School Accountability: Effectively communicating A, B, C, D and F school letter grades results

Houston Airport Marriott at George Bush Intercontinental Airport
18700 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77032

Wednesday, March 28, 2018
9:00 am - 2:00 pm
### Agenda

#### Preparing for the who, what, how, when, where, and why.

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<td>Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements</td>
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<td>9:40 am</td>
<td>Purpose of School Accountability</td>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>The Who, What, How, When, Where and Why of Communicating School Grades</td>
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<td>Know Your School Website</td>
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<td>Focusing on WHY, A Case for Transparent School Accountability</td>
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<td>Develop State Plan to Garner Support and Communicate Results</td>
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<td>Next Steps and Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>2:00 pm</td>
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Welcome and introductions

Welcome to ExcelinEd’s workshop for communicating school grades.

- Overview of ExcelinEd
  - Purpose
  - Policies
  - Work activities

- ExcelinEd team introductions
  - Name
  - Role
  - Responsibility related to A-F

- Participant introductions
  - Name
  - State
  - Organization
  - Role
  - Responsibility related to A-F
  - Years A-F has been state policy
Foundation for Excellence in Education

ExcelinEd

501(c)(3) organization that supports state leaders in transforming education to unlock opportunity and lifelong success for each and every child.

From policy development to implementation, ExcelinEd brings deep expertise and experience to customize education solutions for each state’s unique needs. Focused on educational opportunity, innovation and quality, ExcelinEd’s agenda is increasing student learning, advancing equity and readying graduates for college and career.

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66th U.S. Secretary of State and Professor of Political Science at Stanford University

F. Philip Handy  
CEO, Winter Park Capital

Allan B. Hubbard  
Founder & Chairman, E&A Industries
Policy agenda

Opportunity
- High-Performing Charters
- Education Scholarship Accounts
- Traditional Vouchers
- Tax Credit Scholarships
- Public School Choice

Innovation
- College & Career Pathways
- Personalized Learning
- Course Access

Quality
- School Accountability
- Early Literacy
- Standards & Assessments
- Education Funding
After years of transitions - standards, assessments, and accountability - another dramatic overhaul may be a tipping point for many states.

2010 - revised state standards
2010 to 2014 - designed new assessments systems with more dynamic, challenging, and comprehensive assessment items
2014-15 - implemented the new assessment systems and set more rigorous proficiency expectations
2015-16 - implemented new accountability system to go along with the new standards, assessments, and more rigorous proficiency expectations
2016-17 - state ESEA waivers nullified by US Department of Education
2017-18 - ESSA compliant school accountability system required

Media and national key policy players made blanket statements that states must be more innovative and take advantage of the flexibility the feds have afforded under ESSA.

• ESEA waivers afforded states most of these flexibilities already, and ESSA has drawn back some of the flexibilities too.
• Keep in mind that the intent of ESSA was to return authority to the states to develop these school accountability systems.
Objectives

Every state is communicating new school accountability calculations in 2017-18.

• Develop an understanding of how to effectively communicate and roll out school letter grades results.
• Educate on the rationale for using an A-F school grading system, ESSA requirements, garnering support for A-F and prepare for responding to critical perspectives.
• Initiate development of state-specific action plans for rolling out school grades for 2017-18.
The table of contents for the A-F Communications Toolkit.

- Key Messages and Talking Points
- Results Summary
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Excuse vs. Reality
- Policy Brief
- Media Outreach Materials
- Op-ed
- Letter to the Editor
- Parent Engagement Materials
- Social Media
- Logos
- Resources
- Key Decision Points Worksheet
What is your goal for a successful A-F release?

Goals provide strategic direction for communications.

Example goals:
• Position the state Department of Education as a trusted leader in school accountability.
• Focus school grades release efforts on engaging stakeholders, parents and leaders so they are well-versed in their school’s performance and can act.

