

No Child Left Behind

State and Local Report Cards

Action Guide for Parents and Communities

PUBLIC
EDUCATION
NETWORK

Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

State Education Agency Report Cards

Data the State Must Include:

- Data must be from ALL students in the grades tested in the State, not just those students tested in grades 3-8 as required by NCLB, or those students enrolled for a full academic year, as defined by the state.
- At minimum, States must provide data from their reading/language arts and mathematics assessment, and starting in school year 2007-2008 they must also include data provided from their science assessments.
- For each grade and subject tested, the State report card must include:
 - Percentage of Students Tested

Information on the percentage of students tested. States must report either the percent of students tested, or the percentage of the students not tested. This information must be disaggregated by the following subgroups:

- All students
- Major racial and ethnic groups
- Students with disabilities
- Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Gender and by migrant status (these subgroups are for reporting purposes only, and are not among the required subgroups that determine AYP)
- Disaggregated information on student achievement at each proficiency level

Information on student achievement at each proficiency level must be disaggregated by the following groups: (Note that different states have different names for these levels, but NCLB requires that there must be two levels that describe high achievement such as advanced and proficient, and a third level that provides information about lower performing students, such as basic. Some states report on five levels, for example). See Action Brief on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

- All students
- Major racial and ethnic groups
- Students with disabilities
- Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Gender and by migrant status (these subgroups are for reporting purposes only, and are not among the required subgroups that determine AYP)
- Two-Year Achievement Trend Data
 - Each report card should include the most recent 2-year trend data in student achievement for each subject and each grade.
- Comparisons Between Student Achievement and the State's Academic Expectations
 - States are required to provide comparisons between student achievement levels and the States annual measurable objective in reading/language arts and mathematics. This comparison must be for the following subgroups:
 - All students
 - Major racial and ethnic groups
 - Students with disabilities

- Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Other Academic Indicators

Information on the other academic indicators used by the State for AYP purposes, including graduation rate for high schools, and the States “additional academic indicators” for elementary and middle schools, as defined by the State. This information must be disaggregated by the following subgroups:

 - All students
 - Major racial and ethnic groups
 - Students with disabilities
 - Limited English Proficient (LEP)
 - Economically Disadvantaged
- AYP by Title I Schools and School Districts

States must provide information on AYP including the number and names of each school and district identified for improvement, corrective action and restructuring for school districts and schools receiving Title I, Part A funds.
- Teacher Quality

The professional qualifications, as defined by the State, of all public elementary and secondary school teacher(s) in the State.

 - The professional qualifications, as defined by the State, of all public elementary and secondary school teacher in the State.
 - The percentage of elementary and secondary school teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials.
 - The percentage of classes in the State not taught by highly qualified teachers as defined by NCLB Section 9101 (23), (See Teacher Quality Action Brief) in the aggregate and disaggregated by high-poverty compared to low- poverty schools which means schools in the top quartile of poverty and the bottom quartile of poverty in the State.
- Other Information that the State May Include
 - School attendance rates
 - Average class size in each grade
 - Achievement and gains in English proficiency of LEP students
 - Incidence of school violence, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, student suspensions or student expulsion
 - Percentage of students completing Advanced Placement courses, and the rate of passing Advanced Placement tests
 - Description of community and parental involvement in the state, and how well the state did in informing parents and the community about NCLB and the rate of involvement

Did You Know ...

- That all State Education Agencies (SEAs) that receive Title I, Part A funds must prepare and distribute report cards. Currently, every state receives these federal monies.
- That all school districts that receive Title I, Part A funds must prepare and distribute report cards. Many SEAs take on the responsibility for preparing and producing report cards on

behalf of the local school districts. If the school district is responsible for producing and disseminating report cards, the SEA is required to monitor their development and to ensure that the final product meets NCLB reporting requirements.

- That State and local district report cards must be disseminated annually, and must be broadly distributed to parents and the general community as a whole.
- That there is NO REQUIREMENT that parents be involved in the development, formatting and/or the layout of either the state or local report card. However, it is strongly recommended that parents be consulted and involved in the development of each so that the report card makes sense, is easy to understand and provides information that leads to school improvement.

