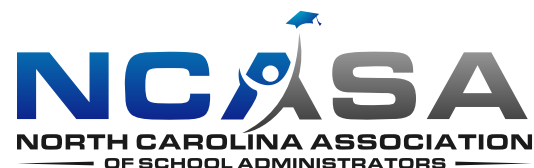


REFINE THE A-F SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADING SYSTEM



BACKGROUND | The A-F school performance grades were established by the Excellence in Public Schools Act and implemented in the 2013-2014 school year for all public schools, both district-led and charter.

These performance grades included on annual report cards for each school and district are made available to the public and used to calculate certain aspects of individual principal pay.

Under the current model, each school's performance grade is determined using two components making up the composite score, with 80% determined by student achievement (based on performance on end-of-year or end-of-course tests), and 20% determined by student growth (based on student progress in one year's worth of learning). School districts can opt out of including the growth component in the calculation if it would lower the school's overall grade.

In 2017, lawmakers changed the way student achievement is calculated to make the A-F school performance grades

compliant with federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) standards. They retained, however, the 80/20 grade calculation, leaving test performance as the predominant factor in the grade, rather than an increased emphasis on how students in the school and district are growing and learning each year.

The 15-Point Scale

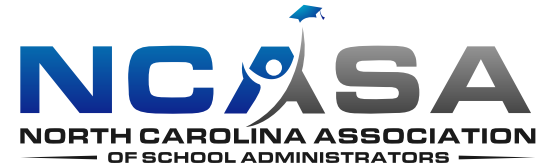
Currently, a school's overall grade is calculated based on a 15-point scale (A = 85–100, B = 70–84, C = 55–69, D = 40–54, F = 39 or Less). This scale is scheduled to change to a 10-point scale beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. This shift in the grading scale will inevitably cause fewer schools to be designated as "A" or "B" and more to be labeled as "D" or "F".

As a result of this expected drop in school performance grades, parents and the public at-large may mistakenly view the declining grades of local schools and districts as an indicator of lower-quality instruction, rather than attributing the drop to the mandatory change in the grading scale.

IMPACT ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES BASED ON 15-POINT vs 10-POINT SCALE USING 2017-2018 PERFORMANCE DATA				
	DISTRICT LED PUBLIC SCHOOLS		CHARTER SCHOOLS	
	OFFICIAL	HYPOTHETICAL	OFFICIAL	HYPOTHETICAL
LETTER GRADE	15-POINT SCALE	10-POINT SCALE	15-POINT SCALE	10-POINT SCALE
A	185	91	15	7
B	717	244	55	22
C	1072	567	60	41
D	471	775	30	42
F	92	860	8	56
TOTAL	2537	2537	168	168

Data in chart referenced above collected and analyzed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

REFINE THE A-F SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADING SYSTEM, cont.



Low-Performing School Criteria

In 2015, the General Assembly also changed the definition of “low-performing schools” to include any school that receives a school performance grade of D or F, regardless of whether the school “met expected growth” or has “not met expected growth” for the year. This means a school could be labeled as “low-performing” even when its students are achieving expected levels of year-to-year growth, thereby increasing parent and public misperception that no achievement or learning is taking place in the school.

Economic Impact

In addition to lowering individual and public perception of school performance, these policies also have a significant impact on the economy of local communities, as well as the state as a whole. The state has been striving to provide a welcoming tax and business environment in order to bring more companies and jobs to North Carolina. However, the tax rate is only part of what a company considers when relocating or expanding. Business leaders also consider the potential quality of life for their employees, including the performance of local schools. As a result, the performance grades schools receive each year can play an important role in business decisions on locating or expanding in a community.

RECOMMENDATIONS | Refining the current A-F school grading system through the following actions will not only improve public perception of student learning and achievement, but will also assist state and community efforts with greatly needed economic development:

- **Retain the 15-point grading scale for the A-F school performance grades** to prevent parents and the public from incorrectly thinking the quality of instruction at public schools is declining.
- **Increase the value of student growth from its current 20% weight in calculating A-F grades**, showing the true work and progress of North Carolina public schools.
- **Exclude schools that satisfy “meet growth” standards from the definition of, and penalties for, low-performing status** to reward academic improvement in struggling schools.
- **Provide incentives for high-performing schools** to encourage student growth and reward continued school success.