Think about what success looks like in your state. Measurable objective examples:
• Develop five champions for school grades.
• Place 10 letters to the editor from parents.
• Increase traffic to school report card website.
• Superintendent quoted in major news stories.
• Hold five events across state.
• Produce a suite of parent engagement materials.
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Timeline for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

ESSA INTERVENTION TIMELINE

- **2015**: ESSA Became Law
- **2016**: State Plan Approval
- **2017**: States Submit Accountability Plans
- **2018**: States Identify Schools for Targeted and Comprehensive Support
- **2019**:
  - States Implement Interventions (2019-2022)
  - Replacing principal & significant percentage of staff
  - Restart school as charter
  - Close and consolidate the school
- **2020**
- **2021**
- **2022**
- **2023**: States Take More Rigorous Action
### Goals

States must establish “ambitious, state-designed long-term goals” and interim progress targets for all students and for each subgroup for:

- Academic achievement
- High school graduation
- English language proficiency (all students only)

### Identification of Schools

The accountability system must identify at least three categories of schools:

- Comprehensive support and improvement schools
- Targeted support and intervention schools
- Additional schools

### School Accountability

States must establish a **system of meaningfully differentiating schools on an annual basis** based on the following indicators for all students and each subgroup. The system must give **substantial weight** to each academic indicator.

- Academic achievement indicator
- Another academic indicator (growth/grad rate)
- English proficiency progress
- Additional indicator of school quality or student success

In the aggregate, state must give **much greater weight** to these indicators.

Progress in English language proficiency and the school quality or student success indicators are new federal requirements for state accountability systems.
States made adjustments to school accountability calculations to comply with ESSA.

Describe the changes made to your state accountability system and why the change was made.

Examples:

Proficiency on Science and Social Studies state assessments were added to the calculation as an indicator of School Quality and Student Success. Schools earn one point for each percent proficient, up to 100 points for each subject. Science and Social Studies were added to focus on objective measures of student achievement placing emphasis on subjects beyond reading and math.

The percent of English Learners making progress on ACCESS 2.0 - an assessment to determine English language proficiency - was added to the calculation. Schools earn one point for each percent of English Learners making progress, up to 100 points. Focusing on English language acquisition will ensure English Learners are ready to master the state standards and demonstrate proficiency in reading and math content on the state assessments.
Purpose of School Accountability
Federal law requires states to adopt a school accountability system.

From our perspective, the school accountability systems serve two main functions:

• To define and measure what matters.
• To communicate results to parents and the public.
  – True accountability comes when parents and the public can actually interpret the results
    • Clearly
    • Transparently
    • Intuitively

School grading video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqkdNzBsB7o
The core message is not an explanation of the policy. It is the vision of what it means for the future.

**Example:**

School grades produce transparent accountability for student learning. A-F creates a sense of urgency for excellence, heightens focus on school quality, generates community support, and empowers parents with better information.

- The core message should be positive and aspirational.
- Research is clear that in education people respond better to hope than they do to fear.
- School grading is good because it empowers parents with the information that educators already know.
- This is your chief talking point - the one you repeat as often as you can.
Purpose of A-F school grading

A-F creates a sense of urgency for excellence, heightens focus on school quality, generates community support, and empowers parents with better information.

Almost two decades of experience in Florida, and subsequent A-F adoption in 14 other states, have created opportunities for students to be better prepared for success in school, careers and life resulting in four fundamental reasons for supporting A-F school grading.

1. Excellence versus Complacency

A-F school grading has created a system-wide focus on school quality because administrators, educators and parents all understand A-F grades. No one is satisfied with a C grade or even a B grade. In the 15 A-F states across the country, stakeholders strive for excellence in a way you don’t see with fuzzy descriptors like “satisfactory” or “performing.” Grading schools on a scale of A-F creates a sense of urgency to ensure our schools are meeting the needs of every student.
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2. Increased Media and Public Attention
   Transparency in evaluating schools attracts more attention - from extensive media coverage of individual school effectiveness to realtors who highlight good school grades as a selling point on the housing market. This attention brings more investments in time and energy from families, teachers, administrators, policy makers and all community leaders.

   Schools now have a real, tangible sign of their excellence and/or hard work. Despite any initial objections to school grades, it’s not long before everyone begins displaying their grades on the school marquee, hanging banners, or doing local press about the fact that they earned the coveted ‘A’ grade or jumped from a ‘D’ to a ‘B.’
A-F creates a sense of urgency for excellence, heightens focus on school quality, generates community support, and empowers parents with better information.

Almost two decades of experience in Florida, and subsequent A-F adoption in 14 other states, have created opportunities for students to be better prepared for success in school, careers and life resulting in four fundamental reasons for supporting A-F school grading.