School District Report Cards

Data the Local School District Must Include:

- Similar to state report cards, the school district data must include academic information for ALL students in the grades tested in the district as a whole and ALL students in the grades tested in each school served by the school district, not just those students who have been enrolled for a full academic year.
- Individual report cards are not required, but information about each school must be included in the school district report card.
- At minimum, local school districts must provide assessment data from their reading/language arts and mathematics assessment, and starting in school year 2007-2008 they must also include data provided from their science assessments.

For each grade and subject tested, the school district report card must include informative data for the school district as a whole, and for each school served by the school district, including non Title I schools. This data must include the following:

- Percentage of Students Tested

The school district must report either the percent of students tested, or the percentage of the students not tested. This information must be disaggregated by the following subgroups:

- All students
- Major racial and ethnic groups
- Students with disabilities
- Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Gender and by migrant status (these subgroups are for reporting purposes only, and are not among the required subgroups that determine AYP)
- Disaggregated information on student achievement at each proficiency level
Information on student achievement at each proficiency level disaggregated by the following groups: (Note that different states have different names for these levels, but NCLB requires that there must be two levels that describe high achievement such as advanced and proficient, and a third level that provides information about lower performing students, such as basic. Some states report on five levels, for example). See AYP Action Brief
 - All students
 - Major racial and ethnic groups
 - Students with disabilities

- Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Gender and by migrant status (these subgroups are for reporting purposes only, and are not among the required subgroups that determine AYP)
- Two-Year Achievement Trend Data
Each report card must include the most recent 2-year trend data in student achievement for each subject and grade.
- Information of How Individual Students in the School District Compared to Students in the State as a Whole, and How Each Individual School in the District Achieved as Compared to Students in the School District as a Whole, and Compared to Students in the State as a Whole. In presenting this information, the school district should report student assessment scores used by the school district to determine AYP status. These are the assessment scores of students enrolled in the school for a full academic year.
- Other Academic Indicators
Information on the other academic indicators used by the State for AYP purposes must be included. This includes graduation rate for high schools and the “additional academic indicators” for elementary and middle schools, as defined by the State. This information must be disaggregated by the following subgroups:
 - All students
 - Major racial and ethnic groups
 - Students with disabilities
 - Limited English Proficient (LEP)
 - Economically disadvantaged
- AYP by School (See Annual Yearly Progress Action Brief)
 - Information on AYP including the number, names of each school, and the percentage of schools in the district identified for improvement, corrective action and restructuring, and how long each school has been identified.
 - Information on schools identified as being in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring must be provided for schools receiving Title I, Part funds.
- Teacher Quality (See Parent Right to Know Action Brief)
For the district as a whole and for each school within the district, information on the following three elements must be provided for elementary and secondary school teachers:
 - The professional qualifications of all public elementary and secondary school teacher in the State, as defined by the State
 - The percentage of all elementary and secondary school teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials
 - The percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers as defined by NCLB Section 9101 (23), in the aggregate and disaggregated by high-poverty compared to low - poverty schools which means schools in the top quartile of poverty and the bottom quartile of poverty in the State
 - The requirement that teachers be highly qualified applies to public elementary and secondary school teachers who teach a core academic subject—which means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography (Title IX, Section 9101 (11))

- Other Information that the State May Include
 - School attendance rates
 - Average class size in each grade
 - Achievement and gains in English proficiency of LEP students
 - Incidence of school violence, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, student suspensions or student expulsion
 - Percentage of students completing Advanced Placement courses, and the rate of passing Advanced Placement tests
 - Description of community and parental involvement in the state, and how well the state did in informing parents and the community about NCLB and the rate of involvement

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

It makes sense that citizens want to know whether our nation's public schools are doing a good job. This is true of community members who typically want to know how good their schools are and the results of the taxes they pay. Annual state and school district report cards can be powerful accountability tools to provide this information if used appropriately. Knowing how to access, use, and understand data are essential skills for improving schools and engaging the community. Data can:

