

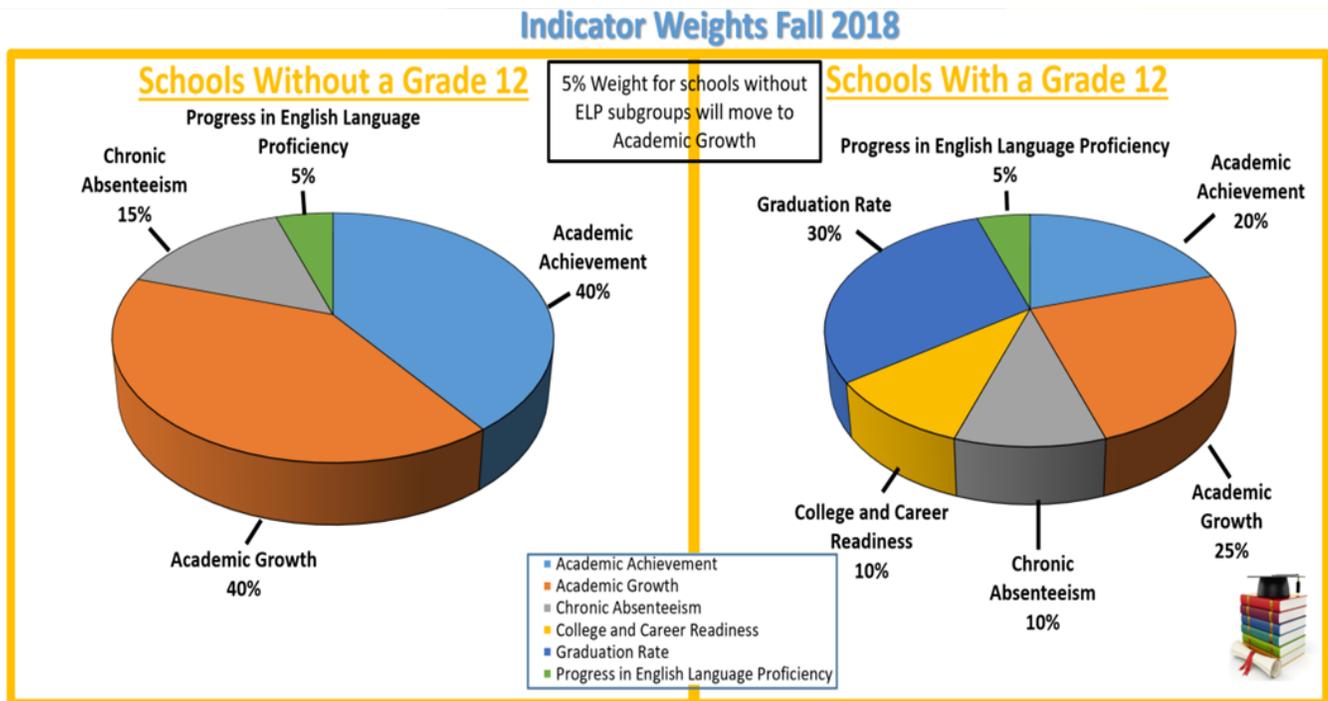
Commonly Asked Questions: Alabama State Report Card

Q. Why do we have a report card? Why now?

The Alabama State Department of Education has developed the report card to comply with state and federal law, following passage of Alabama Act 2012-402 and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. The Alabama State Report Card seeks to communicate how our schools are doing. It is one tool to highlight what we are doing well and what we need to do to help all students succeed.

Q. How are letter grades determined?

The pie graph below illustrates how our new report card determines grades.



Q. What does my score mean?

There are many factors that influence the quality of a school. It is important that we look at the entire report card to find opportunities for improvement. By looking at these measures over time, we can identify our strengths and weaknesses in order to develop plans for improvement.

Q. Does a low grade mean my school is bad?

There are many factors that influence the quality of a school. The letter grade is a snapshot of how a school or school system performed on particular criteria during the previous year. The grades are to be used to identify areas that are performing strongly or areas that are in need of improvement.