3. Community Support Emerges from Transparent, Simple Grading

In an A to F system, low performing schools are easily identified and communities rally around them. A-F states can share numerous stories of communities coming together to improve schools to raise student achievement.

For example, in one Florida district, an entire school board meeting was dedicated to how the county could become the first in the state with no C schools. That would not have happened if the old labels of “satisfactory,” “making progress,” and other vague language had still been in place.
A-F creates a sense of urgency for excellence, heightens focus on school quality, generates community support, and empowers parents with better information.

Almost two decades of experience in Florida, and subsequent A-F adoption in 14 other states, have created opportunities for students to be better prepared for success in school, careers and life resulting in four fundamental reasons for supporting A-F school grading.

4. Empower Parents to Make Better Choices for Their Children
   Easy-to-understand school grades are crucial for promoting transparency and helping parents choose the best school for their child. That’s why A-F letter grades have been incredibly popular with parents. In a national poll, 84 percent of parents supported assigning schools a letter grade based on how well they educate their students (McLaughlin & Associates, 2014).
Define your state’s purpose of A-F school grading

States must be clear about the purpose of A-F school grading.

Identify and define the purpose of school accountability in your state. This will be used as a reference for all future communications materials.

Examples:

• To define and measure what matters, then clearly communicate results
• Create a sense of urgency for excellence
• Heightens focus on school quality
• Generate community support
• Empowers parents with better information
Who, What, How, When, Where, and Why
Who
Who needs to know about school grades?

The audience for school grades results is broad and diverse.

- Families
- Public
- Educators (District leaders, School leaders, Teachers)
- Education organizations
- Legislators on education committees
- Governor’s Office
- State Board of Education
- Higher education
- Advocacy organizations
- Business groups

- Higher Education
- Realtors
- Faith Based Community
- Candidates
- Philanthropies and Foundations
- School Foundations
- Retired state superintendents
- Other teacher groups
- Other Policymakers
- Media
Building your coalition

Building a coalition is extremely important, but often neglected.

**Be proactive, not reactive:** Start building your coalition early - well before the release of school grades. Identify new or old partnerships and relationships that need to be cultivated.

**Know your opposition:** Your opposition will likely be a pre-formed and long-standing coalition. They most likely will not need to expend resources to grow their coalition.

**Coalition tips:**
- Check in regularly.
- Find where you can agree.
- Assign messages to stakeholders.
- Start with a brain dump, and people to ask people... you have to start somewhere.
- Each organization has their strengths - engage those who will make an impact with various audiences.
Define your state’s audience for A-F school grades

States must be clear about who needs to know about A-F school grading.

**Be specific:** List specific individuals, groups, committees, and organizations that are interested in school grade results in your state and identify potential coalition members.

**Examples:**
- Governor Phil Bryant and Laurie Smith
- Lt. Governor Tate Reeves and Laura Hipp
- Senate Ed Chair Gray Tollison and House Ed Chair Richard Bennett
- Grant Callen at Empower Mississippi
- Jameson Taylor at Mississippi Center for Public Policy
- Kate Royals and Bracey Harris at the Clarion Ledger
Information needed about school grades varies by audience.

**Everyone will need to know:**
- Why school grades are important
- How school grades are calculated and changes have been made from prior years
- The results and how they should be interpreted
- What will be done to help schools

**Specific audiences:**
- **Families** - how to talk to their child’s teacher and principal about the grade, what is being done for their child, how can they help at home
- **Educators** - technical information on how calculations are performed and data used for the calculations
- **Legislators on education committees** - any impact on policy and projected constituent concerns with suggested responses; how to talk with other legislators about school grades
- **Legislators** - school grades for schools in their districts with talking points
- **Advocacy organizations** - how these results compliment their efforts for reform
- **Media** - provide all these materials to the media as background and shape the narrative
Illustrate how school grades are calculated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Language Arts</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
<th>Acceleration Success</th>
<th>*English Language Proficiency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>Achievement (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>Achievement (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>Achievement (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>4-year Graduation Rate (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>High School AP, IB, AICE, Dual Enroll or Industry Cert (0% to 100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Gains (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>Learning Gains (0% to 100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School EOCs or Industry Cert (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>Learning Gains (0-100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Gains - Lowest 25% (0% to 100%)</td>
<td>Learning Gains - Lowest 25% (0% to 100%)</td>
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*The English Language Proficiency indicator is new in 2017-18.*
Highlight the results and an interpretation of the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 School Grade</th>
<th>2018 School Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>976</td>
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In 2018, nearly half of all schools maintained an A (670, 21%) or increased their school grade (943, 29%, green cells). These schools will be recognized as reward schools. There were 310 schools (red cells) that decreased their grade, 10%, and 2,000 schools (yellow cells) had no change in the grade 61%.
Share actions that will be taken to help schools succeed.