- Help communities vision patterns and trends in school systems related to funding, achievement, teacher quality, curriculum and programs, and school building modernization
- Help communities understand the data so they can clearly see the ways in which some groups receive inferior schooling
- Promote the tasks of identifying, analyzing, and using critical information to uncover issues of race, inequalities and exclusion
- Bring together organizations and people who represent the diversity of a community using them to engage in discussions about school improvement, public responsibility for schools, and planning for next steps
- Get the community to understand that they have a role to play in knowing the school data, and promoting quality public schools, even though they may not have children in school

The purpose of the report card information is NOT to punish public schools, but should be used to stimulate improvements in those schools that have been identified as not meeting expectations.

NCLB relies heavily on test scores to evaluate how well schools and school districts are performing—but more than a single test is required to provide a broad range of evidence and data so that communities are able to draw conclusions and recommend solutions on the basis of accurate information. Remember, the NCLB state accountability systems are NOT designed to measure individual student performance, but to determine if individual school districts and schools, and groups of students within the school district and schools, have met the AYP expectations as established by the state.

Community leaders should encourage their members to do the following:

- Because the law is silent on how and to whom state report cards should be distributed, community leaders must make sure the information is widely distributed. Learn your states intentions. If the state does not plan to distribute the report card widely, implement plans yourself

- to disseminate the information to the community.
- Make sure the community has input on the format, languages, and presentation on the state, district and school report cards so that lay audiences, media representatives, and elected officials can understand the information.
 - Because a single test should not and cannot provide the total picture about school district and individual school quality community leaders should make sure the report card includes other appropriate information about the state, district and individual schools besides test scores including:
 - Attendance rates
 - Mobility rates, or the percentage of students who move into or out of a school or district every year
 - Per student funding
 - Discipline referrals and other safety measures
 - Percentage of parents involved in the school
 - Percentage of high school students enrolled in advance courses such as Advanced Placement, advanced algebra, and International Baccalaureate
 - Dropout rates, or percentage of high school students who drop out of school before they graduate
 - Graduation rates, or percentage of 18-24 year-olds who are out of school and hold high school diplomas
 - Student-to-teacher ratios
 - Educate the community about the NCLB accountability and state mandated testing system.
 - What tests are being administered to students? Is the test useful in determining school performance and quality? Is the test aligned with the state standards? Does the test provide descriptive information that teachers, parents and the community can draw on to help them determine which areas of the school district program is strong and which areas require improvement.
 - Upon release of the state and local report cards, host community meetings to analyze the information and interpret the data for school improvement. Are the data valid? Is it backed by multiple measures? Can community members interpret and understand the data?
 - Seek second or third opinions from testing and assessment experts when major differences arise about the meaning of state and local report cards.
 - Work with the media to help them understand the report card data and how the data can increase opportunities for students and schools.
 - Sponsor workshops for parents on how to use the data to improve schools and recognize schools that are not doing well. Help parents learn what the data means, what additional kinds of data are required to get a complete picture of school quality, and what constitutes the uses and limitations of achievement measures.
 - Provide help for community members and parents in understanding that states and school districts may use tests that are inappropriate in evaluating the quality of schools. Tests that are intended to measure individual student performance rarely are appropriate for evaluating the quality of a school. Work with parents and the community in explaining the various uses of tests. For instance, nationally standardized achievement tests such as the California Achievement Tests, the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (now known as Terra Nova), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, and the Stanford

Achievement Tests. While these tests have been well researched and widely used, they were never intended to be used to evaluate schools.

