and universities	Coming in 2014		

How do students perform on measures of academic success?

Percentage of students who meet or exceed state standards on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE)	2012-2013	2011-2012	IL Average
PSAE Overall	46%	48%	53%
Mathematics	43%	48%	52%
Reading	49%	47%	55%
Science	45%	53%	49%

What does the 5Essentials survey tell us about the school's learning conditions?

This year, for the first time, Illinois schools piloted an anonymous statewide survey of learning conditions, the 5Essentials Survey. The 5Essentials Survey provided an opportunity for students in grades 6 through 12 and all teachers to share their perspectives on essential conditions for learning. Next year, results from the 2014 survey will appear on the report card in the format below. A detailed report for all schools and districts will also be made available in 2014.

Effective Leaders Do principals and teachers implement a shared vision for success?

Collaborative Teachers Do teachers collaborate to promote professional growth?

Supportive Environment Is the school safe, demanding, and supportive?

Ambitious Instruction Are classes challenging and engaging?

Involved Families Does the entire staff build strong external relationships?



	Response Rate	IL Average
Students	81%	85%
Teachers	82%	82%

For more information: Illinois5Essentials.org

District- and school-level results on individual questions within the survey are available online at IllinoisReportCard.com

OHIO

Summary: Another report card with nearly perfect scores, Ohio’s effort was lauded for its graphics and for being easy to read and understand. One concern: Several data points are labeled “Coming in 2015.”

“Very well-designed and easy to understand. The graphics are outstanding. I really like the little ‘gauge’ graphics.” The different data points are explained well and concisely.”

2012-2013 Report Card for Cuyahoga Falls High School

View Printable PDF

Overview | Achievement | Progress | Gap Closing | Graduation Rate | K-3 Literacy | Prepared for Success

SCHOOL GRADE

Coming in 2015

SCHOOL DETAILS

VIEW DISTRICT

Financial Data

These measures answer several questions about spending and performance. How much is spent on Classroom instruction? How much, on average, is spent on each student? What is the source of the revenue? How do these measures compare to other districts and schools?

VIEW DATA



Achievement

This grade combines two results for students who took the state tests. The first result answers the question - How many students passed the state test? The second result answers the question - How well did the students do on the state test?

Performance Index B
83.6%
Indicators Met A
100.0%

COMPONENT GRADE

Coming in 2015

VIEW MORE DATA



Progress

This is your school's average progress for its students in math and reading, grades 4-8. It looks at how much each student learns in a year. Did the students get a year's worth of growth? Did they get more? Did they get less?

Value-Added NR
Overall
Gifted NR
Lowest 20% in Achievement NR
Students with Disabilities NR

COMPONENT GRADE

Coming in 2015

VIEW MORE DATA



Gap Closing

This grade shows how well all students are doing in your school in reading, math, and graduation. It answers the question - Is every student succeeding, regardless of income, race, culture or disability?

Annual Measurable Objectives C
73.3%

COMPONENT GRADE

Coming in 2015

VIEW MORE DATA



Graduation Rate

This grade answers the question - How many ninth graders graduate in four years or five years?

Graduation Rates B
91.7% of students graduated in 4 years
94.4% of students graduated in 5 years B

COMPONENT GRADE

Coming in 2015

VIEW MORE DATA

RESEARCHER REVIEW “LIKES”

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO FIND?

“It was relatively easy to find (after minimal digging) and I like that you can download the report.”

“The school-specific information did not come up through an Internet search, but found relatively easily through the state education department.”

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO READ?

“The report card was very good. Easy to read. Not too much information shown, but links to more detailed information were easily accessible.”

“I also liked that information was available in Spanish.”

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO UNDERSTAND?

“I like that there’s a two-page snapshot as well as the more detailed online version. Information was broken down into tabs, which I think is helpful.”

“Nice balance of data and narrative explanation. ‘For Parents’ and ‘for Educators’ are GREAT features to see.”

DOES THE USE OF GRAPHICS HELP CONVEY INFORMATION?

“The graph titles also provide additional information by hovering over the text.”

“I really like the overview on the first page with the snapshot and basic graphs. It made the basic information very easy to understand and digest. I also liked how the graphics were interactive and allow users to click through for more details.”

RESEARCHER REVIEW “DISLIKES”

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO FIND?

“When I searched for report cards on the Department of Education site, the first link it brought up was broken. It took me nine minutes to get to the accountability reporting system page.”

“Found right away with a Google search, but the website doesn’t work right with Firefox. Worked fine with MS Explorer.”

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO READ?

“This report card was clearly not designed with parents in mind. It looks like it’s just to meet state/or federal reporting requirements. There’s no explanation of the contents and no total score or rating.”

“I don’t think the format (requires lots of clicks) is user-friendly.”

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO UNDERSTAND?

“Oddly, the school’s A-F grade doesn’t appear on the report. You have to go to the Excel spreadsheet to get the A-F grade. There’s information on the web page about how the grades are calculated, but you have to be willing to click and read several different documents.”

“I see that the school got a four-star rating, but I don’t see any content around that. Four out of what? Five? Ten?”

DOES THE USE OF GRAPHICS HELP CONVEY INFORMATION?

“There are a bunch of nice charts and graphs, but you have to click on each thing separately to see them.”

“Nearly unreadable. It was very difficult to understand what was being tracked or scored.”

SECTION II: PARENTS

Do the report cards contain useful information?

To determine how useful the report cards actually are to parents, ECS asked parents from across the country to follow a link to an individual school report card from each of the 50 states. The 14 parents were selected by ECS staff and represent a mix of educational attainment, ethnicity, income levels and geography, both in terms of urban/rural and in terms of U.S. states. Their children range in age from kindergarten to high school.

Each of the parents reviewed report cards from all 50 states and rated them from 1 (unacceptable) to 5 (excellent) in the categories of “easy to read,” “provides sufficient data” and “useful.” ECS selected for review a mix of elementary, middle and high schools that were moderately diverse in student population and that received ratings in the moderate to upper range.³

Overall, the parents favored report cards with clear graphics that made the data easy to understand. They also liked when additional information was available if a viewer wanted to drill down. However, there was not always consistent agreement. On the same high school report card, for example, one parent labeled the report card as unacceptable in each category while another parent labeled the report card as excellent in all categories.

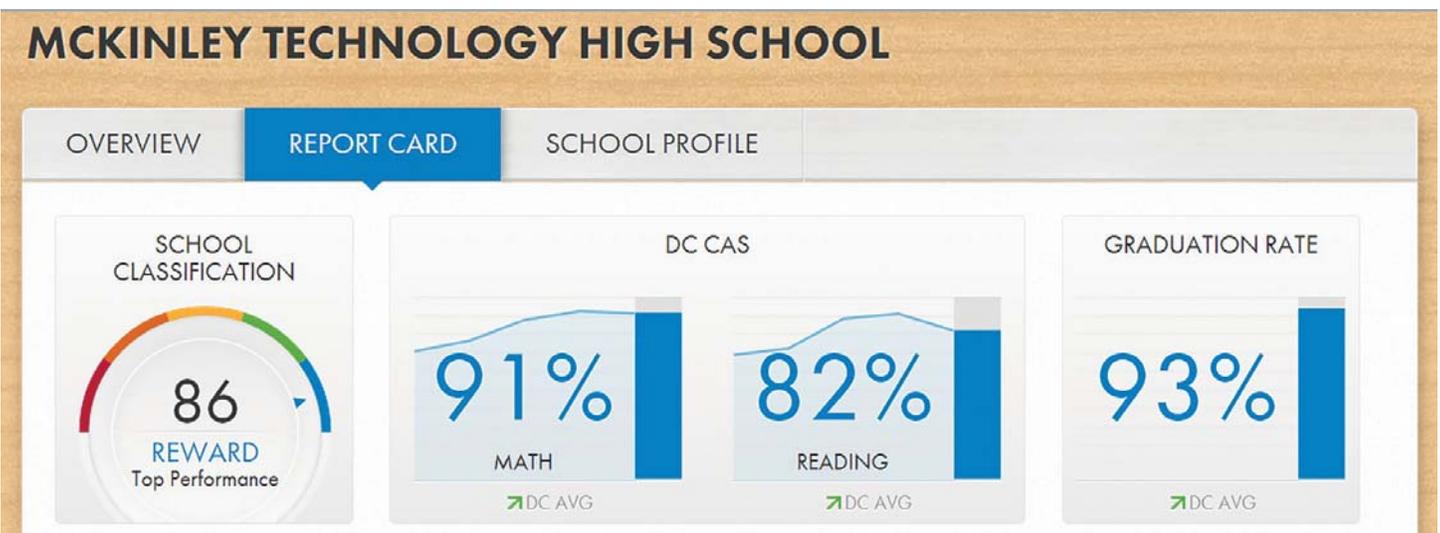
Report cards from [Illinois](#) and the [District of Columbia](#) were identified as favorites by a majority of parents, or eight of the 14. They were closely followed by [Delaware](#) (chosen by six parents) and then [Arkansas](#), [Ohio](#) and [Wisconsin](#) (each selected by five parents).

