



## A-F SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

# F.A.Q.

## Indiana's A through F School Grading System

### What is the A through F school grading system?

Indiana's A through F grading system gives parents, students, educators and communities a clear and concise assessment of how well their schools are doing. This system is a new and better way of measuring and reporting school performance each year, as required by state law.

### Why are A through F school grades important?

Giving schools letter grades for their performance—just as we do for our students—ensures parents, students, educators and communities understand how their schools are performing.

Even more, the new metrics Indiana uses to assign A through F letter grades consider the things that matter most when judging how well a school is doing: student performance, improvement, year-to-year growth in individual student learning, closing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and opportunities for students to gain an early advantage on college and careers (like Advanced Placement courses and technical certifications).

### How are letter grades calculated for schools or districts?

#### High Schools

##### Performance

Schools receive English/Language Arts and Math scores based on the percentage of students who passed the End of Course Assessments for each subject by the end of grade 10.

##### Improvement

A school's letter grade may increase, decrease, or remain the same based on student improvement from grades 8 to 10 and from grades 10 to 12.

##### Graduation Rate

Schools receive a score based on their four-year (on-time) graduation rate.

##### College and Career Readiness

Schools receive a score based on the percentage of graduates who receive at least one of the following:

- a passing score on an Advanced Placement exam
- a passing score on an International Baccalaureate exam
- three college credits
- a passing score on an approved industry certification exam



## Elementary and Middle Schools

### Performance and Improvement

Schools receive preliminary English/Language Arts and Math scores based on the percentage of students who passed the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+) or other state assessments.

### Growth

The Indiana Growth Model measures how much progress each student makes during a school year.

A school's preliminary score may increase, decrease, or remain the same depending on how many students demonstrate high or low growth on the ISTEP+ exam.

### Participation

A school's score is lowered if too many of its students are not tested.

## Who assigns the letter grades to schools?

The Indiana Department of Education calculates letter grades based on data collected throughout each school year and presents the calculations to the State Board of Education. The State Board then reviews these calculations and offers final approval prior to public release of the grades.

## What happens to schools that receive poor grades?

The greatest benefit of the A through F school grading system is heightened community awareness and increased dialogue and action among education stakeholders. Furthermore, in accordance with state law, low performing schools will be held accountable. The law requires the State Board of Education to intervene in a school that has received an "F" for six consecutive years.

## Which Indiana schools are assigned letter grades?

Letter grades are assigned to all of Indiana's public (traditional and charter) and accredited non-public schools as well as any school participating in Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program.

## When can schools and districts expect to receive their A through F grades?

Schools and districts receive preliminary letter grades in September. They have time to review and appeal their grades. The State Board of Education approves the final grades after the IDOE has processed all appeals. Once finalized, the grades are released to the public.

## What is the law governing A through F?

The Indiana General Assembly passed Public Law 221 (P.L. 221) in 1999. The first school performance ratings were made for the 2004-2005 school year. More information on PL221 can be found at [www.doe.in.gov/improvement/accountability/pl221](http://www.doe.in.gov/improvement/accountability/pl221).

## Where can I find rules governing the implementation of school letter grades?

Complete information regarding A through F implementation can be found at [www.doe.in.gov/improvement/accountability/f-accountability](http://www.doe.in.gov/improvement/accountability/f-accountability). In 2010, IDOE began conversations about updating the way school performance ratings are determined. A workgroup of Indiana educators was formed to develop various models and present findings to the State Board of Education. Eventually two models—one for elementary and middle schools and one for high schools—were formulated. After discussion, fine tuning and changes made as a result of public comments, the new metrics were adopted and finalized in February 2012.

