

Measuring Up



New School Report Cards begin rolling out this month

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Wisconsin has a new school accountability system and school report cards. These signal a new era of school accountability that honors the complex work of schools and focuses on making sure our students graduate ready for college and career.

The report cards place a high value on integrating information used to tell the public how our schools are doing with information that gives practical guidance to schools on how to improve. In short, the system is designed to be both informative and useful.

What's Measured

Each year, schools will receive report cards that will give them one of five accountability ratings. These ratings will be based on a score from these four priority areas:

- **Student Achievement** in reading and mathematics on state assessments;
- **Student Growth** measured by year-to-year improvements in achievement;
- **Closing Gaps** in performance between specific student groups (comparing English language learners, low-income students, students with disabilities, and members of racial or ethnic groups with their peers);
- **On-Track to Graduation/Postsecondary Readiness** using reliable predictors of high school graduation and postsecondary success.

Accountability Rating

Based on how they perform in the above priority areas, schools will receive an accountability score on a 0 to 100 scale and its associated accountability rating. There are five rating categories. Eventually, a school's rating will determine what level of support the school will receive, as depicted below. Currently, state support is provided only for Title I Focus and Priority Schools, a federal designation for schools

meet their specific needs as part of a new, differentiated statewide system of support.

Insight into a School's Strengths and Weaknesses

Knowing how a school performed on different parts of the index can provide valuable insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses. It can also provide guidance on how to proceed with planning school improvements, especially in terms of

ACCOUNTABILITY RATING CATEGORY	LEVEL OF SUPPORT
Significantly Exceeds Expectations	Rewards and Replication
Exceeds Expectations	Rewards and Replication
Meets Expectations	Local Improvement Efforts
Meets Few Expectations	State Support
Fails to Meet Expectations	State Support

with large achievement gaps or low subgroup performance or schools with lowest achievement in the state, respectively.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will recognize top performers as Rewards Schools and work to disseminate their best practices to struggling schools. In struggling schools, interventions will be required including the development and execution of turnaround or improvement plans. Other schools will be connected with resources that

steering further investigation of performance issues. Used in combination with other school data, the report card and the accountability index provide a foundation for school improvement planning and evaluation.

School Report Cards and Report Card Detail

The DPI will provide two documents as part of the Report Card release: the School Report Card, a one page (front and back) document that summarizes a school's performance

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on the report card and provides some descriptive information about the accountability system; and a lengthier Report Card Detail that includes detail data for each of the accountability calculations as well as some additional, non-accountability data to inform local conversations about school performance and improvement.

The School Report Card is meant for all audiences and is intended to serve the purposes already described. It provides basic accountability index data, and it also describes the sections of the report card.

The Report Card Detail is intended for an audience that seeks a more detailed understanding of the index. It supplies additional data that fill in some of the steps of calculating scores for the various parts of the index as well as supplemental data that, while not directly contrib-

uting to the index score, may help inform conversations about specific aspects of school performance. The Technical Guide provides full details and walk-throughs for the accountability calculations.

■ Direction for Improvement

The new school report card is the face of Wisconsin's new accountability system. The report card rates a school's performance and assigns it one of five accountability determinations, based on an accountability score that provides a balanced look at school effectiveness.

The accountability index and the report card itself are designed not only to provide the public with vital information about their schools but also to give schools practical, constructive direction



for investigating performance issues and designing effective school improvement strategies.

Wisconsin's new accountability system also encompasses a strategy for delivering to schools the level of support they need to address performance issues. The overall goal of the accountability system is to help provide direction and support to Wisconsin schools so that all our students graduate college and career ready. ■

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