**Examples:**

- The lowest performing 5% of Title I schools and all high schools with graduation rates below 67% will receive technical assistance and additional resources as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools *as required under federal law.*

- Targeted Support and Improvement Schools have groups of students are “consistently underperforming” or groups of students who are performing as poorly as Comprehensive Support Schools and will have targeted technical assistance and resources provided such as entering into a targeted performance contract supported by additional state and federal funding.
Perfect your messaging

Create top line messages that are routinely shared with your audience.

Examples:

- “For education to be its best, parents need an honest indicator of how their child’s school is performing. [STATE]’s new A-F School Grading System does exactly that.”

- “By grading schools with simple A, B, C, D and F labels that everyone understands, [STATE] will be able to recognize effective schools and provide meaningful assistance to those that are not meeting expectations.”

- “While the new A-F school grading system provides more accountability and transparency in education, it is not perfect. Parents, teachers and community leaders must continue to push to refine the system to improve student achievement.”
Perfect your messaging

Emphasize how the new system raises the bar in education.

**Excellence:** A-F school grading prioritizes excellence over the complacency. There is no greater goal in education than academic success. Implementing A-F school grading, creates urgency that prompts entire communities to come together to tackle problems and dedicate themselves to improving student achievement. We are confident [STATE]’s students and teachers can adjust to and exceed these rigorous expectations.

**Inspiration:** A-F School Grades increase public attention surrounding the release of the grades that can inspire pride in successful schools and unleash a competitive fire in all schools committed to doing better.

**Transparency and Engagement:** Just like a report card helps parents understand how their child is doing academically, A-F grades give information on how the school is performing. Through the simplicity of A-F letter grades, parents can quickly identify trends at their children’s school and get engaged.
Perfect your messaging

Schools earn A-F letter grades.

Earn

Schools do not receive a letter grade, they earn them.
Anticipate opposing arguments

Identify the opposition coalition and prepare for their messages.

Examples from opponents of A-F School Grades:
• “There is no evidence that A-F school grading works.”
• “There’s a lot more to a school’s performance than a letter grade.”
• “This policy is biased against our low-income schools, which face more difficult situations than more affluent schools.”

Prepare to respond:
• Engage a trusted voice to share his/her message via a target audience publication.
• Secure champion(s) to carry your messages and engage with media.
Define your message on what to tell the audience

Create your message based on your state calculation and school grade results.

Focus on the big picture as well as commentary that has already percolated in conversations and the media to perfect your message.

- **Explain** why A-F will improve student outcomes
- **Explain** the school grading formula
- **Comment** on successes
- **Prepare** responses to known opposition
- **Comment** on next steps for the state and schools
How
How will you tell them about school grades?

Different modes of communication are necessary to reach entire audience.

To reach all audiences:
- Press release
- Press conference
- Website
- Webinar
- Newspaper
- TV/Radio news
- TV/Radio News
- Social media
- School marquee

Specific audiences:
- Families - school specific letter to parents
- Educators - technical paper and associated data
- Education organizations - pre-release meetings, one-pager on calculation, changes, results
- Governor’s Office, State Board of Education, Legislators - one-on-one pre-release meetings, one-pager on calculation, changes and results
- Advocacy organizations and Business groups - pre-release meetings, one-pager on calculation, changes and results
- Media - pre-release meetings, interviews, host a media background event to better inform press about A-F school grades, conduct editorial board meetings
Lessons learned

Strategies for spreading the word on A-F school grades.

- **Find a trusted voice:** Someone - a parent, teacher, principal - that can lend credibly to A-F school grading through a personal story to get others inspired.

- **Conduct reporter outreach:** Be a resource for reporters, hold a reporter meet and greet, provide advance information on A-F results, provide specific messages they can use.

