



MODEL LEGISLATION

A-F SCHOOL GRADING

Section 1. {Title} The A-Plus Accountability and Transparency Program Act.

Section 2. {Definitions}

(A) “Department” — The state Department of Public Instruction or an organization chosen by the state.

(B) “School and District Report Cards” — The Department shall prepare annual reports of the results of the statewide assessment program to describe student achievement in the state, each district, and each district and charter school. The Department shall prescribe the design and content of these reports, which must include, without limitation, descriptions of the performance of all schools participating in the assessment program and all of their major student populations as determined by the Department. These reports must also include the median scores of all eligible students who scored at or in the lowest 25th percentile of the state in the previous school year; provided, however, that the provisions of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g pertaining to student records and any similar state legislation apply to this section.

(C) “School Grades” — The annual report shall identify schools as having one of the following grades:

- (1) “A,” schools making excellent progress.
- (2) “B,” schools making above average progress.
- (3) “C,” schools making satisfactory progress.
- (4) “D,” schools making less than satisfactory progress.
- (5) “F,” schools failing to make adequate progress.

(D) Each school designated with a grade of “A,” making excellent progress, or having improved at least two grade levels, shall have greater authority over the allocation of the school’s total budget, state categorical funds, any lottery funds, grants, and local funds, as specified in (State Board of Education or Department) rule. The rule must provide that the increased budget authority shall remain in effect until the school’s grade declines.

(E) Designation of School Grades

(1) Each school that has students who are tested and included in the school grading system shall earn a school grade, except as follows:

(a) A school shall not earn a school grade if the number of its students tested and included in the school grading system is less than the minimum sample size necessary, based on accepted professional practice, for statistical reliability and prevention of the unlawful release of personally identifiable student data under 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g and similar state privacy laws.

(F) A school's grade shall be based on a combination of:

(1) Student achievement scores on the state annual accountability assessment for all students.

(2) Student learning gains for all students as measured by the state annual accountability assessments in.

(3) Student learning gains of the lowest 25th percentile of students in the school in reading and mathematics on the state annual accountability assessment.

(4) The Department shall assign school grades based one half on overall student achievement, one quarter on the learning gains of all students, and one quarter on the learning gains of the lowest 25th percentile of students in the school.

(G) Student assessment data used in determining school grades shall include:

(1) The aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled in the school who have been assessed on the state annual accountability assessment.

(2) The learning gain scores of all eligible students enrolled in the school who has been assessed on the state annual accountability assessment and who has scored at or in the lowest 25th percentile of students in the school in reading and mathematics.

(3) The learning gain scores of all eligible students.

(4) The term "eligible students" in this subparagraph does not include students attending an alternative school who are subject to district school board policies for expulsion for repeated or serious offenses, who are in dropout retrieval programs serving students who have officially been designated as dropouts, or who are in programs operated or contracted by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

(H) "School Improvement Ratings" —The Department shall develop school awards for schools that improve at least one grade level or maintain an A school grade.

(I) “School Report Cards” — The Department of Education shall annually develop, in collaboration with the school districts, a school report card to be delivered to parents throughout each school district. The report card shall include the school’s grade, information regarding school improvement, an explanation of school performance as evaluated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and indicators of return on investment. The department on its website shall publish each school’s report card annually, and the school district shall provide the school report card to each parent.

(J) “Performance Based Funding” — The Legislature may factor in the performance of schools in calculating any performance-based funding policy that is provided for annually in the General Appropriations Act.

(K) “District Grades” — The annual report shall include a district grade, which follow the same method used for calculating a school grade except at the district level (e.g. in the district for the full academic year, the lowest 25 percent of the students for learning gains, the achievement and learning gains of all students in the district.

(L) “Increasing Standards” — In any year in which 80 percent or more of the statewide aggregate of elementary, middle and/or high schools earn a grade of A or B, the Department shall raise the number of points required to earn a school grade for that level of school by 5 percent statewide.

Model Legislation