- Ensure that the indicators being included in the report card are meaningful in the context of true accountability.
- Find out if the SEA/LEA has a communications plan in place early, in order that officials are prepared to disseminate information effectively about the reports cards and are prepared to discuss results.
- Ensure that the SEA/LEA understands that the public wants to know more than just test scores and that they understand that the community is interested in things like discipline statistics, safety, staffing, average number of years experience of teachers, teacher retention rates, teacher career ladder status, average professional salary, etc.
- Encourage your SEA/LEA to invest in a smart design for the report cards. Work with them to make it appealing to the eye and one that includes short narrative explanations of the data, in order that the public will be better able to put the information into context.
- Suggest that the report cards include suggestions on how the data can be used to help schools improve.
- Ensure that the SEA and LEA periodically reviews the indicators used in the report cards for validity.
- Ensure that if the report cards are available on line that they do not only include selected information, and does show all of the SEAs available data.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

Parent leaders have a major responsibility in working with school officials, principals and teachers in explaining report information to parents and how to act on that information to improve school performance. It makes sense that parents want to know whether their child's public school, as well as the other schools in the district, are doing a good job. Therefore, when parents receive the annual report card, which contains mandated NCLB information, they need to assure that the information on the report card is accurate. Based on that information, if a school or school district does not meet the state AYP expectations, there are consequences for that school, which includes placing the school on a "needs improvement" or "corrective action" list.

Annual NCLB state and school district report cards can be powerful tools in holding schools accountable for high school student achievement levels if parents and teachers know what the data means, and if they have confidence that the data is an accurate measure of their school's performance. Knowing how to access, use, and understand data are essential skills for improving schools and engaging the community. Data can:

- Help parents see patterns and trends in schools systems related to funding, achievement, teacher quality, curriculum and programs, and school building modernization.
- Help parents look at data so they can clearly see the ways in which some groups receive inferior schooling.
- Promote the tasks of identifying, analyzing, and using critical information to uncover issues of race, inequalities and exclusion.
- Bring together parents who represent the diversity of a community engaging them in discus-

sions about school improvement, public responsibility for schools, and planning for the next steps.

- Working with community leaders in getting them to understand that they have a role to play in knowing the school data, and promoting quality public schools, even though they may not have children in school.

The purpose of the report card information is NOT to punish public schools, but should be used to stimulate improvements in those schools that have been identified as not meeting expectations. NCLB relies heavily on test scores to evaluate how well schools and school districts are performing—but more than a single test is required to provide us with a broad range of evidence and data so that communities are able to draw conclusions and recommend solutions on the basis of accurate information. Remember, the NCLB state accountability systems are NOT designed to measure individual student performance, but to determine if individual school districts and schools, and groups of students within the school district and schools, have met the AYP expectations as established by the state.

Parent leaders should engage parents in the following activities:

- Educate parents about the NCLB accountability and state mandated testing system. What are the state's academic achievement standards? Are they aligned with the state NCLB tests? What tests are being administered to students? Is the test useful in determining school performance and quality? Is the test aligned with the state standards? Does the test provide descriptive information that teachers, parents and the community can draw on to help them determine what areas of the school programs are strong, and which areas require improvement? What tests are being given in the school to satisfy the NCLB requirements?
- Because the law is silent on how and to whom state report cards should be distributed, parent leaders must make sure the report card information is widely distributed. Learn your states intentions. If the state does not plan to distribute the report card widely, implement plans yourself to disseminate the information to parents.
- Make sure the community has input on the format, languages, and presentation on the state, district and school report cards so that lay audiences, media representatives, and elected officials can understand the information.
- A single test should not and cannot provide the total picture of school quality. The more evidence that's available, the more influence it should have in determining school quality. Make sure the report card includes other appropriate information about the state, district and individual schools besides test scores including:
 - Attendance rates
 - Mobility rates, or the percentage of students who move into or out of a school or district every year
 - Student work samples
 - Assessments that measure students' attitudes and interests related to the school. Data such as: students' interest in the school program, motivation to learn, enjoyment of learning, and children's attitudes about themselves as learners
 - Per student funding
 - Discipline referrals and other safety measures
 - Percentage of parents involved in the school

