



**School Accountability:**  
***Reforming education starting with***  
***A, B, C, D and F school letter grades***

**North Carolina Legislative Convening on School Performance Grades**  
**Tuesday, April 30, 2019 from 6:00-8:00 PM**  
**137 S Wilmington Street, Raleigh NC**



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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# 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 the results.
  - True accountability comes when parents, policymakers and the public can interpret the results
    - Clearly
    - Transparently
    - Intuitively



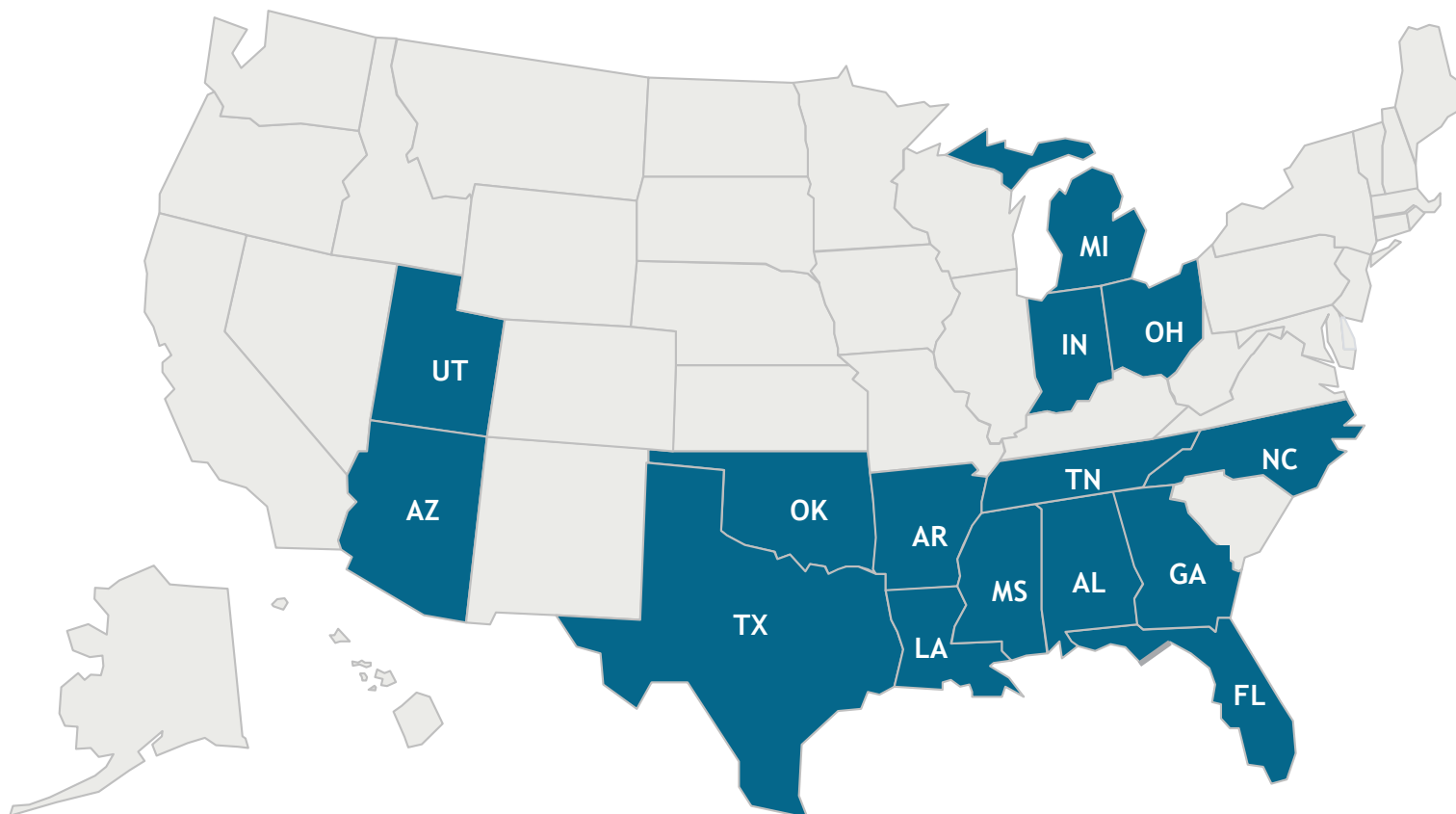
School grading video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqkdNzBsB7o>

# School Accountability



All states are required to have a school accountability system, but not many are transparent and built only on student learning outcomes.