PARENTS SPEAK: “THESE STATES GOT IT RIGHT!”

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Summary: Parents raved about the “very clear” presentation of information and features such as the ability to compare schools and the option to ask for more data via a readily available email form.

“Wow!! This is one of my favorites. The ability to ‘explore’ the data is really nice. No other school we looked at had this feature,” said one parent while another noted, “I wanted to read it more.”



ILLINOIS

Summary: Parents applauded this site for being easy for navigate, noting its clear directions and ‘appealing’ graphics. They liked the ability to compare schools and to convert information to Excel.

“Fabulous graphics on Fast Facts front page. Also, terrific tech use of ‘scan QR code’ on the At-A-Glance report,” said one parent while another noted “The whole website is really easy to interpret.”

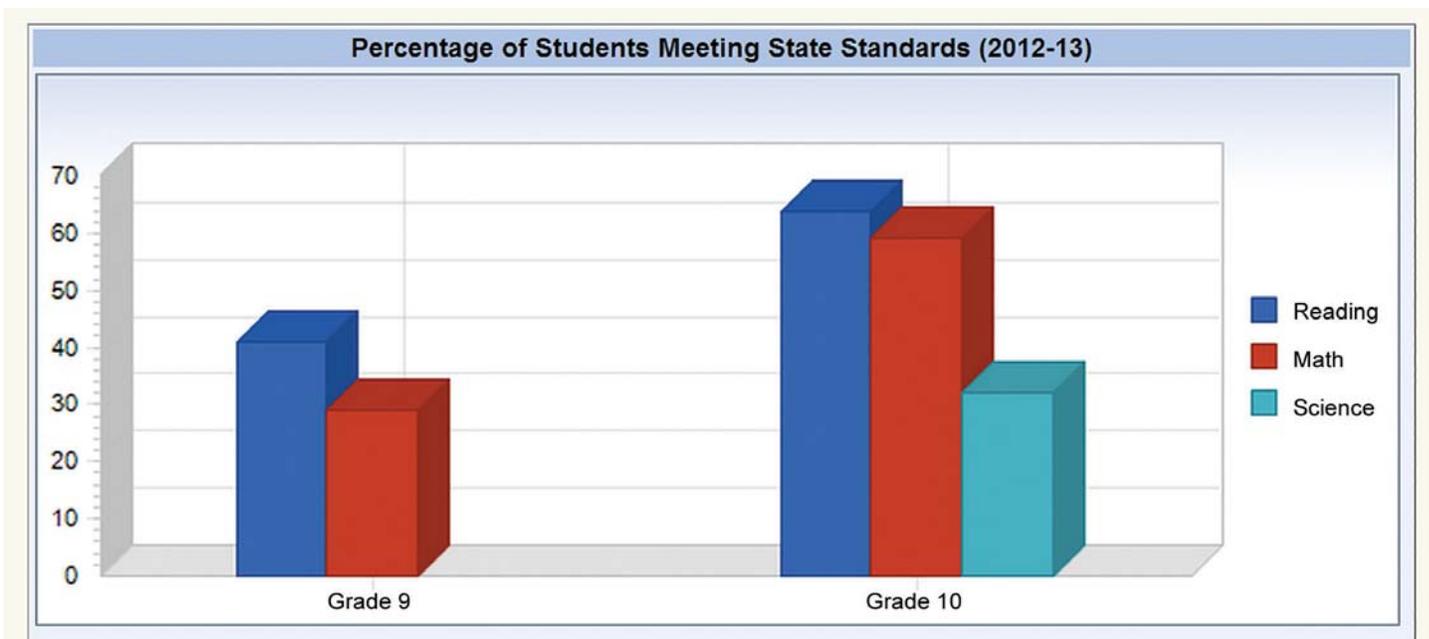
Fast Facts About MACARTHUR MIDDLE SCHOOL



DELAWARE

Summary: Parents were enthusiastic about the inclusion of more staff data than other states and the ability to drill down from tabs labeled School, Student and Staff. A common refrain: “User friendly.”

“Loved this one – especially the school, teachers, students tabs to help sort out data!” said one parent while another commented, “Nice front-page summary, easy to drill down for more data.”



A Clear Winner: Illinois

Illinois was the only state whose school report cards, found easily at: www.illinoisreportcard.com, were selected in the top three by both researchers and parents.

The interactive site is rich with graphics, pop-up explanations and links to at-a-glance reports, videos and additional resources. Indicators are typically accompanied by tabs labeled “Explanation of Display,” “Context” and “Resources.”

An example is the display regarding student academic growth, a concept that can be tough to explain. Illinois uses a short video to explain the concept, describes how growth fits into the overall performance picture and links to a Frequently Asked Questions document prepared by the state.

Additional comments from parents:

“Easily accessible.”

“Easy to navigate.”

“Provided directions as to how to navigate the page and was not overwhelming with data.”

“Had links to compare the school to district & state.”

“Very informative.”

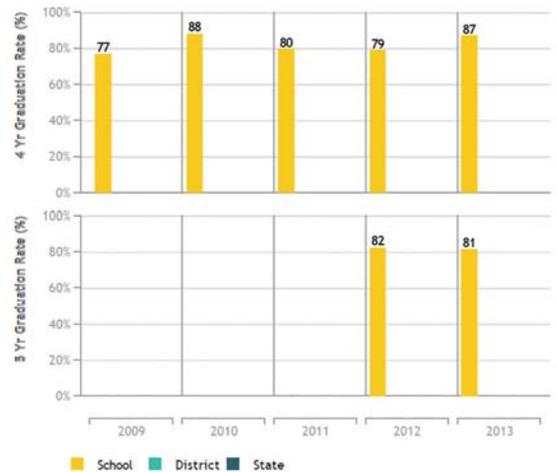
Additional comments from researchers:

“Very good. Easy to read. Not too much information shown, but links to more detailed information were easily accessible.”

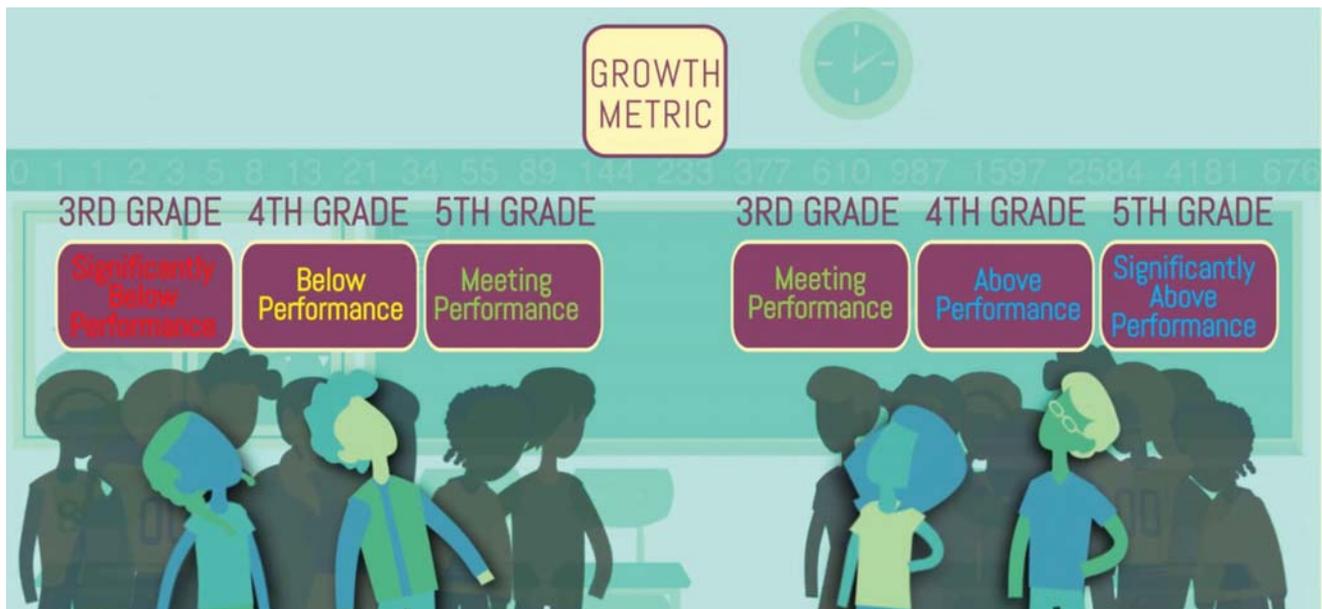
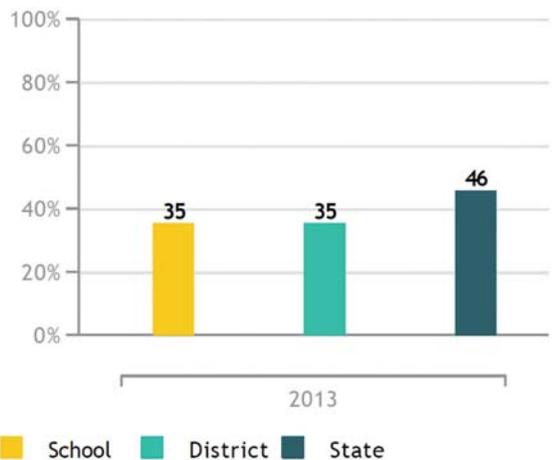
“THE BEST SO FAR. Easy to interpret, everything is clickable for more information.”

