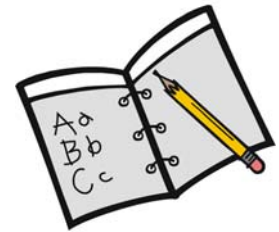


School Report Cards

It's no longer just students who get report cards!

Student Report Cards provide parents with information on how their children are performing at school. School districts now issue annual *School Report Cards* that provide parents with information on how schools are performing. Before discussing these school report cards in more detail, we want to explain how these school report cards fit into the school accountability system.



School Accountability

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a federal education law for public K-12 schools. The law is designed to increase the accountability of schools and school districts in order to improve student achievement. NCLB seeks to eliminate the achievement gap between different groups of students such as those based on race/ethnicity or on family income.

In order to increase school accountability, each state is required by NCLB to set standards for what students should know at different grade levels. Then each year, schools are required to test students at specific grade levels to determine what percentage of students is meeting those standards. Tests primarily cover the areas of reading and math. School districts must then publish school report cards each year on the performance of each school. These school report cards indicate the percentage of students in that school that are on grade level based on the testing. (These school report cards are discussed in more detail later in this handout.)

There are special requirements for Title I schools (public schools that serve a large number of low-income families) in regard to school accountability. *The majority of schools in Arkansas are Title I schools.* A Title I school is considered in "School Improvement" if, for 2 consecutive years, the school does not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward having all students on grade level in reading and math. Consequences for being in "School Improvement" status include having to provide options for students. These options depend on how long a school has been in school improvement status. The options include: (1) Public School Choice, and (2) Supplemental Educational Services (SES).

Public School Choice

Students in Title I schools that are in school improvement status may be eligible to transfer to a higher-performing school. School districts are required to inform parents how to apply for the transfer. School districts are also required to provide transportation to the new school. *Note: Parents must apply for the transfer by the deadline date specified by the school district.*

Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

Students in Title I schools that are in school improvement status may also be eligible to receive Supplemental Educational Services (SES). SES provides free tutoring services. These services are provided outside of regular school hours. This tutoring is paid for by the school district. Schools are required to inform parents if their child is eligible. *Note: Parents must sign their children up for this approved tutoring, or it will not be provided.*

School Report Cards

Report cards on each school's performance are published once per year. Information is also published each year on how each school district and state is performing. School report cards should be provided to parents through the school district. If parents don't receive a school report card they should request a copy from the school's principal, the school's parent facilitator/coordinator, or the school district office. Parents may also obtain information on the performance of an individual school, school district, and the state of Arkansas at <http://normes.uark.edu>

School report cards provide parents with important information that they can use to understand how their child's school compares to other schools in the district and the state. This information can help parents make decisions on where to send their child to school. It can also help lead parents to become more involved in helping improve their child's school. Parents should ask the principal what is being done to address the school's weaknesses. Parents should be part of the solution. Research has consistently shown that when parents are more involved in their children's school and education, student achievement improves.



What information is in a School Report Card?

School Report Cards provide a lot of important information to parents including:

- The percent of teachers at the school who are certified
- The percent of teachers at the school who are “Highly Qualified”
- The school attendance rates
- The graduation rate (for high schools)
- Student achievement levels are reported for the grades tested.
 - Student achievement information is presented for both Math and Reading (Literacy).
 - Student achievement information is presented by the percent of students who performed at different levels (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced)
 - Student achievement levels are reported separately for different groups including: student gender (boys vs. girls), different races/ethnicities, limited English proficient (LEP) students, students from low-income families, and students with disabilities.
 - Information is also provided on changes in student achievement over at least the past two years.
- The school report card should indicate if the school is in School Improvement status.

School Report Cards should be clearly written and easy to understand. If it is not, parents should tell the principal and school district superintendent. Parents can also ask school leaders to schedule a parent meeting to explain the results.

A Final Note to Parents:

As a parent, it is important for you to be actively involved in your child's education. Schools and parents should be partners in the education of children. When schools and parents partner in meaningful ways, the achievement of children improves.

Be informed about school accountability, supplemental educational services (SES), and school choice. Read the School Report Card for your child's school! Know if your child is eligible for supplemental education services (SES) and/or school choice.

*To learn more about **School Accountability, School Choice, and Supplemental Educational Services (SES)** visit the Arkansas State PIRC website at <http://parenting-ed.org>*

You can check to see how your child's school measures up at

<http://normes.uark.edu>

or

<http://SchoolMatters.com>



AR State PIRC/Center for Effective Parenting

Little Rock Center: (501) 364-7580

NW Arkansas Center: (479) 751-6166

For additional resources, visit our website:

www.parenting-ed.org

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