- **Explore digital:** There are cost effective ways to release information about A-F school grades to make your message go further and reach more people; explore Twitter, Facebook, Instagram.

- **Prepare op eds in advance:** Op eds are a great way to defend a position, but they take time to write and place; have these ready and media outlets prepped to maximize opportunities for placement.

- **Get creative:** Think about other tools to use to promote A-F, such as: direct reporter outreach, a blog, a parent or educator video testimonial shared on social media.
Define how your message will be shared

Use new and existing materials, resources, and partners to spread your message.

Examples:

Create a one-page summary graphic depicting how school grades are calculated, highlighting changes from last year.

Write an op ed, to be submitted by a partner, explaining how the school grading system accounts for subgroups highlighting how subgroups are performing and what supports and interventions are provided to schools with low performing subgroups.

Update your website with user friendly language and navigation.
When
When will you tell them about school grades?

Transparency and understanding results in better communications on release day.

In the months leading up to the school grades results release, share information about school grading and timelines so the audience understands and is prepared for release day.

- **Families** - Why is my child’s school being graded? What does the grade mean?
- **Public** - Why is school grading needed?
- **Educators**
  - District leaders - How are school grades calculated? How will the grades impact my district?
  - School leaders - How are school grades calculated? How will the grade impact my school?
  - Teachers - How are school grades calculated? How will the grades impact me?
- **Education organizations** - Why is school grading needed? How are school grades calculated? How can we support school grading? How will low performing schools be helped?
- **Governor’s Office, State Board of Education, Legislators** on education committees - Why is school grading needed? How are school grades calculated? What policy changes were made this year, by whom, and why? How will low performing schools be helped?
- **Policymakers** - Why is school grading needed? How are school grades calculated? How will low performing schools be helped?
- **Advocacy organizations and Business groups** - Why is school grading needed? How are school grades calculated? How can we support school grading?
- **Media** - Why is school grading needed? How are school grades calculated? What happens after school grades are awarded?
### When will you tell them about school grades?

Giving information in advance of the public results release supports messaging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As Needed</th>
<th>24 to 72 hours before the public release</th>
<th>24 to 48 hours before the public release</th>
<th>24 hours before the public release</th>
<th>Day of the public release</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policymakers in the agency</td>
<td>Governor’s office</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Education organizations</td>
<td>Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Board of Education</td>
<td>District leaders</td>
<td>All legislators</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legislators on education committees, leadership, sponsors</td>
<td>School leaders and teachers - at the district’s discretion</td>
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If you start certain phases too late, it is too late.

• **Think about key dates:** Identify your desired outcome - school grades released in the summer - and plan *backwards*.

• **What existing opportunities can you leverage?**
  – Holidays?
  – Special *Capitol Days*?
  – Major meetings or events involving your target audience?

• **Consider contextual deadlines:** What could make your message timing good or bad?

• **Include messaging on purpose, calculation, and changes:** ensure the audience is prepared to understand release day results.
Define your release timeline

List specific activities, duration, completion dates, and person responsible.

Be deliberate and specific on timing out the development and updating of materials, scheduling of briefings, and release day events.

**Examples:**

Jenn will host media day meet and greet with major media markets to share background on the purpose of school grading, the timeline for releasing school grades, and the process for sharing advance information three weeks before the public release.

Christy will create a graphic depicting the school grading calculation and changes from prior years six weeks prior to the public release to share in briefings.

Liya will schedule pre-release results briefings with education committee members, key legislative leaders and school grading bill sponsors two days before the public release.
A-F Sample Communications Timeline

April 2-13
- Develop A-F communications plan

April 16-May 4
- Develop materials
- Plan release events

May 7-June 27
- Publish and release materials

May 21-25
- Review results
- Create storyline

May 30
- Audience pre-briefing

June 25-26
- Brief audiences on results

June 27
- Release A-F school grades
Where
Events can help promote the importance of school grades.

