

What Parents Should Know About Ohio's New Local Report Cards

Ohio is changing how it tells parents and communities about the academic progress of their schools. The new Local Report Card System approved by the General Assembly in December is based upon A to F letter grades like most of us received when we were students. And that will make it easier for everyone to know just how schools and districts are performing.

The new approach takes the place of the existing system that used six labels to describe school performance: *Excellent with Distinction, Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch* and *Academic Emergency*.

Here's how the new system works. Schools and districts will receive letter grades in six broad categories:

Achievement: How well students are doing against national standards of success.

Gap Closing: Having great schools means making sure all students are successful. This measure looks at whether students in all racial and demographic groups are making gains.

Graduation Rate: Students who fail to graduate can be doomed to a life of limited options. High schools and districts will be graded on how well they do helping students earn diplomas.

Progress: Schools are also graded on how well they help students of all abilities improve. This will include grades for gains made by students classified as gifted and those with disabilities so that no group falls through the cracks.

K-3 Literacy: Studies prove that learning to read by grade 3 is the key to mastering all courses in later grades. This measure looks at how many students in kindergarten through Grade 3 are reading on grade level.

Prepared for Success: It is essential that students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in college or a career. This component measure students' college and career readiness.

Together, grades in these six areas will be combined to produce a single overall performance grade for the school or district. While grades in most specific areas will begin in August 2013, **overall grades will not be issued until August 2015**. This will give schools time to adjust to the new system and focus their efforts on being successful in all areas that are being measured.

Ohio's new Local Report Cards will also include other important information, such as how many students earn college credits in high school, graduate with honors, receive credentials that prepare them to directly enter the workforce and if they are ready for college and careers. These items, which will be graded as a group but not individually, are for information only and will not be assigned letter grades.

In coming months, the State Board of Education will be working with educators and communities to determine how to award letter grades in each of the categories listed above. The new report cards will be published online starting in August. For updates and more information, go to newreportcard.educaton.ohio.gov.