CANTON HIGH SCHOOL

Graduation Rate



Ready for College Course Work



PARENT REVIEW "LIKES"

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO READ?

*"I like that the data is presented in both table and bar graph format.
Four-color bar graph easy to decipher at a glance."*

"Everything is on one page. You can get additional information from just one click on the graph and the breakdown of data pops up. The information is very clearly presented."

"Tabs across top make navigation quick."

DOES THE REPORT CARD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DATA?

"As a parent, I could find information that would be important to me when making decisions about schools. I felt like I got an understanding of the school without going there from what is on this site."

"I could learn about more than just data about the schools from this site."

"Very thorough - WOW! Could be a bit much to some but I'm sure most parents would love more information than less."

IS THE REPORT CARD USEFUL?

"Additional information such as school safety, graduation rates, etc., help to paint a whole picture of this school."

"Great summary/comparison to the state - demonstrating this school outperforms state average."

"Postsecondary and workforce readiness category is nice to know."

PARENT REVIEW "DISLIKES"

IS THE REPORT CARD EASY TO READ?

"This report made the user have to use dropdown boxes and select what you wanted to see. Not easy to compare everything like charts and spreadsheets/graphs."

"They use words that are not meaningful to the general public (Cell Count, etc.)."

" +/- I really liked this report card although it is not supported for tablet or smartphone."

DOES THE REPORT CARD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DATA?

"So much emphasis on enrollment in the past 10 years, but not much information on performance or assessment."

"Not much reference or explanation of the 'B' grade in the upper right-hand corner. Amount of data insufficient."

"No growth comparisons from years past. Data is very limited."

IS THE REPORT CARD USEFUL?

"Extremely boring and data in tables not clearly labeled or explained."

"Nice summary, but very little info. Would not be good if you were moving to area and wanted more school info. Where is the rest of the data?"

"Like reading a corporate financial report of 20 pages to get information. Lot of data that is scattered and not formatted to be easily understood."

An important consideration

Overall, parent reactions to the report cards broke down into a fairly even distribution — a third of the cards rose to the top, a third sank to the bottom and a third landed somewhere in the middle. Individual reactions to some state’s accountability reports, however, were widely disparate. A sampling of those opinions is presented here to further illustrate how difficult it can be to create public reporting systems that please everyone:

ONE CARD, DIFFERENT RESPONSES: A MATTER OF PREFERENCE

While many of the scores reported by the parent panel were in the same range, there were definite differences of opinion.

ALASKA

- PRO – “Performance index was easy to read and provides a good feel for each school’s performance” and “Good data, easy to read!”
- CON – “One 96-page document with one page for each school in Alaska. Rates three subjects and just gives percent proficient, not levels or what percentages were in previous years. No demographic or teacher data included. ... What is a good score?”

VERMONT

- PRO – “You have a lot of control in building the type of reports you want to view. If you know exactly what you are looking for, this is a useful website.”
- CON – “Vague, would like to see a grade in the district – A, B, C.”



SECTION III: EXPERTS

Essential metrics states should use to measure school success

Because of the complexities involved with selecting school measures that accurately and reliably signal the quality and health of schools, ECS convened a panel of 12 experts in December 2013 to look at what states measure and what they should report regarding the quality and health of their schools.⁴ The robust discussion covered the maturation of state accountability and report card efforts, and the pitfalls facing states when the measures become political liabilities. The experts pinpointed essential metrics, caveats, key considerations and important policymaker decision points.

The ECS School Accountability Advisory Group grappled with many questions, including:

- ✦ Is more information necessarily better?
- ✦ Do metrics and formulas accurately measure which schools are doing well?
- ✦ What level of data is necessary? Student-level or cohort-level?
- ✦ Is there an absolute level on an indicator below which no school should operate?
- ✦ Do you weigh progress toward a goal or an absolute measure?
- ✦ Since you cannot account for everything, what are the best metrics for examining the health of a school or system?
- ✦ How do you ensure growth toward a goal is recognized while not losing focus on reaching the goal?

Key Findings:

1. Set a clear goal or “North Star”

The expert group noted that states need a clear goal or “North Star” of what they are trying to accomplish with renewed school improvement efforts.

For example, Kentucky lists its “College or career ready for all” goal with their formula and on the state landing page for its school report cards.

Or, if a state such as Massachusetts wants to focus on a P-20 system, measures should signal success throughout that system. That might mean inclusion of a pre-K indicator. Creating a common goal for the state encourages public buy-in and a cohesive message.

When choosing the indicators or metrics to measure school performance, experts say it is important to link the causes, interventions and reliable outcomes that will lead to achieving the overall goal or “North Star.”

2. Beware unintended consequences

Prior to delving into essential indicators for states, the experts’ panel discussed over-arching concerns about accountability. A major theme was that states and districts must be careful in how they hold schools accountable and how the information is reported to the public. That’s because what is measured and reported has the possibility of driving bad behaviors.

For example, grading a school based on the number of expulsions may have the unintended consequence of encouraging teachers and administrators to be more lenient on behavioral infractions.

3. Ensure state systems can handle the data

Because the most accurate accountability systems typically require a reliable student-level data system, the experts noted policymakers must consider the capacity of their state longitudinal data system and staff when choosing metrics. Many state data systems were initially created to track school-level accountability data and weren’t designed to capture student-level data in a secure and shareable manner. Portability of data across schools, districts and platforms is critical for understanding the growth students are making, but existing state data systems may not be up to the task.

Five essential indicators every state should measure and report

While the experts encouraged additional metrics based on individual state and district issues, they recommended every state report card include these indicators:

- ✦ Student achievement
- ✦ Student academic growth
- ✦ Achievement gap closure
- ✦ Graduation rates
- ✦ College and career readiness

For each indicator, the experts examined the various metrics used, advantages, caveats and key state decision points. Detailed findings for each indicator are listed on the following pages.⁵

ECS EXPERTS' ADVICE TO POLICYMAKERS

- ✦ Identify and publicize your state's "North Star."
- ✦ Re-engage people in your schools. Good communication is vital to ensuring the data and accountability story is easily understood by everyone.
- ✦ Choose your indicators and metrics carefully. Know how to use an indicator — make it less about grading and shaming and more about what research says works and how to address problems.
- ✦ Be realistic about the limits of your data system. Highly mobile students may create special challenges in tracking proficiency and growth data.
- ✦ Consider the potential unintended consequences of what's being measured, rewarded or punished.



Making the Grade: States Meeting the Five Essential Indicators

The experts convened by ECS did not focus on how to find state report cards or, once found, how to navigate them. Their charge was different: Identify the essential metrics for any accountability system.

So it may not be surprising that there is little cross-over between the top states picked by parents and researchers and those states identified as measuring and reporting on the five essential indicators.

The 14 states identified as meeting the experts' criteria are [California](#), [Colorado](#), [Florida](#), [Kentucky](#), [Louisiana](#), [Nevada](#), [New Mexico](#), [North Dakota](#), [Ohio](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Pennsylvania](#), [Tennessee](#), [Utah](#) and [Wisconsin](#).

This example of a New Mexico state [report card](#) for Albuquerque High School illustrates the use of the five essential indicators:



Source: http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/docs/1213/SchoolGrading/001_590_ALBUQUERQUE_PUBLIC_SCHOOLS_ALBUQUERQUE_HIGH_SchoolGrading_2013.pdf

Essential Indicator #1: Student Achievement

Every state gives students standards-based assessments and reports those results to schools and parents. States choose the subjects to be tested and set the cut scores necessary for students to show proficiency. Reporting overall or absolute levels of student achievement typically indicates the number or percentage of a school's students who are deemed to be performing proficiently in particular subjects. Many states have defined proficient as achieving grade-level expectations.

But many students come to schools with significant disadvantages. Some states, such as Tennessee, seek to accommodate for such disadvantages with statistical models. These models attempt to reduce the likelihood that schools serving large numbers of disadvantaged students will have their performance designation affected by conditions over which they have little control.

Including absolute levels of student achievement as an indicator in an accountability system is typically seen as an advantage for schools serving more affluent populations. To balance that concern, many states include changes in school achievement levels over time in their ratings formulas and some include student academic growth measures. In addition, a number of states have created comparisons among schools of similar demographics. California, for example, ranks its schools statewide and compares each school to another 100 schools with similar rates of poverty, parent education and other indicators.