**Press conference or town hall**
- **Timing:** Morning is best
- **Location:** Consider a school
- **Participants and messages:**
  - Governor, educator, business leader, parent, student
  - Messages: school successes, overcoming challenges, personal anecdotes
- **Press packet:** press release, data, prepared remarks
- **Event logistics:** visual aids, A/V

**School Visits**
- **Timing:** Day-of or week-of grades release
- **Location:** Largest media markets and multiple schools (fly around day). Visit high poverty schools earning an A, low-performing school to show support, or schools that have improved.
- **Participants:** Governor, Lt. Governor, legislators, superintendent, school board, principals, business leaders, teachers, students and parents.
- **What is the hook?** School tour, present school with award.
- **Ongoing:** Visit low performing schools throughout the year to encourage or highlight improvement.
Ideally, the chief should provide results and be accompanied by a special guest.

**Examples:**

At 9 am the Education Chief will visit Washington High School to announce school grades. Principal George will share remarks on how he improved two letter grades highlighting specific teacher and students and Legislator Martha will present a school recognition check. Media will be invited.

At 8 am the Education Chief will host a press conference in the Capitol briefing room. The Governor will provide remarks on specific school successes and encouragement for the upcoming year. Media will be invited.

At 10 am Fordham will host a town hall with legislators, school leaders, and parents to highlight current year successes of the school grading system and suggest improvements can be made.
Why
Why are school grades important?

Establish the purpose of school grading, to improve student outcomes, and share the message with the audience using a variety of modes.

- Editorial
- Blog
- Op-ed
- Policy talking points
- Data evidence
- Individual success stories
- Summary one-pager
- FAQs
- Social media
- School marquee
Know Your School Website
School grades vs. public reporting

School Grades

- Proficiency
- Growth
- Graduation rates
- English language proficiency
- College and career ready
- Lowest performing 25% students

Report Cards / Dashboards

Required Under ESSA
- Accountability system details
- Disaggregated results
- Disaggregated assessment participation rates
- The state’s minimum N
- Civil Rights Data Collection
- Educator qualifications
- State, local and federal per-pupil expenditures
- NAEP results
- Disaggregated grad rates/college enrollment

Optional
- Attendance
- Expulsion/Suspension
- School Climate
- Parent/Teacher Survey
- Social & Emotional Supports
School report cards

States are federally required to develop school report cards.

Links to model A-F websites:

- Georgia: https://gosa.georgia.gov/georgia-school-grades-reports


Know Your School Website

An innovative model state online school report card.

**ExcelinEd’s *Know Your School* website:**

- An innovative model state online school report card designed for parents and the community to easily access information about their schools.
- Designed to give states a road map to achieve excellence in public reporting, the functioning prototype website can be **easily replicated** by other states interested in increasing transparency and public understanding of school accountability measures.

Intro Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8XpAbVSeF8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8XpAbVSeF8)

Website: [https://knowyourfloridaschool.org/](https://knowyourfloridaschool.org/)
Do you know how your child's school is performing? Search below to find out!

Find Your School

School Name

Search by School Name
Increasing transparency: Know Your School

Abraham Lincoln Middle School

DISTRICT: Alachua
PRINCIPAL: Latroy Strappy
PHONE: 352-955-6711
FAX: 352-955-7133
WEBSITE: http://www.sbac.edu/pages/ACPS
MAILING ADDRESS: 1001 Se 12th St Gainesville, FL 32641-8101
CHARTER: No
MAGNET: Yes

2016-17 School Grade

B

Abraham Lincoln Middle School's overall performance is higher than 61% of middle schools in the state.

Recognize the work of your principal and teachers and ask how you can help improve student achievement.
# Understanding School Grades

School grades provide a clear way for the state of Florida to measure school performance.

## Sunshine Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Points Earned/Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>70/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>72/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>80/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Gains</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>60/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>63/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Gains of Lowest Performing Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>40/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>46/100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ 62% = A \]
Parents have the ability to compare schools side-by-side.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Doral Performing Arts &amp; Entertainment Academy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current year school grade</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current year percent of school points</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Achievement</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Achievement</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Learning Gains</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Learning Gains</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Learning Gains Lowest 25%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Learning Gains Lowest 25%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Achievement</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies Achievement</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Acceleration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Acceleration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Doral Academy Charter Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current year school grade</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current year percent of school points</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Achievement</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Achievement</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Learning Gains</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Learning Gains</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Learning Gains Lowest 25%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Learning Gains Lowest 25%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Achievement</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies Achievement</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Acceleration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Acceleration</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Archimedeans Middle Conservatory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current year school grade</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current year percent of school points</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Achievement</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Achievement</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Learning Gains</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Learning Gains</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Learning Gains Lowest 25%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Learning Gains Lowest 25%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Achievement</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies Achievement</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Acceleration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Acceleration</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focusing on WHY
A Case for Transparent School Accountability
A-F school grading

All states are required to have a school accountability system, but few are transparent and built only on student learning outcomes.