- Percentage of high school students enrolled in advance courses such as Advanced Placement, advanced algebra, and International Baccalaureate
- Dropout rates, or percentage of high school students who drop out of school before they graduate
- Graduation rates, or percentage of 18-24 year-olds who are out of school and hold high school diplomas
- Student-to-teacher ratios
- Lobby for inclusion of information on the level and quality of parental involvement, an evaluation of community linkages, and the adequacy of resources intended for quality education efforts at the school district and school levels.
- At the state level, use the data to pressure elected officials to provide adequate resources, qualified teachers, additional instructional time, and special programs such as preschool or before- and-after school programs.
- Upon release of the state and local report cards, host community meetings to analyze the information and interpret the data for school improvement. Are the data valid? Backed by multiple measures? Can citizens understand the data?
- Help parents understand the data they are receiving and what that data means for improving the school programs. In many school districts, parents are now receiving more information than ever before. But much of this information comes in the form of graphs, charts, disaggregated number and raw test scores that complies with the requirements of NCLB, but is often reported to parents in “educationese” and jargon that can be confusing and not useful. It is important that report card information is in a form that is not threatening to parents, and provides helpful information. Before parents receive a report card, walk parents through the report card format, the academic expectations required by the state standards, and the consequences if the school does not meet AYP.
- Seek second or third opinions from testing and assessment experts when major differences arise about the meaning of state and local report cards.
- Sponsor workshops for parents on how to use the data to improve schools and recognize schools that are not doing well. Learn what the data mean, what additional kinds of data are required to get a complete picture of school quality, and what constitutes the uses and limitations of achievement measures.
- Provide help for parents in understanding that states and school districts may use tests that are inappropriate in evaluating the quality of schools. Tests that are intended to measure individual student performance rarely are appropriate for evaluating the quality of a school. Work with parents and the community in explaining the various uses of tests. For instance, nationally standardized achievement tests such as: the California Achievement Tests, the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (now known as Terra Nova), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, and the Stanford Achievement Tests. While these tests have been well researched and widely used, they were never intended to be used to evaluate schools. Lead parents in your community through a set of questions related to the appropriateness of the test used in your state and school district:
 - Will the NCLB test promote better learning in the classroom?
 - Does the NCLB test provide teachers with information so they can do a better instructional job?
 - What impact are the NCLB tests having on the teachers and the instructional program?

Are teachers teaching to the tests? Is the curriculum being narrowed to just those subjects that will be tested?

- Does the assessment information provide parents with ideas about how they can help their child maintain high achievement level?
- Do teachers understand and have a clear idea about the skills/knowledge being assessed by the tests?
- Do parent and teachers receive reports of test results that indicate which assessed curricular aims have or have not been mastered by each child who has been tested?
- Do parents have confidence in the NCLB process to evaluate their schools, and does that evaluation correspond to their own judgment about the school's performance?

Whether a school was rated positive or negative by the NCLB system, it is important to go beyond the test scores to determine if that assessment is accurate. It is possible that a school that is rated positive is less than ideal; and a school that is rated negative or "failing" may not be accurate based on the quality of the NCLB test. Always go beyond the test scores. Call a meeting of your parents with teachers and the principal to come up with additional insights. The more information that you can assemble about the actual quality of the school, the more confident that your parents be in the NCLB label.

- Encourage your SEA/LEA to invest in a smart design for the report cards. Work with them to make it appealing to the eye and one that includes short narrative explanations of the data, in order that the public will be better able to put the information into context.
- Suggest that the report cards include suggestions on how the data can be used to help schools improve.
- Ensure that the SEA and LEA periodically reviews the indicators used in the report cards for validity.
- Ensure that if the report cards are available on line that they do not only include selected information, and does show all of the SEAs available data.