FACTORS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ Critics believe a focus on test scores may create a “high-stakes” environment for students, teachers and administrators.
- ✦ Communities may have a hard time rallying behind the tests without alignment between the tests, grade levels and learning requirements.
- ✦ Setting the cut scores for proficiency on the tests is not a perfect science.
- ✦ If tests change, school accountability systems should too. When moving to a new assessment, states should carefully align the old and new tests to validate that the standards are being met.

QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ Which subjects will be tested and in which grades?
- ✦ Do the tests fully align to the standards and do they meet college- and career-ready expectations?
- ✦ How are the cut scores for the assessments determined? Who makes those decisions and how often will the cut scores be re-examined?
- ✦ Will the results for groups of students, such as English language learners, minorities or low-income students, be explicitly reported as part of the accountability system? Will these results factor in a school's final ranking or grade?
- ✦ Does the accountability system consider trend data, such as the past two or three years, or is it based on one year's results?
- ✦ Will end-of-course exams or other assessments, such as college entrance tests including the ACT or SAT, be included in the school and district rating system?

Essential Indicator #2: Student Academic Growth

A small but increasing number of states are refining their accountability systems to measure and reward student academic growth. Based on a review of students' test score gains from previous grades, researchers can predict the amount of growth those students are likely to make in a given year and then compare to actual performance. This differs from changes in school-level performance over time because actual individual student performance is tracked, even as students move in and out of schools.

This prediction can help determine whether a student is making expected progress in a particular subject. Measuring student academic growth is one way of analyzing test data to measure teaching and learning. It's often referred to as "value-added" or looking to see whether a teacher has added value to a student's body of knowledge.

In addition, measuring student academic growth and using past growth to predict future results can be used as part of "catch up" or "keep up" indicators. The "catch up" indicator examines the progress of lower-performing students who need to catch up to the performance of their peers. The "keep up" indicator looks at the growth of the highest-performing students, who may stagnate if growth isn't recognized as a priority.

Measuring and reporting student academic growth is generally seen as a way of resolving concerns about composition bias and of recognizing schools and districts that are working hard, even if their results fall short of absolute performance goals.

FACTORS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ "Growth" is often perceived as being too confusing — people may not understand it because the underlying statistical calculations are complex and not easily replicated by non-statisticians.
- ✦ Communication strategies for explaining growth are critically important. It is possible to keep the explanations simple, even if the methodology is complex.
- ✦ Because simple growth models depend largely on the formula determining individual student growth, it is possible to game the system and make the data look better than it actually is. Calculations should address students who switch schools midyear, those who start or finish a course outside of the normal academic calendar, who have missing data or those who are far below or above grade level for their cohort.
- ✦ Attempting to control for student demographics may increase the precision of results in models that don't use all available prior achievement data, but it might have the effect of implying there are different standards for different students.

QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ Will growth be measured against an absolute proficiency standard or against "peer" schools with similar demographics?
- ✦ How can growth calculations keep from working against or accommodate for high-performing schools with less room for growth? Does your state rating formula ensure that achievement growth within the highest-performing quartile also matters?
- ✦ Will student academic growth be considered in evaluating teacher performance? If so, does the system used for determining growth align with what's needed to measure teacher performance?

Essential Indicator #3: Achievement Gap Closure

Gaps in achievement separating groups of students by income and ethnicity have been the focus of numerous studies, policy innovation and public concern for many years. Researchers have identified a variety of factors that appear related to these achievement gaps, including family income, parent education levels, access to high-quality preschool, peer influences, curricular and instructional quality, and teacher expectations.

Many states have chosen to focus on these particular achievement gaps as a means of ensuring progress — or a lack thereof — is highlighted. Equally as important, however, are indicators that focus on achievement gaps such as those between English language learners and native English speakers, students performing in the lowest quartile versus those performing better, male students and female students, and so on. In short, the intent of reporting and/or measuring achievement gaps should be to ensure that all students are being served.

It's also important to consider the size of the groupings used in this analysis. For example, the performance of all boys versus all girls in a school may not be useful. But a further breakdown by academic subject and grade may yield more helpful data.

FACTORS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ While challenging, experts agree it is important to measure and report disparities in performance levels among different groups of students.
- ✦ Closing achievement gaps should benefit all students – accelerating the growth of lower performers without reducing growth in higher achievers.
- ✦ In addition to subgroups based on student demographics, consider subgroups based solely on achievement. For example, closing gaps between historically struggling and higher-performing readers in a grade level or school.
- ✦ Decisions surrounding determination of subgroup size matter. Subgroup size can enhance fairness but the use of “super subgroups” — such as grouping all ethnicities under the term minority versus breakdowns by individual ethnicity — may risk covering up low performance by smaller subgroups.
- ✦ Federal regulations governing the reporting of assessment results for minimum sample sizes, to avoid releasing personally identifiable information, should be consulted.

QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ Which achievement measures will be used — test scores, graduation rates, growth, etc.?
- ✦ Which subgroups should be included and which excluded — by income, race, achievement level, etc.?
- ✦ Are achievement gaps measured within schools and within districts?
- ✦ Are multiple years of data used for school performance measures?
- ✦ Should performance measures specifically target academic growth of the lowest quartile by giving that group additional weight in the accountability formula?
- ✦ How can unintended consequences of subgroup size be accommodated in small, rural schools?

Essential Indicator #4: Graduation Rates

Measuring graduation rates is intended to encourage all schools to ensure all students complete requirements to receive a diploma. The credential, which data has long demonstrated results in better employment prospects and higher pay, can have a profound impact on student life outcomes.

The U.S. Department of Education's required calculation for a school's four-year graduation rate is to divide the number of students graduating in four years with a regular high school diploma by the number of students who entered the school as freshmen four years previously. This calculation is adjusted to account for student movement in and out of the school during the four-year period.

A graduation rate would seem to be a fairly easy metric on its face. Yet it offers a myriad of complexities when considering how to encourage schools to serve students who might "count" against them, such as those who have left school and returned or who have been slow to accumulate enough credits to graduate. For example, how does a state consider students who take five or six years to graduate? Such decisions can have a significant influence on the effort schools put forth in educating at-risk students.

FACTORS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ Allowing credit for five-year and six-year graduation rates, in addition to the four-year rate, could encourage schools to work with struggling students.
- ✦ Alternately, does allowing credit for five-year and six-year graduation rates reduce pressure to help students reach credential completion within four years?
- ✦ Because graduation requirements differ in states, with some requiring end-of-course exams versus credit accumulation, accurate cross-state comparisons are difficult.
- ✦ Managing student mobility data requires a strong longitudinal data tracking system.
- ✦ Even with common calculations, schools have the potential to "game the system" by being selective about which students are included in a four-year graduation rate.

QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ Should five-year and six-year graduation rates be included in the state accountability system to encourage schools to work with struggling students?
- ✦ Will a school's graduation rate be measured against an absolute goal, such as 100 percent, or a state average when determining a grade or score for the report card?
- ✦ Similarly, should a school's graduation rate be compared against demographically similar or "peer" schools, all schools or perhaps both?
- ✦ Will trend data, such as three years' worth of graduation rates, be used to determine if progress is being made?
- ✦ Consider potential loopholes schools might use to improve their ratings, such as excluding some students, and figure out how to close them.
- ✦ Is there a minimum graduation rate below which a school would fall into the lowest performance category?

Essential Indicator #5: Postsecondary and Career Readiness

While many states are working to define postsecondary and career readiness, the ECS School Accountability Advisory Panel defined it as when a student can perform college level-work without the need for remediation. Often, the more explicit definition in terms of metrics is provided at the state level. An indicator of career readiness creates the need for clarity in defining what career-ready looks like.

These indicators of postsecondary and career readiness were commonly used by states:

- ✦ Dual enrollment participation and/or completion
- ✦ Advanced Placement participation and/or results
- ✦ ACT/SAT participation and/or results
- ✦ International Baccalaureate program participation
- ✦ College-going rate
- ✦ Percentage of students taking algebra in grade 8
- ✦ Industry certifications earned
- ✦ Percentage of students enrolled in postsecondary programs
- ✦ Percentage of students assessed as needing college remediation

FACTORS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ No single formula or definition guarantees freshman-year college success.
- ✦ States must increase the dialogue between all aspects of K-12 and postsecondary education to create an aligned P-20 system. Each part of the system provides a necessary building-block for postsecondary success or workforce readiness. Those blocks must be aligned for individual college- and career-readiness measures.
- ✦ Measures related to dual enrollment should recognize that dual enrollment may be limited by student location or availability of online courses. Additionally, whether students take part in dual enrollment may be limited by counseling availability and teacher support.
- ✦ When including courses and tests that students select into, such as Advanced Placement, ACT and SAT, include both the course or test-taking and the course or test-passing rates.
- ✦ Including Advanced Placement participation and results in an accountability formula bring into question the availability of courses offered in person and online and test cut scores.
- ✦ Determining whether students entered college ready to perform college-level work requires a relatively stable student population and a strong longitudinal data tracking system.

QUESTIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

- ✦ What other metrics might be considered to measure postsecondary or career readiness? Is the data capability available to measure those?
- ✦ Which advanced offerings, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or dual enrollment courses, are available to all students?
- ✦ Does the state have the longitudinal student-level data necessary to determine if students are successful in postsecondary education and/or the workforce?
- ✦ Do the state metrics accurately tell the story of whether K-12 students are attending college without the need for remediation?

CONCLUSION

For more than a century, states have created different ways of reporting on the quality of their public schools. It's only in the last 30 years, however, that the reporting has shifted from inputs to outcomes and to how well children are being served. This is a dramatic change and one that likely will continue to evolve.

Increased public reporting about school performance has prompted concerns about the fairness of comparing schools serving different populations. Many states have sought to address this issue by compensating for poverty, which is linked to many out-of-school factors affecting achievement, in some way in their district and school rating systems. Often, this has sparked criticism that expectations are lower for different groups of students. Balancing fairness for all schools and rigor for all students is widely viewed as a challenge in creating accountability systems.

The findings of the ECS School Accountability Advisory Group, the results from researchers and the survey of parents make it clear that communication of a state's overarching goal for schools is imperative. To what end are schools being graded? Schools have long served, and continue to serve, as community centers. Accountability systems impacting schools carry the potential for disrupting communities. For

a state school and district rating system to be most effective, students, parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, employers and community members must understand the state's goal and what their schools are doing — or not doing — to achieve it.

Is your state's "North Star" ensuring college and career readiness for all? Is it graduating students with 21st century skills? Is it serving the whole child? Is it reducing the gap between high-achieving and low-achieving students and providing opportunities for all students? Is it providing an accurate picture of school quality — or the lack thereof?

As states continue with their efforts, some may need to re-evaluate their ratings systems and make necessary course corrections to reach their goals. State leaders should consider whether the public reports are providing increased transparency and serving the needs of parents and communities. A perfect metric, accountability formula or school report card does not exist. There is always room for improvement and the accountability landscape will continue to evolve. The key is to determine which metrics will drive the desired outcomes and whether measuring, reporting, incentivizing or leveling sanctions will best move the state closer to its goal.



Members of the ECS School Accountability Advisory Group

The Education Commission of the States convened its School Accountability Advisory Group on Dec. 12-13, 2013 in Denver. Members are the following:

- ✦ *Facilitator - Christopher Cross*
Chairman of Cross & Joftus, LLC and an ECS 2014 Distinguished Senior Fellow
- ✦ *Jean-Claude Brizard*
President, UpSpring Education and former Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Public Schools
- ✦ *Sandy Kress*
Partner, Akin, Gump, Straus, Hauer & Feld, LLP
- ✦ *Eric Lerum*
Vice President for National Policy, Students First
- ✦ *Patricia Levesque*
Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Excellence in Education
- ✦ *Aaron Pallas*
Professor of Sociology and Education, Teachers College Columbia University
- ✦ *Paul Reville*
Professor of Educational Policy and Administration, Harvard Graduate School of Education
- ✦ *Joan Sullivan*
Chief Executive Officer, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools
- ✦ *Philip "Uri" Treisman*
Executive Director, Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas, Austin
- ✦ *John White*
Director, SAS EVAAS for K-12, SAS Institute
- ✦ *Priscilla Wohlstetter*
Senior Research Fellow, Consortium for Policy Research in Education

ENDNOTES

1. *Education in the States: Nationwide Development since 1990*, Jim B and Edgar Fuller (editors), Pearson (Author), National Education Association (Publisher), 1969.
2. Data notes for this graph:
 - ✦ Determinations were based on statutory requirements, although we also reviewed state-requested waivers to the No Child Left Behind Act. Reconciling the two made it difficult to maintain accurate counts.
 - ✦ Achievement gap elements reflect state statutory language explicitly targeting closing achievement gaps or explicit targeting of the lowest-performing quartile or English Language Learners.
 - ✦ Some states explicitly measure college and/or career readiness (and measure via proxies such as ACT/SAT scores, dual enrollment, college-going rate, industry certifications) while others might simply measure and/or report on the proxies of readiness.
3. Education Commission of the States' School Accountability Parent Panel reviewed state school report cards between Jan. 20 and Feb. 10, 2014. For parent feedback, ECS selected a mix of elementary, middle and high schools that were moderately diverse in student population and received ratings that were in the moderate to upper range. This resulted in a total of 700 report card reviews – 14 parents, each reviewing 50 state school report cards = 700 report card reviews.
4. The ECS School Accountability Advisory Group met Dec. 12-13, 2013 in Denver. Members of the group are identified by name and title in an appendix to this report. The group was facilitated by Christopher Cross, chairman of Cross & Joftus, LLC, and an ECS 2014 Distinguished Senior Fellow.
5. Gillian Locke, Joe Ableidinger, Bryan C. Hassel and Sharon Kebschull Barrett, *Virtual Schools: Assessing Progress and Accountability, A Final Report of Study Findings* (Washington D.C.: National Charter School Resource Center at American Institutes for Research, February 2014), <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/sites/default/files/Virtual%20Schools%20Accountability%20Report.pdf>.

Below are links where you can find school accountability reports for each state.

Alabama	Idaho	Minnesota	North Dakota	Vermont
Alaska	Illinois	Mississippi	Ohio	Virginia
Arizona	Indiana	Missouri	Oklahoma	Washington
Arkansas	Iowa	Montana	Oregon	West Virginia
California	Kansas	Nebraska	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin
Colorado	Kentucky	Nevada	Rhode Island	Wyoming
Connecticut	Louisiana	New Hampshire	South Carolina	Washington D.C.
Delaware	Maine	New Jersey	South Dakota	American Samoa
Florida	Maryland	New Mexico	Tennessee	Guam
Georgia	Massachusetts	New York	Texas	Puerto Rico (Spanish)
Hawaii	Michigan	North Carolina	Utah	U.S. Virgin Islands



Education Commission of the States

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Denver, CO 80203

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“Williams: Texas Will Get A-F School Rating System”

Associated Press, April 2, 2013

“Oklahoma House Passes Bill Changing A-F Grading System”

The Oklahoman, March 5, 2013

“Grades for Utah Schools Expected to Stir Controversy”

Deseret News, Aug. 27, 2013

“Some Michigan School Leaders Criticize New Scorecards that Give Few Schools High Ratings”

Detroit Free Press, Aug. 20, 2013

“Maine Public Schools To Be Assigned Letter Grades: Democratic Legislators, School Officials Cry Foul Over Gov. Paul LePage’s Education Initiative”

Portland Press Herald, April 27, 2013

“Georgia About to Roll Out New Grading System for Schools and Districts”

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, April 4, 2013

“Schools Get Taste of Own Medicine: States Assign A-F Grades”

Wall Street Journal, Jan. 9, 2013

Families' Read-At-Home Plan for Student Success



A guide designed for Kindergarten-3rd grade

This Guide Includes

Activities to help your child learn the five components of reading:

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Fluency
4. Vocabulary
5. Comprehension

Families' Read-At-Home Plan for Student Success

Dear Parents and Families,

You are your child's first teacher, and reading with your child is a **proven way** to promote early literacy. Helping to make sure your child is reading on grade level by third grade is one of the most important things you can do to prepare him/her for the future. By reading with your child for 20 minutes per day and making a few simple strategies a part of your daily routine, you can make a positive impact on your child's success in school.

We are happy to provide you with this Read-at-Home Plan, which includes strategies to help your child become a more proficient reader!

Sincerely,

David Whittemore, Chairman
SC Education Oversight Committee

Dr. Danny Merck, Vice Chairman
SC Education Oversight Committee



Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and distinguish sounds. This includes:

- **Recognizing sounds, alone and in words**
- **Adding sounds to words**
- **Taking apart words and breaking them into their different sounds**
- **Moving sounds**



Phonemic Awareness Activities— Kindergarten - 1st Grade

- Play “I Spy” with your child, but instead of giving a color say, “I spy something that starts with /b/.” or “I spy something with these sounds, /d/ /õ/ /g/.” Have your child do the same.
- Play a game in which you say a word and your child has to break apart all the sounds. Ask your child to stretch out a word like dog and he/she can pretend to stretch a word with a rubber band. Your child should say /d/ /õ/ /g/.
- Play the “Silly Name Game”. Replace the first letter of each family member’s name with a different letter. For example, ‘Tob’ for ‘Bob’, ‘Watt’ for ‘Matt’, etc.
- Say a sentence aloud and ask your child to determine how many words were in the sentence.
- Explain that rhymes are words that sound the same at the end.
- Read books over and over again containing rhymes.
- As you read, have your child complete the rhyming word at the end of each line.
- Orally provide pairs of words that rhyme and pairs that do not rhyme (EX; pan/man; pat/boy). Ask, “Do ‘pan’ and ‘man’ rhyme? Why? Do ‘pat’ and ‘boy’ rhyme? Why not?”
- Prompt your child to produce rhymes. Ask, “Can you tell me a word that rhymes with ‘cake’?”
- Sing rhyming songs like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” or “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”.
- Give your child a small car (such as a Matchbox car). Write a 3-4 letter word on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.

