

Commonly Asked Questions

Alabama State Report Card

Q. Why does my report card from February 2018 say “prototype”? The February 2018 Report Card is a first-draft and has not yet been approved by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). School systems and the public will have the opportunity to provide input on the prototype report card from February 1st through February 23rd. That information will be provided to the Alabama State Board of Education so that a final plan may be provided to the U.S. Department of Education for final approval. Based on those decisions, next year’s report card may be different in terms of indicators, weighting of scores, and the determination of the final grade.

Q. Where is the report card for Northport Elementary and Taylorville Primary? Schools that have a grade level configuration that does not include the testing grades will not receive a report card. Each of these schools are Pre-K through 2nd grade.

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 particularly 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. 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. Was pre-K used in determining the score for Chronic Absenteeism either in the denominator or numerator? No. Pre-K was not used for any of the Report Card indicators.

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 was academic growth determined in elementary and middle schools? Growth between the 2016 ACT Aspire data and the 2017 ACT Aspire data.

Q. How was academic growth determined for high schools? Growth between 10th grade Aspire and 11th grade ACT was used.

Q. Why did the Alabama State Department of Education base 90% of an elementary school’s report card grade on the discarded ACT Aspire? Federal law requires an annual assessment be used to track the educational progress of students. For the past four years, the assessment Alabama has used is the ACT Aspire. It is the only assessment by which we can garner any data to tell how our students are doing academically.

Q. What is a cohort? A cohort is the group of students who begin high school together in the ninth grade. The 4-year cohort includes those students who began ninth grade together and graduated within four years. The 5-year cohort includes those students who graduated high school but needed one additional year to do so.

Q. We have a 4-year and 5-year cohort for students graduating from high school. How were each of these cohorts used in determining the graduation rate score? **20 percent of the graduation rate is determined by the five year cohort and 80 percent determined by the four year cohort on the Alabama State report Card.**

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. The Tuscaloosa County School System does not have any schools on the Alabama Accountability Act list of failing schools.**

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. The Tuscaloosa County School System does not have any schools on that list.**

Definitions

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.

PROTOTYPE: A first, typical, or preliminary model of something. The Alabama State Report Card will have PROTOTYPE watermarked on the front because it is a preliminary model and it has not yet been given full approval by the U.S. Department of Education.