**15 States Use A-F School Grading**

# Impact of A-F School Grades



*Student outcomes, academic research and public opinion support school grading.*

## Improves student outcomes

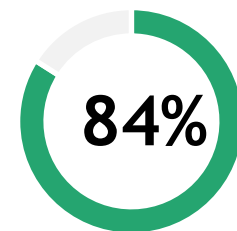
Eight of 10 states with multiple years of NAEP data after implementing A-F school grading outpaced the National Public improvement in Grade 4 Reading.



## Proven by academic research

- Researchers at the Manhattan Institute found positive, meaningful impacts continued six years after A-F was first adopted in NYC, but ceased after A-F was repealed.
- Schools facing accountability pressure changed their instructional practices in meaningful ways, which explained some of the test score gains in Florida's school grading system, per the *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.

## Supported by public opinion



Of those surveyed in a national poll support assigning schools a letter grade based on how well they educate students.

# North Carolina A-F Grading System



*NC's 2017-18 A-F grading system meets several ExcelinEd fundamental principles.*

Weight	Elementary and Middle School Indicators
80%	Academic Achievement - Reading awarding one point for each percent proficient
20% each measure	Academic Achievement - Math awarding one point for each percent proficient
	Other Academic - Science awarding one point for each percent proficient
	EL - one point for each percent progressing on the English language acquisition assessment
20%	SQ/SS - Growth in ELA/Math using a normative value-added method, EVAAS

Weight	High School Indicators
80%	Academic Achievement
10% each measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>English II awarding one point for each percent proficient</li><li>Math awarding one point for each percent proficient</li></ul>
	Other Academic -
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Biology awarding one point for each percent proficient</li><li>One point for each percent completing Alg II or Integrated Math III</li><li>One point for each percent earning score to gain admission to University of North Carolina</li><li>One point for each percent earning workplace readiness of Silver, Gold, Platinum</li><li>One point for each percent graduating in four years</li></ul>
	EL - one point for each percent progressing on the English language acquisition assessment
20%	SQ/SS - Growth in ELA/Math using a normative valued-added method, EVAAS

The final grade is based on a 15-point scale where A = 85-100, B = 70-84, C = 55-69, D = 40-54 and F = Less than 40.

An A-F grade is calculated for the school and for each subgroup of race, free/reduced lunch, English learner, and students with disabilities.

# A-F School Grades: What gets measured, gets done



*A policy employed in 15 states, grading schools on an A-F scale creates a sense of urgency for excellence, heightens focus on school quality, generates community support and empowers parents with better information.*

## Fundamental Principles of A-F School Grades

- 1 Use clear and transparent descriptors of A, B, C, D, and F
- 2 Include objective, concise student learning outcome measures
- 3 Balance measures of student performance and progress
- 4 Calculate student progress toward grade level and advanced achievement
- 5 Focus on the progress of the lowest performing students in each school
- 6 Report results as close to the end of the school year as possible
- 7 Communicate clearly to parents
- 8 Establish rigorous criteria, with automatic increases, in order to earn an A, B, C, D or F grades
- 9 Use grades to identify schools for recognition, intervention, & support