Phonemic Awareness Activities—Kindergarten - 1st Grade

- ❑ To help your child separate (segment) sounds in words:
 - ❑ Give your child 3-5 blocks, beads, bingo chips, or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word.
 - ❑ Play Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound, and knees for the third while saying each sound.
 - ❑ Jump for Sounds. Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.



Phonemic Awareness Activities—2nd Grade - 3rd Grade

- ❑ Demonstrate clapping a word into its syllables. Ask your child to clap words into syllables.
- ❑ Make tally marks for the number of syllables in the names of people in your family, favorite foods, etc.
- ❑ Give your child a small car (such as a Matchbox car). Write a 5+ letter word on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.
- ❑ To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words:
 - ❑ Give your child 4-7 blocks, beads, bingo chips or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word.
 - ❑ Play Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound, and knees for the third while saying each sound.
 - ❑ Jump for Sounds. Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.



Phonics

Phonics is the ability to understand the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent. This includes:

- Recognizing letter combinations that represent sounds
- Syllable patterns
- Word parts (prefixes, suffixes, and root words)



Common Consonant Digraphs and Blends:

bl, br, ch, ck, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gh, gl, gr, ng, ph, pl, pr, qu, sc, sh, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, th, tr, tw, wh, wr

Common Consonant Trigraphs:

nth, sch, scr, shr, spl, spr, squ, str, thr

Common Vowel Digraphs:

ai, au, aw, ay, ea, ee, ei, eu, ew, ey, ie, oi, oo, ou, ow, oy

Phonics Activities—Kindergarten - 1st Grade

- Make letter-sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words. (for example, if the letters “p-e-n” spell pen, how do you spell hen?).
- Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter d).
- Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name.
- Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child’s names (for example, John and jump). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, “I am thinking of something that starts with /t/.
- Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.
- Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter m matches the /m/ sound as in man).
- Make letter-sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.
- Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabet in order. Say letter-sounds and ask your child to pick out the letters that match those sounds.
- Building words - Using magnetic letters, make a three letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, sat, mat, rat, pat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).

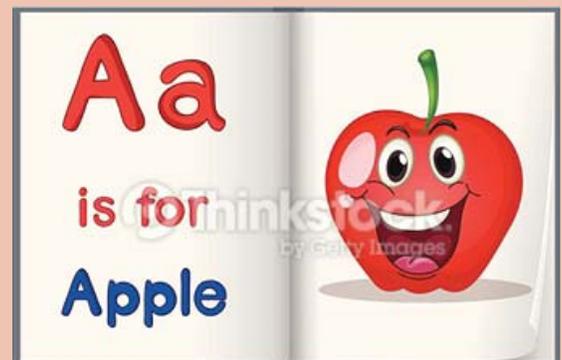
Phonics Activities—Kindergarten - 1st Grade

- ❑ Making words - For this game, you will need magnetic letters and three bags. Put half of the consonants into the first bag. Put the vowels into the middle bag, and put the remaining consonants into the last bag. Have your child pull one letter from the first bag. That will be the first letter of their word. Then have your child pull from the vowel bag for the second letter of the word and from the other consonant bag for the third letter of the word. Next, the child will read the word and decide if it is a real word or a nonsense word. Take turns, replacing the vowels as needed until there are no more consonants left.
- ❑ Labeling words - When reading with your child, keep Post-it notes handy. Every so often, have your child choose one object in the picture and write the word on a Post-it. Put the note in the book to read each time you come to that page.
- ❑ Practicing words with pictures - Choose pictures from a magazine or catalog. Say the name of the picture, have your child say the sound that the picture begins with and the name of that letter.
- ❑ Hunting for words - Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is “m”, the child might find and write mop, mat, Mom, money, and microwave.
- ❑ Teach your child to recognize the letters in his or her name.



Hints for helping your child sound out words

- First Sound - Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture or surrounding words. Double-check the printed word to see if it matches the child’s guess.
- Sound and Blend - Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t). This is called “sounding it out”, and then say the sounds together (sat). This is “blending”.
- Familiar Parts - When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as “presenting”, your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word “sent,” and the word ending -ing.



Phonics Activities—Kindergarten - 1st Grade

- ❑ Use magnetic letters to spell words on the refrigerator or spell names of family members and friends.
- ❑ Discuss how names are similar and different.
- ❑ Recognizing shapes is the beginning of recognizing the features of letters. Have your child sort letters by tall tails, short tails, hooks, humps, and circles. Your child can continue to sort by feature combinations as well (Ex: circles and tall tails, hooks and circles, humps and tall tails, etc.)
- ❑ Ask your child to name stores, restaurants, and other places that have signs. This is called environmental print. Have your child cut the images of these signs from bags, take-out containers, and fliers and post them somewhere to make an Environmental Print Word Wall.
- ❑ Ask your child to look through ads to point out things he/she recognizes. Ask if they know any of the letters on the page.



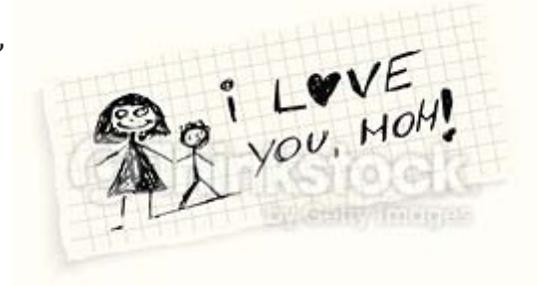
- ❑ Use stores as an opportunity for learning! Ask questions like, “Can you find something that has a letter C? Can you find a word that begins with an M? Can you find something with 4 letters?” Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.

- ❑ Make alphabet letters out of Play-doh®.
- ❑ Write letters with your finger on your child’s back and have them guess the letter. Have your child do the same to you.
- ❑ Play “Memory” or “Go Fish” using alphabet cards.
- ❑ Read alphabet books to your child and eventually ask him/her to name the items on the page that you know he/she can successfully tell you.



Phonics Activities—2nd Grade - 3rd Grade

- ❑ Make blend-sounds and have your child write the letters that match the sounds.
- ❑ Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters "l-a-t-e-r" spell later, how do you spell hater? How many syllables are in later?).
- ❑ Write vowel and consonant digraphs, trigraphs, and blends on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the long e sound /ē/ for the vowel digraphs ea and ee).
- ❑ Writing words - Many children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Send your child notes in his/her backpack or place notes on the pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child. Whenever your child receives a note, have him/her write back. Don't be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out the words to the best of his/her ability.
- ❑ Hunting for words - Choose a blend and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is "bl", the child might find and write blanket, blood, blue, blizzard, blast.
- ❑ Play "Memory" or "Go Fish" using consonant and vowel digraphs, trigraphs, and blends. Common vowel digraphs in English include ai (as in rain), ay (day), ea (teach), ea (bread), ea (break), ee (free), ei (eight), ey (key), ie (piece), oa (road), oo (book), oo (room), ow (slow), and ue (true). Common consonant digraphs in English include ch (as in church), ch (school), ng (king), ph (phone), sh (shoe), th (then), th (think), and wh (wheel).



Hints for helping your child sound out words

- First Sound - Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture or surrounding words. Double-check the printed word to see if it matches the child's guess.
- Sound and Blend - Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t). This is called "sounding it out", and then say the sounds together (sat). This is "blending".
- Familiar Parts - When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as "presenting", your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word "sent," and the word ending -ing.



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read with sufficient speed to support understanding.

This includes:

- **Automatic word recognition**
- **Accurate word recognition**
- **Use of expression**

Fluency Activities—Kindergarten -1st Grade

- ❑ Repeated reading - Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, and then read it together, helping your child figure out any tricky words. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.
- ❑ Use different voices - When reading a familiar story or passage, try having your child use different voices. Read the story in a mouse voice, cowboy voice, or a princess voice. This is another way to do repeated reading, and it adds some fun to reading practice.