15 States Use A-F School Grading
The eight states with multiple years of A-F implementation are making faster improvements on NAEP 4th and 8th grade reading and math than the Nation as a whole.

For example, since implementing A-F, Florida has outpaced the Nation in Grade 4 Reading by 13 points.

Over this time period the Nation increased 8.5 points while Florida improved 21.5 points.

It is also important to note that the ‘outpacing’ is underestimated because the improving A-F states cannot be backed out of the Nation.
Student learning outcomes improve with A-F school grading as measured by NAEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>First Year of A-F Grades</th>
<th>Scale Score Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4th GRADE READING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NATION*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NATION*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Represents national average in scale score improvement for non-A-F states over the same time period. Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
During 2007-13, NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg evaluated schools using A-F; Bill de Blasio became the new mayor on January 1, 2014, and his administration has moved sharply away from the information-collection and accountability metrics. Winters’ paper explores the effects of the Bloomberg era’s school letter grades on NYC’s lowest-performing schools; it also estimates the effect of removing these grades after the first year of the new de Blasio accountability system.

- The decision to stop reporting summary letter grades removed an instrument that had led to positive changes at NYC’s lowest-performing schools.
- A positive, meaningful F-grade impact was detected in the final year (2013) of the original policy, six years after it was first adopted.
- Schools that would have earned an F in fall 2014—the first year of the de Blasio system—showed no improvement relative to schools that would have earned higher grades.
• The decision to stop reporting summary letter grades removed an instrument that had led to positive changes at NYC’s lowest-performing schools.

• A positive, meaningful F-grade impact was detected in the final year (2013) of the original policy, six years after it was first adopted.

• Schools that would have earned an F in fall 2014—the first year of the de Blasio system—showed no improvement relative to schools that would have earned higher grades.
While numerous studies have found that school accountability boosts test scores, it is uncertain whether estimated test score gains reflect genuine improvements or merely ‘gaming’ behaviors. This paper brings to bear new evidence from a unique five-year, three round survey conducted of a census of elementary schools in Florida that is lined with detailed administrative data on student performance.

We show that schools facing accountability pressure changed their instructional practices in meaningful ways, and that these responses can explain a portion of the test score gains associated with the Florida school accountability system.”
“We show that schools facing accountability pressure changed their instructional practices in meaningful ways, and that these responses can explain a portion of the test score gains associated with the Florida school accountability system.”
Public opinion favors A-F grading schools

- **84%** Of those surveyed in a National poll support assigning schools a letter grade regarding how well they educate students.

- **77%** Of Tennessee voters favor an A-F grading scale for each school so parents can more easily identify where the good schools are instead of the current rating system.

- **80%** Of respondents in Georgia favor an A-F school grading policy, while just 14% oppose. Support for this policy is broad across key sub-groups.
Impact of A-F on schools, parents and policymakers

**Increased Transparency**
- A, B, C, D, F vs. . . .
- Reward, Celebration Eligible, Continuous Improvement, Focus, Priority

**Improved Student Achievement***
- Schools facing accountability under A-F change their instructional policies and practices in meaningful ways.
- Evidence supports that improvement in student achievement and test scores in low-performing schools are because of the pressure to improve.

**Increased Parent Involvement**
- In Oklahoma, first year of issuing grades, 25,000 more hits on the A-F website than number of students in Oklahoma schools.

**Command Focus on Learning**
- Leon County (Tallahassee, FL) School board dedicated entire meeting on how to be the first district in the state with no “C” schools.

*National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research*
Money is not the answer
Using the Results of A-F School Grades
Releasing A-F school grades starts the conversation about education reform.

Accountability itself does not improve student outcomes, but the data it produces should inspire action that will improve student outcomes.

Examples:

• School Recognition
• Choice
• K-3 Reading
• College and Career Pathways
Rewards for successful schools

Examples of school recognition programs

- **Schools earn $100 per student for:**
  - Improving a letter grade
  - Earning or maintaining an “A”

- Money goes directly to the school **bypassing collective bargaining**.

