

A Parent Guide to State and Local Report Cards



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Introduction

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, requires every State and district to publish a report card.

The report cards provide parents and the public with important information on State, district, and school performance and progress.

The information in this presentation provides an overview of the types of information included on report cards. States and districts can also add information they believe is useful and helpful to parents and others in evaluating schools' progress.

Education Spending

For the first time ever, *ESSA* requires that State and district report cards have information on how much **is spent per student** for every school.

This information must show how much money comes from federal sources and how much money comes from State and local sources.

Some parents find it helpful to compare student spending in order to make the best decision for their child.





Parent Engagement

ESSA requires States to consult with parents as States develop their report cards. States may do this in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Holding meetings with parents
- Creating a report card committee that includes parents
- Publishing drafts for feedback

Through this consultation, parents are able to advise States on the best way to display the required information. Parents can also explain what information parents need in order to understand how schools are doing.

If you want to get involved in your State's report card feedback process, contact your **State *ESSA* coordinator**.

Accessibility

ESSA requires that report cards be:

- Concise and understandable
- Accessible to the public, including people with disabilities
- Written in plain language that parents can understand
- Available in the languages spoken by large populations of non-English speakers that the State or district serves and have a process to support all non-English speaking parents

To request an accessibility accommodation, reach out to your **State ESSA coordinator**.





Readily Available

States and districts must make report cards available on their websites. Districts without websites may make report cards available in another format.

States and districts also may share report cards in a variety of other ways, such as:

- Printing and providing them in school and district offices, libraries, and community and childcare centers
- Emailing or texting the website link directly to parents
- Providing them at parent advisory group meetings
- Developing smartphone applications that allow parents to access them

If you are having trouble finding your State or district report card, ask your child's school principal or district representative.



Graduation Rates

ESSA requires that State and district report cards include:

- The graduation rates of all students and of each **subgroup** of students who receive a regular diploma or higher credential within four years
- States may publish the graduation rates for students who receive a diploma after more than four years
- Rates of postsecondary enrollment for every high school in the State, if they are available

Graduation rate and post-secondary enrollment data is important to many parents, especially information about what graduates do after high school.

Accountability

ESSA requires that State and district report cards include:

- A clear and brief description of the **State accountability system**, which helps parents and others understand how the State evaluates school performance
- Results of the State accountability system—for example, how the school is performing on the indicators in the State’s system and what schools are identified for improvement and support—which helps parents determine how well a school is performing
- Under *ESSA*, States choose additional accountability indicators, such as educator engagements or chronic absenteeism

Find your state's **ESSA plan**.

School Environment

ESSA requires that State and district report cards include the most recent information about the following:

- In-school suspensions
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Expulsions
- School-related arrests
- Referrals to law enforcement
- Chronic absenteeism
- Incidents of violence (including bullying and harassment)

School environment data helps parents understand information about the school's culture and climate.





Teacher Qualifications

ESSA requires that State and district report cards include the number and percentage of the following:

- Inexperienced teachers, principals and other school leaders
- Teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials
- Teachers who are not teaching in the subject or field for which the teacher is licensed

The above data must show a comparison between high-poverty and low-poverty schools. It might look something like this:

	% in high-poverty schools	% in low-poverty schools
inexperienced teachers	20%	18%
emergency credentials	21%	17%

Parents deserve to know the qualifications of the teachers who spend critical amounts of time with their students.

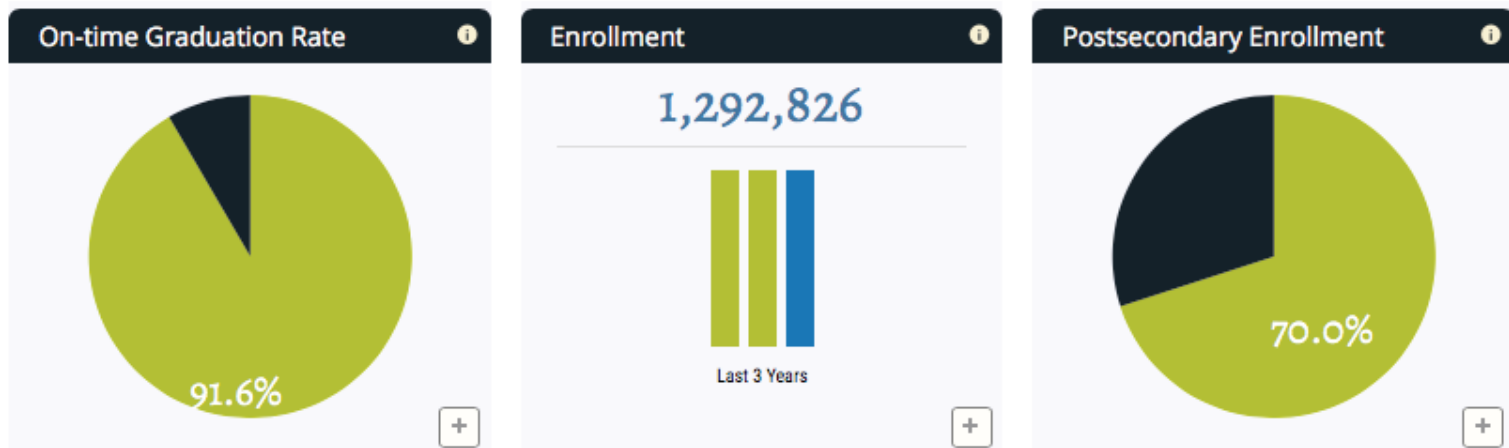
Report Card Examples

Note: The following data is not from the most current school year.



Spotlight: Virginia

Virginia provides visuals that are easy to interpret and have clear headings.



Spotlight: Ohio

Ohio provides stakeholders with a guide to help them interpret data and highlight important questions to ask.

Achievement



The achievement component represents the number of students who passed the state tests and how well they performed on the term. Two new indicators are included in the 2018 measures — the Chronic Absenteeism Improvement Indicator and the End-of-Course Improvement Indicator.

What is being graded?

1. Indicators Met – How did students perform on state tests?
2. Performance Index – How well did students perform on tests overall?

Why is this important?

- It shows if students are meeting grade-level expectations.
- It shows how far above or below grade-level expectations students performed.

What is an A?

- Your school or district must exceed state standards.
- The grade will improve as students score higher on tests.

Questions to ask

- Which students are performing well and which are not?
- In which subjects and grades are students doing well? Why?
- In which students and grades are students not going well? Why?
- Which districts, similar to ours, are doing better than we are? What are they doing?
- Does my school have a high percentage of students who miss a lot of school? Why?

Glossary

Sub-group: A group of students identified by a particular characteristic, such as race, ethnicity, English proficiency, disability status, or income. Using specific data about individual student groups helps to identify and overcome obstacles.

Accountability Plan: The goals States use to determine how well all students are performing academically and where state resources need to be used to ensure schools and districts are being supported.

Annual Tests: Comprehensive tests at the end of the school year that show whether students mastered the State's standards.

Alternate Assessment: The annual test that some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take in place of the general annual test. The alternate assessment is still based on grade level academic standards.

Per-Student Spending: The average amount of money the state, a district, or a school spends for each student.

State Accountability System: A set of policies and practices that a State uses to measure schools' and districts' progress and to which they are expected to adhere.

To learn more about your State and district:



Contact your State:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html>



Read your State's *ESSA* Plan:

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/statesubmission.html>



Contact your local school district.



Attend your local school board meeting.



This document presents a summary of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which amended the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*. This document does not create any new rights or responsibilities. For the full text of the statute, please go to the following link: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/index.html>.

U.S. Department of Education

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