Q. I hear some say this is not a good measure of school performance. Why should I believe this grade?

The Alabama State Report Card is one tool to highlight what we are doing well and where we need to improve. It is not meant to be the only measure of a school's performance. It was developed to encourage honest conversations about what we need to do to help all students succeed. It is important that we look at the entire report card to find opportunities for improvement. By looking at these measures over time, we can identify our strengths and weaknesses in order to develop a plan for

improvement. One letter grade does not define a school as there are many factors and attributes that make each school unique.

Q. How can you grade a school's performance based on an exam that was only given once during the school year?

One exam is better than no exam. It is imperative to measure proficiency to know if the educational standards and practices in place are effective for our students. Even one exam can provide the benchmarks that teachers need to help each student focus on the area's most challenging to them so they may grow and succeed. Additionally, federal law requires we test all students in grades three through eight and once in high school.

Q. Are "Excused" absences counted towards the Chronic Absenteeism rate even if doctor's notes are provided? Yes. Excused and unexcused absences are counted towards Chronic Absenteeism.

Q. How does the Alabama State Report Card relate to the Alabama Accountability Act (commonly referred to as the 'Failing Schools Act')?

It does not relate. The criterion for schools being identified for the Alabama Accountability Act is completely different than the criteria used to assign scores and grades for the Alabama State Report Card. The criterion for a school to be placed on the list as mandated by the Alabama Accountability Act is that the school must fall into the bottom 6% of proficiency measures across the state. Due to the difference in criteria, there will be schools on the AAA list that did not receive a score of 'F' on the Alabama State Report Card. There will also be schools with an overall score of 'F' on the Alabama State Report Card that are not on the AAA list.

Q. Are there school choice or transfer options available for students in the Tuscaloosa County School System? No; school choice or transfer options are only possible for schools listed on the Alabama Accountability Act which has not yet been released.

Q. As a (parent/teacher/community member), what can I do to help improve our schools?

Parents and community members can volunteer, attend local school board meetings, and engage in meaningful dialogue with school leaders about what is happening in their schools. We are all in this together. Let's have a conversation. Schools, parents and our larger communities all have a role to play in educating children. The most important thing is that you get involved.

Q. Where can I find more information about what my school's grade means?

Additional data and details about the factors used to determine grades are available on the Alabama State Department of Education's website, www.alsde.edu.

Standardized Assessments History for Alabama

2012 – 2017	ACT Aspire in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10
2018 - 2019	Scantron Global Scholar
2020 - ?	New Test Currently Under Development

Definitions

Accountability Indicators: These are the measures of progress used on the Alabama State Report Card to determine a significant portion of the letter grade assigned. These indicators are: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Graduation Rate, College and Career Readiness, and Chronic Absenteeism.

ACT Aspire: ACT Aspire is the state assessment that Alabama has used to measure the educational standing of students in grades 3 through 8 and 10 from 2012 until 2017. The first PROTOTYPE Alabama State Report card uses data from the last administration of the ACT Aspire to determine academic growth and achievement.

Alabama State Report Card: *The Legislative School Performance Recognition Program Act*, commonly called the Alabama State Report Card, is state law requiring the state as a whole, as well as school systems and individual school, be graded with a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F, according to a collection of indicators including academic growth, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, college and career readiness, and various other measures.

College and Career Readiness: A student who is college and/or career ready is one who can enroll into a two or four year college/university without the need for remediation in freshman level coursework, or into the workforce with some form of credentialing. In Alabama, the college and career ready indicators are as follows: **1.)** A benchmark score on any of four ACT tests **2.)** A passing score (3, 4 or 5) on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam **3.)** A passing score (4, 5, 6, or 7) on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam **4.)** Silver, Gold or Platinum level on ACT WorkKeys **5.)** Earning transcribed College Credit while still in high school **6.)** Passing an industry credentialing test **7.)** Acceptance for enlistment into the military.