- **School level personnel determine** how the School Recognition Program funds are spent. The funds can be used for any non-recurring expenditure.

- Majority of funds - historically more than 85% - are used for **teacher and staff bonuses**.
Florida Opportunity Scholarships (1999 through 2006)

**Eligibility:** students in schools graded “F” two out of four years

**Choices:**
- A higher performing public school within the district
- A higher performing public school in any other district with space available
- A participating private school

**Funding:** scholarship equal to public school funding or private school tuition and fees, whichever is less

**Status:** Ruled unconstitutional by the Florida Supreme Court in 2006 - that year 753 students participated

**Result:** Research from Harvard, Cornell, and the Manhattan Institute concluded that competition from vouchers fuels student achievement in public schools.
Resources
Documents and other resources developed by ExcelinEd.

• A-F Communications Toolkit
• A-F School Grading Fundamental Principles
• Know Your School Website
  https://knowyourfloridaschool.org/
• ExcelinEd Accountability Website
  https://www.excelined.org/quality/school-accountability/
• ESSA A-F Playbook
Sample items developed by other states.

FL School Grades Overview 2017

FL School Grades Calculation Guide 2017

FL School Grades Results Packet 2017

Indiana Student Centered Accountability System FAQs

History of Indiana’s Accountability System
- [https://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/history-indiana%E2%80%99s-accountability-system](https://www.doe.in.gov/accountability/history-indiana%E2%80%99s-accountability-system)

Mississippi School and District Grading System Explainer

New Mexico A-F School Grading Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- [https://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/School_Grading_FAQ_V2.0.pdf](https://aae.ped.state.nm.us/docs/School_Grading_FAQ_V2.0.pdf)

Oklahoma A-F District Communications Toolkit
- [https://okeducationtruths.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/a-f-district-communications-toolkit.pdf](https://okeducationtruths.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/a-f-district-communications-toolkit.pdf)

West Virginia’s A through F School Grading System FAQs

West Virginia A-F Infographic
States can create a logo specific to school grades.
Develop Your Plan for Garnering Support and Communicating Results
The A-F communications plan is your roadmap for all the activities and actions.

A communications plan keeps everyone on the same page, same message and same timeline; it articulates clear messages, goals and timelines but allows for flexibility to address the unexpected.

- **Define your purpose.** Take time to define your purpose and why school grades are important to your audience. Infuse that passion in all you do.

- **Find partners.** More voices supporting your cause will help you rise above other noise. Partners can help with work, outreach and creative initiatives.

- **Expect the unexpected.** Plan, but be flexible.

- **Know your role.** Think about when you need to be in the spotlight and when you need to be the ghost writer.
There is no perfect style A-F communications plan, but there are key elements.

The **Key Decision Points Planning Guide** will get you started by asking the right questions/thinking through your plan.

**Advice from the “front lines”:**

- Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you’ll have to fly by the seat of your pants. That’s okay. But don’t lose sight of what you’re trying to accomplish, and frequently ask yourself: *will this tactic take me toward my goals?*

- Start with “pie in the sky” ideas and whittle them down... you can do more as you get more expertise and more resources.
Develop your A-F communications plan

Creating resources and strategies to garner support and communicate results.

Participants work in state teams to begin developing an action plan for rolling out school grades in their state.

*Resources:* Communications Decision Points Document and Timeline

- **Who:** Identify your audience and build a coalition
- **What:** Perfect your message and anticipate opposing arguments
- **How:** Determine different modes of communication
- **When:** Create a timeline for briefings and release
- **Where:** Select briefing and event(s) location
- **Why:** To improve student learning outcomes

Participants share their next steps.

Participants may schedule an ExcelinEd support call or visit.
Next Steps and Wrap-Up
Bye for now.

Thank you for participating in the ExcelinEd A-F Communications Workshop.

✓ Please complete the **evaluation**.
✓ All workshop materials will be **emailed to participants**.
✓ **Contact ExcelinEd** for further assistance developing messaging and strategies for A-F School Grading Communications.

**Parting words:**

- We did not even come close to covering everything that we have learned on this policy or planning for a successful state release of the A-F school grade results, but hope we gave direction to get you started.

- As you have heard and will continue to hear, we have a lot of resources on this, so if there are specific areas where you need support, we have tools to assist.
Thank You!

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