



Arizona State Board of Education

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A-F School Accountability Letter Grade Information

Thank you for partnering with us to improve student achievement in Arizona. Next week, public schools will receive a letter grade based on the new A-F Accountability System designed to empower schools and improve individual student performance. The letter grades are embargoed until October 9th when they will be released to the public.

During the embargo period, letter grades should remain confidential and schools should not release their letter grades. In the event of the receipt of a public records request for the letter grades during the embargo period, schools should consult their legal counsel for guidance.

For your reference, below is information you may find useful in communicating the A-F System to your staff, parents and community in the coming weeks and months. In conjunction with the issuance of letter grades, the Board will distribute, and post on its website, additional information including an FAQ and a PowerPoint.

If you have questions regarding your letter grade please contact ADE at Achieve@azed.gov and continue to monitor the Board's website for updates.

How We Got Here

The State Board of Education was charged with developing a new system to comply with state and federal requirements while using the opportunity to measure the quality of a school and its effectiveness across a broader range of measures. The following purposes were identified in adopting an A-F Accountability Plan: 1) fairness and equity; 2) student-level focus; 3) transparency, ease of understanding and ease of communication; and 4) incentives for action.

To aid in the effort, the Board appointed an ad hoc committee consisting of a wide range of educational stakeholders and utilized the technical expertise of the Accountability Advisory Group, a group of assessment, accountability and data administrators facilitated by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

The Board also sought public input by conducting 17 public hearings across the state and distributing a survey that yielded nearly 1700 responses.

As a result of this work, the Board adopted a new A-F Accountability Plan in April 2017 and soon after was recognized as a national leader in school accountability by the [Thomas B. Fordham Institute](http://thomasbfordham.com) for its clear labels, focus on all students, and fairness to all schools.

Board Members: **President: Tim Carter** **Vice President: Luke Narducci**
Superintendent of Public Instruction: Diane Douglas
Calvin Baker **Dr. Rita H. Cheng** **Janice Mak**
Jared Taylor **Dr. Daniel Corr** **Michele Kaye** **Patricia Welborn**
Executive Director: Dr. Karol Schmidt



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How the Grades are Calculated

For K-8 schools, the plan provides for multiple indicators weighted as follows:

- Student proficiency at 30%;
- Student growth at 50%;
- English Language Learners' growth and proficiency at 10%; and
- Acceleration and readiness measures at 10%.

The 9-12 plan provides for multiple indicators weighted as follows:

- Student proficiency at 30%;
- Student growth at 20%;
- English Language Learners' growth and proficiency at 10%;
- Graduation rate at 20%; and
- College and career readiness measures at 20%.

For a complete breakdown of the calculations, please visit the Board's website (<https://azsbe.az.gov/f-school-letter-grades>), or click [here](#).

It is important to note:

- Compared to the previous system, the new A-F System measures student learning while offering a broader range of measures.
- The letter grades are based on data from the 2016-2017 school year.
- The grades do not take into consideration other things the school may be doing well, such as meeting students' emotional/social or health needs. In order to comply with federal law, the calculations only include quantitative measures that are valid, reliable and comparable across all schools in the state and that aid in the meaningful differentiation of school performance.

Next Steps

During the embargo period, schools will have the opportunity to appeal their letter grades based on extreme circumstances that are outside of the school's control (i.e. a tornado touched down near the school on the week of testing and negatively affected student performance). Please find the application at <https://azsbe.az.gov/f-school-letter-grades>.

The Board has indicated it will engage in a timely review of the impacts of the new A-F System to consider refinements and additional measures of school performance as more data becomes available.

A final note on school improvement: State statute (A.R.S. § 15-241.02) outlines requirements for schools that receive a D or F. Because the accountability system is a new and distinct system compared to the old, this year will be considered the *first* year of letter grades for the purposes of A.R.S. § 15-241.02.

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