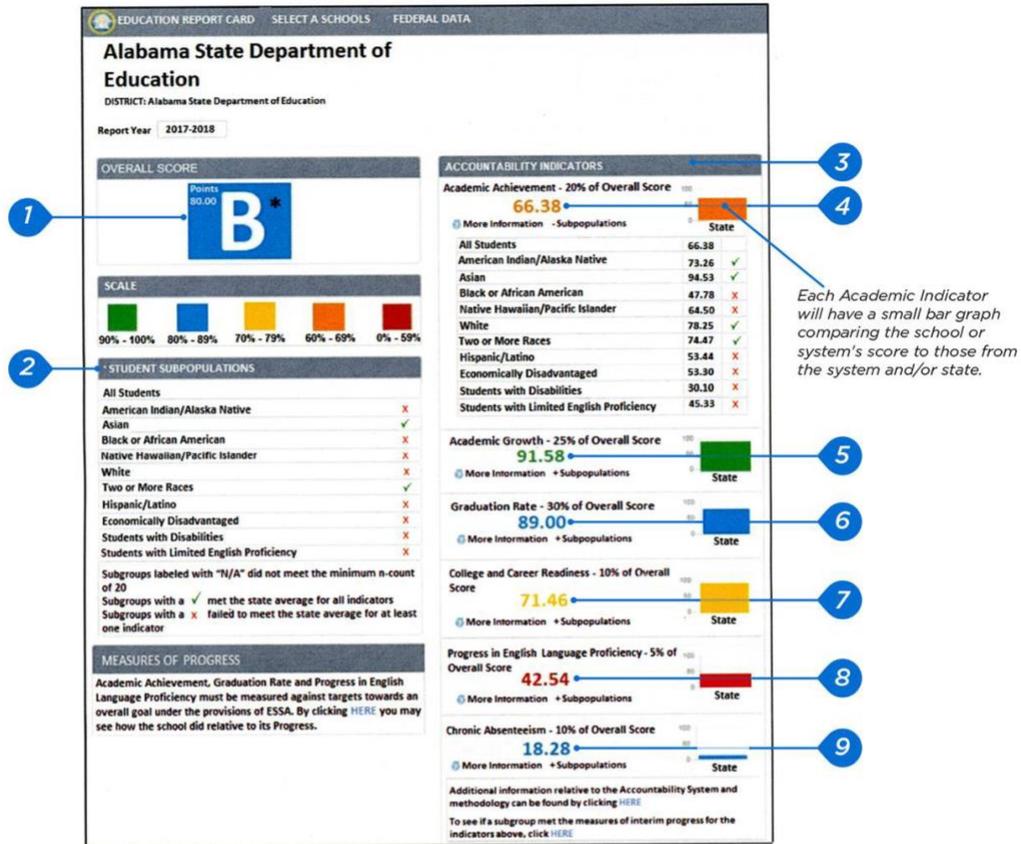
Chronic Absenteeism: A measure of how many students miss a defined number of school days during the school year. Alabama considers missing **15 or more days of school** (excused or unexcused) chronic absenteeism.

Participation: The measure of the active portion of a student body who sat for and took a particular exam/assessment. Current federal law calls for a 95% participation rate on mandated assessments.

Standardized Assessment: The test(s) that students take annually (with the same questions, or a selection of questions from common bank of questions) intended to determine their academic strengths and weaknesses and provide data that helps teachers inform instruction.

ALABAMA STATE REPORT CARD

What You Need To Know



1 LETTER GRADE

This is the overall letter grade for the school or system. It's determined based on the scale below it. The number is made up of all of the elements included on the right side of the page. An asterisk will appear if one or more student subpopulations underperformed.

2 STUDENT SUBPOPULATIONS

It's important to know if all students are learning. If a particular group of students isn't performing well, it will show up here so the school or system can look for solutions to help them get back on track.

3 ACCOUNTABILITY INFORMATION

Privacy is important. If there are fewer than 20 students in any particular group (known as the "n-size") the data will be hidden to protect students' privacy.

4 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

It's important to know how students are performing. This number is based on the percentage of students scoring "proficient" or above on the state standardized test.

5 ACADEMIC GROWTH

It's important to know that students are learning and making progress. This number is based on the progress students made utilizing the state standardized test.

6 GRADUATION RATE

(only on report cards for schools with a grade 12)
 This is the school or system's graduation rate calculated using 4 year cohort data.

7 COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS RATE

(only on report cards for schools with a grade 12)
 It's important graduates are ready for real life when they graduate. This number is the percentage of students who met one or more of the six College and Career Ready Indicators.

8 PROGRESS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

This data shows the percentage of English Learners who are making progress in achieving English Language Proficiency.

9 CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

It's important for students to be at school. This number reflects the percentage of students who were absent for 15 or more days (excused and unexcused) during the school year. This number is subtracted from 100 to help calculate the letter grade.