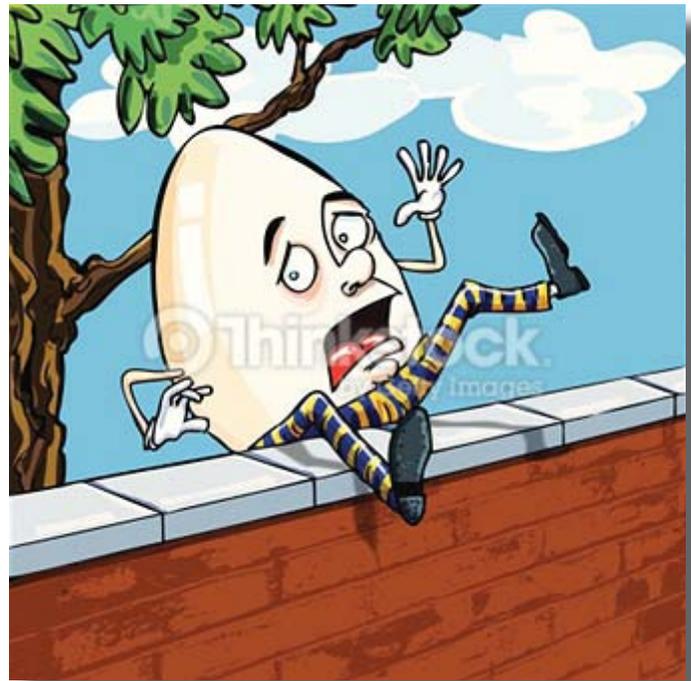
- ❑ Read to different audiences - Reading aloud is a way to communicate to an audience. When a reader keeps the audience in mind, he/she knows that his reading must be fluent and expressive. Provide a variety of opportunities for your child to read to an audience. Your child can read to stuffed animals, pets, siblings, neighbors, grandparents - anyone who is willing to listen. This is a good way to show off what was practiced with repeated reading.
- ❑ Record the reading - After your child has practiced a passage, have him/her record it with a tape player, phone, or MP3 device. Once

recorded, your child can listen to his reading and follow along in the book. Often, he/she will want to record it again and make it even better!

- ❑ When you read a story, use appropriate expression during dialogue. Encourage your child to mimic your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- ❑ Recite nursery rhymes and poems to build familiar phrases in speech.
- ❑ In a repetitive text, ask your child to repeat the familiar phrase with you. Ex: For the story, "The House that Jack Built" your child can recite with you "in the house that Jack built."

Fluency Activities—Kindergarten -1st Grade

- ❑ When you read a story, use appropriate expression during the speaking parts (dialogue). Encourage your child to copy your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Ex: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- ❑ Point out punctuation marks that aid in expression such as question marks, exclamation points and quotation marks. Demonstrate how your voice changes as you read for each. Only focus on one during a book. Remember it is important to enjoy it first and foremost.
- ❑ Encourage child to sing favorite songs and repeat favorite lines of songs.
- ❑ Make your own books of favorite songs for child to practice “reading”. This builds confidence and helps your child identify him/herself as a reader.
- ❑ Say a sentence to your child and ask him/her to repeat it to you. Challenge your child to increase the number of words he/she can repeat. As you say it, put it in meaningful phrases. Ex: The boy went/ to the store /with his mother.
- ❑ Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem or nursery rhyme with your child. He/ she will mimic your phrasing and expression.



Fluency Activities—2nd Grade - 3rd Grade

- ❑ Repeated reading - Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, and then read it together, helping your child figure out any tricky words. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.
- ❑ Use different voices - When reading a familiar story or passage, try having your child use different voices. Read the story in a mouse voice, cowboy voice, or a princess voice. This is another way to do repeated reading, and it adds some fun to reading practice.
- ❑ Read to different audiences - Reading aloud is a way to communicate to an audience. When a reader keeps the audience in mind, he/she knows that his reading must be fluent and expressive. Provide a variety of opportunities for your child to read to an audience. Your child can read to stuffed animals, pets, siblings, neighbors, grandparents - anyone who is willing to listen. This is a good way to show off what was practiced with repeated reading.
- ❑ Record the reading - After your child has practiced a passage, have him/her record it with a tape player, cell phone, or MP3 device. Once recorded, your child can listen to his reading and follow along in the book. Often, he/she will want to record it again and make it even better!
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- ❑ Make your own books of favorite songs for child to practice “reading”. This builds confidence and helps your child identify him/herself as a reader.
- ❑ Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem with your child. He/ she will mimic your phrasing and expression.



Vocabulary

Vocabulary is students' knowledge of and memory for word meanings.

This includes:

- **Receptive Vocabulary** — words we understand when read or spoken to us
- **Expressive vocabulary** — words we know well enough to use in speaking and writing

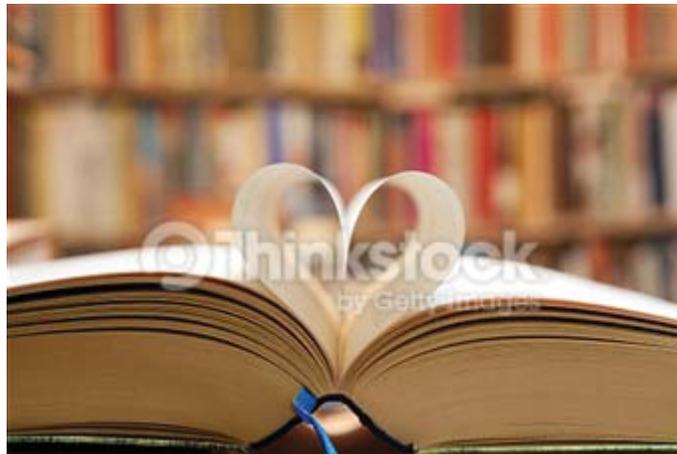
Vocabulary Activities—Kindergarten - 1st Grade

- ❑ Read aloud - Continue to read aloud to your child even after he is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him new words and how they are used in context.
- ❑ Preview words - Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book, choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- ❑ Hot potato (version 1) - Play hot potato with synonyms. Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. For example, you may say, "Cold," and your child might say, "Freezing." Then you could say, "Chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).
- ❑ Hot potato (version 2) - Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms.
- ❑ Word Collecting - Have each family member be on the look out for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- ❑ Introduce your child to a variety of experiences to help build background knowledge he/she can use while making sense of print by taking them to the park, museums, the zoo, etc.
- ❑ Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "farms" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!
- ❑ Discuss opposites (antonyms).



Vocabulary Activities—Kindergarten - 1st Grade

- ❑ Discuss positional words such as beside, below, under, over, etc. Make it into a game at dinner by asking your child to place his/her fork in different places in relation to his/her plate. Ex: Put your fork above your plate.
- ❑ Use the language of books such as author, title, illustrator, title page, etc.
- ❑ Discuss ordinal words such as first, last, beginning, middle, etc.
- ❑ Talk about how things are similar/alike as well as how things are different. Ex: How is a dog like a cat? How is a dog different from a cat?
- ❑ Use a variety of words to describe feelings and emotions. For example, your child says he/she is happy. You can validate that by saying, "I'm so glad you are so joyful today! You sure look happy!"
- ❑ Trips to everyday places build vocabulary. Discuss what you are doing and seeing as you are going through the store, for example. "I'm here in the bakery. I can find donuts, cookies, and bread." Ask your child, "What else do you think I could find here?"
- ❑ When you read a book about a topic, ask him/her to tell you all the words related to it. Ex: If you read a book about a dog, he/she might say dog, puppies, toy, food, play, leash. Add other words to help expand upon what he/she says.
- ❑ When you read a book, ask your child to identify categories for words he/she has read. Ex: If you read a book about pumpkins, you could put the words pumpkin, leaf, stem, and seeds into a category about the parts of a plant.



Vocabulary Activities—2nd Grade - 3rd Grade

- ❑ Read aloud - Continue to read aloud to your child even after he is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him new words and how they are used in context.
- ❑ Preview words - Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book, choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- ❑ Hot potato (version 1) - Play hot potato with synonyms (words with similar meanings). Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. For example, you may say, "Cold," and your child might say, "Freezing." Then you could say, "Chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).
- ❑ Hot potato (version 2) - Play hot potato with prefixes or suffixes. The prefixes dis-, ex-, mis-, non-, pre-, re-, and un- are common. Common suffixes include -able/-ible, -ed, -er, -est, -ful, -ish, -less, -ly, -ment, and -ness.
- ❑ Hot potato (version 3) - Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms.
- ❑ Word Collecting - Have each family member be on the look out for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- ❑ Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "ecosystems" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!
- ❑ When you read a book about a topic, ask him/her to tell you all the words related to it. Ex: If you read a book about dinosaurs, he/she might say Tyrannosaurus Rex, paleontologist, herbivore, carnivore, fossil. Add other words to help expand upon what he/she says.



Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand and draw meaning from text.

This includes:

- Paying attention to important information
- Interpreting specific meanings in text
- Identifying the main idea
- Verbal responses to questions
- Application of new information gained through reading

Comprehension Activities—Kindergarten -1st Grade



- ❑ Sequencing errands - Talk about errands that you will run today. Use sequencing words (sequence, first, next, last, finally, beginning, middle, end) when describing your trip. For example, you might say, "We are going to make three stops. First, we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store."
- ❑ Every day comprehension - Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, how questions about an event in his/her day. For example, if your child attended a party, you could ask, "Who was there? What did you do? When did you have cake? Where did you go? Why did the invitation have dogs on it? How did

the birthday child like the presents?" Once your child is comfortable answering these questions about his/ her experiences, try asking these questions about a book you've read together.