# Recommendations: A-F School Grading Calculation

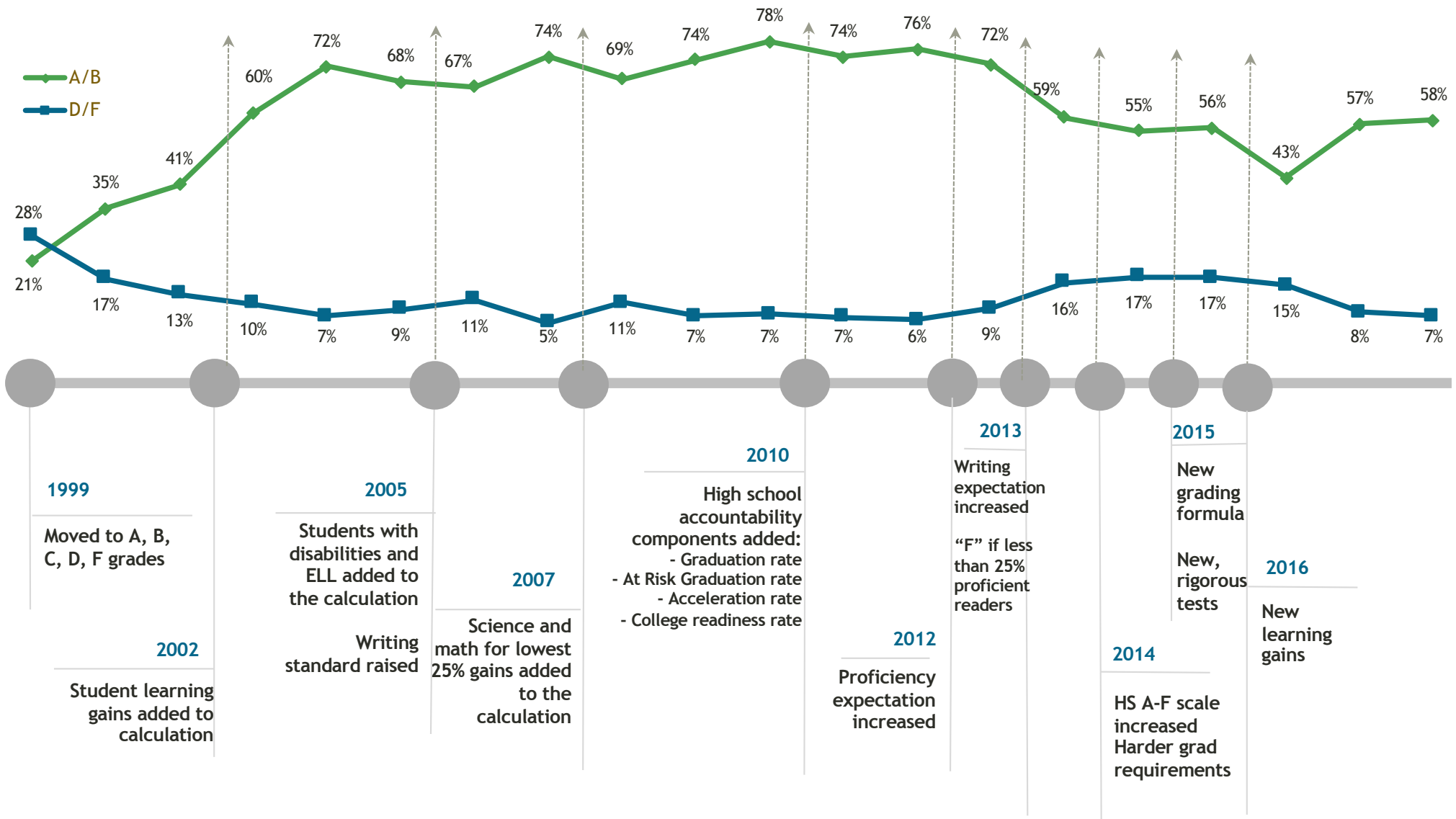


*North Carolina's current A-F calculation is rigorous and focuses on student learning outcomes.*

- Use a criterion-based growth measure instead of normative growth model, EVAAS, to compare the progress of an individual student to a standard, not their peers.
- Balance growth and proficiency in the calculation. However, with the use of EVAAS, a normative growth model, more weight on proficient is acceptable.
- Revise ACT college readiness from UNC admission minimum of 17 to researched readiness scores of 22 representing a 50% chance of a student earning a B or better and 75% chance of earning a C or better on college level course work.
- Report results over the summer so parents and educators have time to make decision before the start of the next school year.
- Consider adding a measure for growth of the lowest performing students, lowest 25% as identified by the prior year test score, in each school as an equitable addition that focuses directly on improving the lowest performers.
- Establish automatic increases to the grading scale so it increases by five percentage points when 65% or more schools earn an A or B in a given year until the grading scale is: 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, and <60% = F.



# Florida A-F Increased in Rigor and Improved Student Achievement Dramatically Since 1999



# State Rankings by Improvements on NAEP



Florida		Reading Grade 4		Reading Grade 8	
	1998-2017	2015-17	1998-2017	2015-17	
ALL Students	2	11	1	9	
FRL Students	2	24	1	17	
		Math Grade 4		Math Grade 8	
	1996-2017	2015-17	1996-2017	2015-17	
ALL Students	2	1	7	1	
FRL Students	2	1	7	3	
Mississippi		Reading Grade 4		Reading Grade 8	
	2011-17	2015-17	2011-17	2015-17	
ALL Students	2	10	13	1	
FRL Students	3	11	16	5	
		Math Grade 4		Math Grade 8	
ALL Students	4	14	9	23	
FRL Students	5	11	3	10	

1996 and 1998, baseline years for math and reading respectively for Florida implementing A-F

2011, baseline year for Mississippi implementing A-F

2015, most recent comparison year

# 2017 NAEP Results



*Florida improved more than any other state in the nation on 2017 NAEP.*

- Florida showed improvement on all four NAEP tests, grades 4 and 8 in reading and math.
- Florida is the only state that showed statistically significant improvement on three of the four assessments, grades 4 and 8 math and grade 8 reading, from 2015 to 2017.
  - The only state to show statistically significant improvement in grades 4 and 8 Math.
- 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students performed above the national public average on NAEP reading.
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade students are above the national public average on NAEP math.
- Significantly outperformed the nation in grades 4 Reading and Mathematics.