Resources

- U.S. Department of Education "Report Cards, Title I, Part A: Non-Regulatory Guidance"
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/reportcardsguidance.doc>
- American Association of School Administrators "Reporting and District Data Best Practices"
<http://www.aasa.org/reporting/index.htm>
- Center for Community Change "Individual School Report Cards: Empowering Parents and Communities to Hold Schools Accountable"
http://www.communitychange.org/Education/PdfFiles/Report_Cards_2001.pdf
- Council of Chief State School Officers "Guide to Effective Accountability Reporting" Found at URL:
<http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/GEAR.pdf>
- Education Commission of the States:
http://nclb2.ecs.org/projects_centers/index.aspx?IssueID=104&IssueName=Report%20Cards
- Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory "School, District, and State Report Cards"
<http://www.nwrel.org/planning/reports/rptcards/h>

- National Governor's Association Non-Regulatory Guidance on Report Cards:
http://www.nga.org/center/divisions/1,1188,C_ISSUE_BRIEF%5ED_5917,00.html

Sample Report Cards

To find state and district report cards, search the Internet. Please find below examples of report cards that are available through an Internet search.

- Barbour County West Virginia School District Report Card
<http://www.wveys.k12.wv.us/nclb/pub/cdnewasss.cfm?sy=03&year=03&county=002&school=202&coname=Barbour&page=pickinfons.asp&rptnum=11>
- Natick District Report Card/ Natick, MA
<http://www.natick.k12.ma.us/nclb/district/NCLB%20Report%20Card.htm>
- Columbus Municipal School District Report Card / Mississippi
<http://www.columbuscityschools.org/nclbcard.htm>
- Wilmington District Report Card / Wilmington, MA
<http://www.wilmington.k12.ma.us/district.htm>
- Brookings District Report Card / Brookings, SD
<http://kc033.k12.sd.us/admin/NCLB/District%20NCLB.pdf>
- Atlantic County School District Report Card / New Jersey
<http://education.state.nj.us/rc/rc03/rcoptions.php?c=01&d=0110&s=010>
- Arlington School District Report Card / Arlington, MA
<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/nclbreportcards/2003-2004/district.htm>
- East Penn School District Report Card / Emmaus, PA
<http://www.eastpenn.k12.pa.us/nochildleftbehind/images/districtrevised.pdf>
- Centerville Elementary School NCLB Report Card / Beverly, MA
<http://www.beverlyschools.org/School%20Report%20Card%20-%20Centerville.pdf>
- Virginia Beach City Public School, Bayside High School Report Card
http://www.vbcps.com/rcard04/high/Bayside_HS.pdf
- Doyle Elementary School Report Card / Doylestown, PA
<http://www.cbsd.org/doyle/Schoolreport%20card.htm>
- Dudley-Charlton Reg. District Report Card / Dudley, MA
<http://www.dc-regional.k12.ma.us/NCLB/District.htm>
- The Park Hill School District Report Card / Parkville, MO
<http://schools.parkhill.k12.mo.us/Graden/reportcards/>
- Walpole County District Report Card / Walpole, PA
http://www.walpole.ma.us/District_Home_page/districtrepcard.htm
- Plymouth School District Report Card / Plymouth, MA
<http://plymouthschools.com/ReportCards/District/index.html>
- Stow-Munroe Falls City School District Report Card / Stow, OH
<http://www.stow.summit.k12.oh.us/reportcard/District.pdf>
- Providence, Rhode Island
<http://www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu/2004/pdf/school/28149H.pdf>
- Fayette County Tennessee
<http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/rptcrd01/system.asp>
- Central Falls School District Report Card / Rhode Island

- <http://131.109.26.242/reportcard/03/rcAccountability.asp?schCode=04109&grade=04>
- Pascagoula School District Report Card /
http://www.pascagoula.k12.ms.us/Results/03_Elem_NCLB-ST-PAS-SCH_Beach.pdf
 - South Williamsport Area School District Report Card
<http://www.mounties.k12.pa.us/PSSA%20Reports/PSSAindex.html>
 - Southern Fulton School District Report Card / PA
<http://www.sfsd.k12.pa.us/CAIU%20District%20Report%20Card.htm>
 - California State Star Schools Testing and Report Card
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr04/yr04rel59.asp>
document=<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr04/yr04rel59.asp>

Our Vision

Every day, in every community, *every* child
in America benefits from a quality public education.

Our Mission

To build public demand and mobilize resources for
quality public education for *all* children through a national
constituency of local education funds and individuals.



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

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