- ❑ Think aloud - When you read aloud to your child, talk about what you are thinking. It is your opportunity to show your child that reading is a lot more than just figuring out the words. Describe how you feel about what's going on in the book, what you think will happen next, or what you thought about a character's choice.

Reading Fiction

- ❑ Before reading - Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?" This will help your child set purpose for reading.
- ❑ During reading - Stop every now and then to ask your child to tell you what has happened so far or what he/she predicts will happen. You might also ask for your child's opinion. "Do you think the character did the right thing? How do you feel about that choice?" Explain any unfamiliar words.
- ❑ After reading - Ask your child to retell the story from the beginning, and ask for opinions, too. "What was your favorite part? Would you recommend this to a friend?"

Reading Nonfiction

- ❑ Before reading - Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think you'll learn about in this book? Why?" This helps your child consider what he already knows about the topic. Look at the table of contents. You and your child may choose to read the book cover to cover or go directly to a certain chapter.
- ❑ During reading - Don't forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or any other information on the page. Young readers tend to overlook these, so it's a good idea to show that the author includes lots of information in these "extras".
- ❑ After reading - Ask your child, "What was it mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?"

Other Ideas

- ❑ Before your child reads a story, read the title and look at the cover. Ask, "What do you think will happen in the story?"
- ❑ Take a quick "book look" and encourage your child to talk about what he/she thinks about what might happen in the story.
- ❑ As your child reads, ask questions that start with who, what, where, when, why, and how. If your child does not answer with an appropriate response, redirect by saying, "I think you mean a person because it was a "who" question" then restate the question.
- ❑ After you read a few pages, ask "What do you think will happen next?"
- ❑ Ask your child to talk about the beginning, middle and end of the story. You will need to model this several times first.
- ❑ Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem, and solution. For example, "How did characters of the Three Bears solve the problem of the porridge being too hot?" If the child does not know, show the picture or reread the page.
- ❑ After reading, ask your child, "What was your favorite part? Show me. Why do you like that part?"
- ❑ Ask questions about character traits. Ex: "Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? How do you know?" If your child doesn't know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it. He/she may also "mimic" your answer. Encourage your child's attempts.
- ❑ Encourage deeper thinking by asking, "If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?"
- ❑ Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, "Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something? The boy who went to the zoo with his family reminds me of when we went to the zoo over the summer. What do you think?"
- ❑ As you are reading, think out loud to your child. Ask questions such as "I wonder why the boy is crying in the picture? Will he find his lost toy?" This demonstrates that reading and comprehension is an active process, not passive.
- ❑ Make puppets to help your child retell a favorite story or use stuffed animals as props to retell a story or part of a favorite story.



Comprehension Activities—2nd Grade - 3rd Grade

- Sequencing comics - Choose a comic strip from the Sunday paper. Cut out each square and mix the squares up. Have your child put them in order and describe what is happening. Encourage your child to use words like first, second, next, finally, etc.
- Every day comprehension - Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, how questions about an event in his/her day. Once your child is comfortable answering these questions about his/ her experiences, try asking these questions about a book you've read together.



Reading Fiction

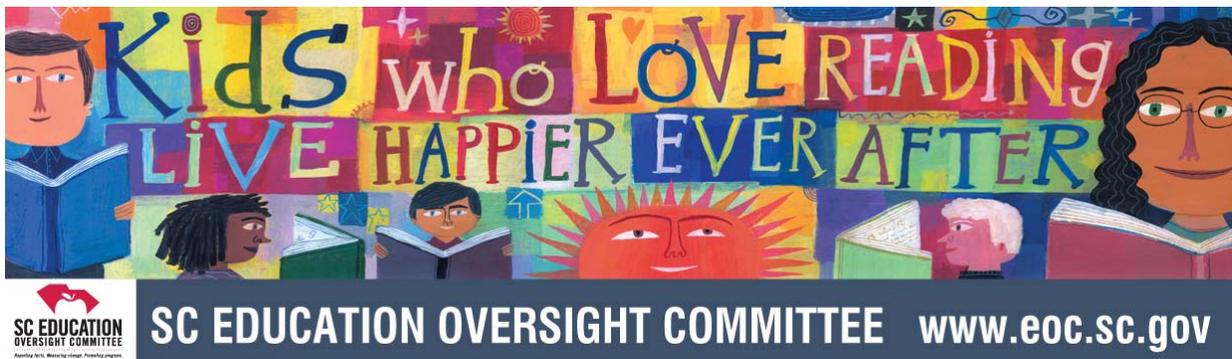
- Before reading - Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?" This will help your child set purpose for reading.
- During reading - Stop every now and then to ask your child to tell you what has happened so far or what he/she predicts will happen. You might also ask for your child's opinion. "Do you think the character did the right thing? How do you feel about that choice?" Explain any unfamiliar words.
- After reading - Ask your child to retell the story from the beginning, and ask for opinions, too. "What was your favorite part? Would you recommend this to a friend?"

Reading Nonfiction

- Before reading - Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think you'll learn about in this book? Why?" This helps your child consider what he already knows about the topic. Look at the table of contents.
- During reading - Don't forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or any other information on the page. Young readers tend to overlook these, so it's a good idea to show that the author includes lots of information in these "extras".
- After reading - Ask your child, "What was it mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?"

Other Ideas

- ❑ Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem, and solution. For example, “How did the Wright Brothers find a solution to help their plane fly longer?” If the child does not know, show the picture or reread the page.
- ❑ Ask questions about character traits. Ex: “Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? How do you know?” If your child doesn’t know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it.
- ❑ Encourage deeper thinking by asking, “If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?”
- ❑ Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, “Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something?”





Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org



Ayude a su hijo a tener éxito en la escuela: Creando el hábito de buena asistencia a temprana edad ¡El éxito escolar va de mano a mano con una buena asistencia escolar!

¿SABÍA QUE...?

- Empezando en el kínder, muchas ausencias pueden causar que los niños se atrasen en la escuela.
- Faltar el 10% (más o menos faltar 18 días en el kínder) puede bajar el rendimiento en el primer grado y hacer que cueste más aprender a leer.
- Los estudiantes se pueden seguir atrasando aunque sólo falten uno o dos días durante varias semanas.
- Las llegadas tarde en los primeros grados pueden predecir que el estudiante tendrá mala asistencia en los años siguientes.
- La falta de asistencia a la escuela puede afectar a todos en la clase, ya que el maestro tiene que disminuir el aprendizaje para ayudar a los niños a ponerse al día.
- Las escuelas pueden perder dinero para programas educacionales porque frecuentemente la asistencia es la base para la asignación de los fondos.

Asistir regularmente a la escuela, ayuda a los niños a sentirse mejor en la escuela—y consigo mismos. Empezar a crear este hábito en la edad preescolar, los hará aprender rápidamente la importancia de ir a la escuela a la hora indicada y todos los días. La buena asistencia ayudará a los niños a tener éxito en la preparatoria, la universidad y en el trabajo.

COMO AYUDAR A SU HIJO

- Establezca una hora consistente para acostarse y la rutina de cada mañana.
- Prepare la ropa y las mochilas la noche anterior.
- Averigüe el día en que empieza la escuela y asegúrese que su hijo tenga las vacunas requeridas.
- Presente a su hijo a sus maestros y compañeros de clase antes que la escuela empiece, para ayudarlo con la transición a la escuela.
- Sólo deje que su niño se quede en casa si está realmente enfermo. Tenga en mente que las quejas de un dolor de estómago o de cabeza pueden ser señal de ansiedad y no una razón para quedarse en casa.
- Si su hijo parece ansioso por ir a la escuela, hable con los maestros, consejeros u otros padres para que le aconsejen sobre cómo hacerlo sentir cómodo y motivado a asistir a la escuela.
- Prepare opciones para llegar a la escuela si algo inesperado sucede. Contacte con anterioridad un familiar, un vecino u otro padre para que le ayude en esos días.
- Evite citas médicas y viajes prolongados durante el tiempo de escuela.
- Contacte al personal de la escuela u oficiales de la comunidad para encontrar ayuda sobre transportación, vivienda, empleo o problemas de salud.

¿Cuándo las ausencias se vuelven en problema?



Nota: Números asumen un año escolar de 180 días

Para más información sobre cómo preparar a su hijo para la escuela, visite attendanceworks.org y reachoutandread.org/esp

RESOURCES

Everyday Learning Opportunities for Children
<http://storytimeoregon.com/>

Activities for the 5 Components of Reading
<http://www.fcrr.org/for-educators/sca.asp>

**Put Reading First:
Helping Your Child Learn to Read – A Parent Guide(K-3)**
http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/PutReadingFirst_ParentGuide.pdf

Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/strategies-teaching-english-language-learners>

Parent Tips: Help Your Child Have a Good School Year
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/33152/>

This plan was adapted from plans developed by the Mississippi Department of Education, Conewago Valley School District, PA; Downers Grove Grade School District 58, IL; and Blue Valley School District, KS.