*While MS lags the national average on NAEP, significant improvement has been made.*

- Mississippi halved the gap to the National Average from 2011 to 2017 and is the closest to the Grade 4 Reading National Public Average the state has been since the start of NAEP testing. Only DC made greater improvements between 2011 and 2017 than MS.
- Between 2011 and 2017 Mississippi improved by nearly a half a grade level in grade 4 math while the national average declined. Only two states (FL and NE) and DC made greater improvements than MS between 2011 and 2017.
- Between 2015 and 2017 Mississippi ranked first in the nation on improving Grade 8 NAEP Reading scores. Mississippi improved by nearly a half a grade level—the largest improvements made by any state during this time period.
- Since 2011 the performance of Mississippi 8th graders on Grade 8 NAEP Math has improved slightly while the national average has declined.

# Impact of A-F

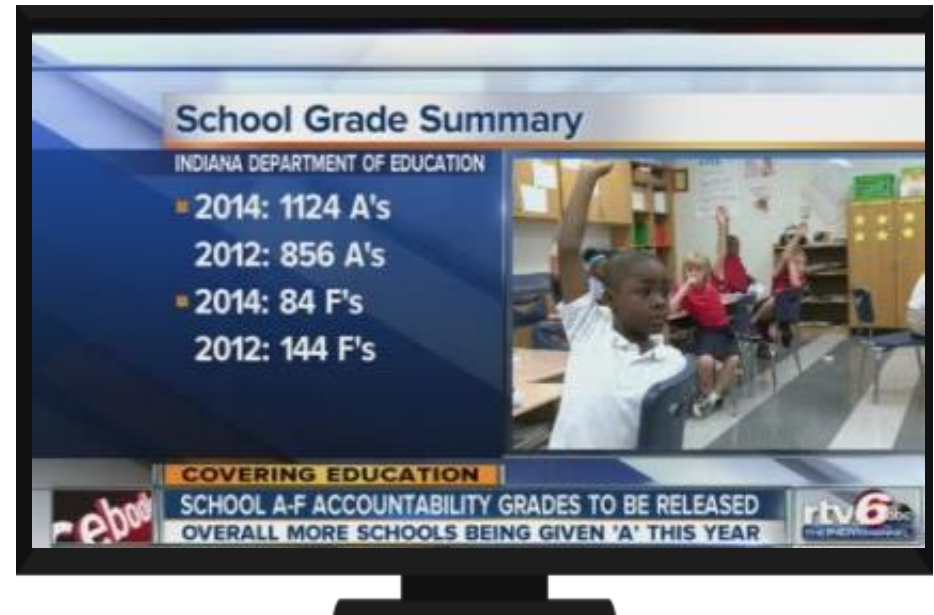


## Increased Transparency

- 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*



*A-F school grades makes the conversation about education reform accessible.*

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



**Thank You!**

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# Florida 2017 NAEP Rankings



*Pure ranking on the scale score to the last decimal.*

FLORIDA	Rank	Florida Score	National Public Score	Difference = FL - National Public	FL Above/Below National Public	Number of States Where FL Outperformed Average Kid
Read 4 - All Kids	5	228	221	7.5	Above	-
Read 4 - Black	4	212	205	7.1	Above	3
Read 4 - Hispanic	1	225	208	16.9	Above	39
Read 4 - White	5	239	231	7.5	Above	51
Read 4 - FRL	2	219	208	11.2	Above	18
Read 8 - All Kids	25	267	265	1.2	Above	-
Read 8 - Black	7	254	248	5.1	Above	1
Read 8 - Hispanic	3	262	255	7.8	Above	14
Read 8 - White	19	274	274	0.7	Above	48
Read 8 - FRL	11	257	253	4.3	Above	4
Math 4 - All Kids	7	246	239	7.2	Above	-
Math 4 - Black	1	233	223	10.6	Above	8
Math 4 - Hispanic	1	242	229	12.5	Above	36
Math 4 - White	5	255	248	7.2	Above	51
Math 4 - FRL	1	239	228	11.0	Above	22
Math 8 - All Kids	34	279	282	-2.8	Below	-
Math 8 - Black	10	262	260	2.5	Above	0
Math 8 - Hispanic	10	273	268	4.6	Above	5
Math 8 - White	28	291	292	-1.5	Below	47
Math 8 - FRL	23	269	267	1.8	Above	3