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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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
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.

Implements 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found positive, meaningful impacts continued six years after A-F was first adopted in NYC, but ceased after A-F was repealed.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.

84%
NC’s 2017-18 A-F grading system meets several ExcelinEd fundamental principles.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>High School Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• English II awarding one point for each percent proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Math awarding one point for each percent proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Other Academic -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Biology awarding one point for each percent proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One point for each percent completing Alg II or Integrated Math III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One point for each percent earning score to gain admission to University of North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One point for each percent earning workplace readiness of Silver, Gold, Platinum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One point for each percent graduating in four years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL - one point for each percent progressing on the English language acquisition assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>SQ/SS - Growth in ELA/Math using a normative valued-added method, EVAAS</td>
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</table>

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
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

- **1999**: Moved to A, B, C, D, F grades
- **2002**: Student learning gains added to calculation
- **2005**: Students with disabilities and ELL added to the calculation
- **2007**: Science and math for lowest 25% gains added to the calculation
- **2010**: High school accountability components added:
  - Graduation rate
  - At Risk Graduation rate
  - Acceleration rate
  - College readiness rate
- **2012**: Proficiency expectation increased
- **2013**: Writing expectation increased
  - “F” if less than 25% proficient readers
- **2014**: HS A-F scale increased
  - Harder grad requirements
- **2015**: New grading formula
  - New, rigorous tests
- **2016**: New learning gains

- **2011**:
  - Students with disabilities and ELL added to the calculation
  - Science and math for lowest 25% gains added to the calculation
  - High school accountability components added:
    - Graduation rate
    - At Risk Graduation rate
    - Acceleration rate
    - College readiness rate
  - Proficiency expectation increased
  - Writing expectation increased
    - “F” if less than 25% proficient readers

- **2014**:
  - HS A-F scale increased
  - Harder grad requirements
  - New grading formula
  - New, rigorous tests
  - New learning gains
### State Rankings by Improvements on NAEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Florida</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1998-2017</td>
<td>2015-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRL Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996-2017</td>
<td>2015-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRL Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mississippi</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011-17</td>
<td>2015-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRL Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011-17</td>
<td>2015-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRL Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
- 4th and 8th grade students performed above the national public average on NAEP reading.
- 4th 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
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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Join ExcelinEd to learn more about education reform in America.

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### Florida 2017 NAEP Rankings

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLORIDA</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Florida Score</th>
<th>National Public Score</th>
<th>Difference = FL - National Public</th>
<th>FL Above/Below National Public</th>
<th>Number of States Where FL Outperformed Average Kid</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read 4 - All Kids</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Above</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read 4 - Black</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>205</td>
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<td>Above</td>
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<td>225</td>
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<td>Math 4 - Black</td>
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