
Understanding the Mississippi Accountability System for Grading Schools and Districts

Overview

Mississippi's public schools and districts are graded annually on an A-F scale. These grades are part of the state's accountability system, which helps educators, families and communities know how well their schools and districts are serving their students. The grading system considers several indicators, including how well students perform on state tests, how much improvement students make on those tests from year to year, and how well graduates are prepared for college and the workforce.

Federal and State Requirements

The federal government requires all states to develop a system to annually evaluate the performance of public schools to ensure all students are provided a quality education. Mississippi [legislation](#) requires a single A-F grading system that meets state and federal requirements. The law requires grades to be based on student achievement and growth on state assessments, with an emphasis on the progress of the lowest performing 25% of students, and the percentage of students graduating within four years. Since the law was enacted, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), legislators, superintendents, administrators, and policy leaders have worked to develop and refine the system.

Higher Standards Beginning in 2025-26

The accountability system is designed to drive continuous improvement. Starting in the 2025-26 school year, schools and districts must meet [higher standards](#) to earn each letter grade because state law requires that standards for student, school and district performance increase when proficiency rates exceed 75% or when **65% of schools or districts earn a grade of "B" or higher**. Schools and districts met this target in 2023, which prompted the MDE to start the two-year process for resetting accountability standards. The new standards are based on impact data and performance level descriptors, which define what students must know and be able to do at each achievement level. **Because of the shift from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced standards, grades assigned for the 2025-26 school year will set a new baseline for measuring the performance of schools and districts and cannot be compared to grades for previous school years.**



Accountability Grade Components

- Student performance in **math and English Language Arts (ELA)** on state assessments in **grades 3-8** and in high school **Algebra I and English II**
- Percentage of **students** meeting annual expected **growth** in math and ELA
- Percentage of the **lowest performing 25% of students** meeting annual expected **growth** in math and ELA
- Student performance in **science** on state assessments in **grades 5, 8 and Biology**
- How well **English Learners** make progress toward proficiency in the English language
- Four-year **graduation rate**
- **Starting in 2025-26**, grades for high schools and districts will include **expanded measures of college and career readiness**, specifically:
 - Performance on the ACT, SAT, ACT WorkKeys or Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
 - Advanced coursework performance including Advanced Placement, dual credit/dual enrollment courses, and career and technical education programs
 - Industry certifications, diploma endorsements and on-time and five-year graduates

Note: U.S. History assessment was eliminated starting in the 2025-26 school year.

What is Not Included in Accountability Grades?

- Grades do not measure how an individual student or teacher performs.
- Grades do not take into consideration other things a school may be doing well, such as meeting students' social, emotional, or health needs or how well students perform in other subjects.

How are Accountability Grades Calculated?

Grades are calculated based on the number of points schools and districts earn in each component. Growth makes up more than half the grade for elementary schools and more than one third the grade for high schools and districts.

Where Can the Public See School and District Grades?

- [Mississippi Succeeds Report Card](#) includes school and district grades since 2017-18 and additional information about their performance: msrc.mdek12.org
- Accountability grades prior to 2017-18: mdek12.org/publicreporting/accountability

Accountability Points and Grading Scales

Elementary and Middle Schools (700 possible points)

English Language Arts	Math	Science	English Language Learners
Proficiency 95 points	Proficiency 95 points	Proficiency 95 points	Progress to proficiency 35 points
Growth All Students 95 points	Growth All Students 95 points		
Growth Lowest 25% of Students 95 points	Growth Lowest 25% of Students 95 points		

High Schools and Districts (1,000 possible points)

English Language Arts	Math	Science	English Language Learners	Graduation in 4 Years	Readiness Index
Proficiency 95 points	Proficiency 95 points	Proficiency 47.5 points	Progress to proficiency 50 points	4-year cohort graduation rate 190 points	Acceleration (advanced courses) 47.5 points
Growth all students 95 points	Growth all students 95 points				Assessment (ACT/SAT/WorkKeys/ASVAB) 47.5 points
Growth lowest 25% of students 95 points	Growth lowest 25% of students 95 points				Achievement (diploma endorsements, on-time and 5-year graduates) 47.5 points

Grading Scale (minimum points required to earn grade)

Total points earned correspond to a grade on the A-F scale. Minimum points to earn each grade:

Grade	Elementary and Middle Schools	High Schools	Districts
A	457	769	694
B	402	689	642
C	352	627	572
D	277	567	519
F	0	0	0

Performance Level Descriptors

Defines school performance at each grade level.

Grade	School Performance Level Descriptor
A	<p>Recognizes an exemplary school in which students are generally exhibiting HIGH rates of proficiency AND HIGH rates of growth for all students AND students in the low 25% group.</p> <p>A-rated schools are among the top performing schools in the state and typically earn HIGH or VERY HIGH ratings for all indicators, including acceleration, college and career readiness, and graduation rate (high schools only) with few exceptions.</p>
B	<p>Recognizes a high performing school in which students are generally exhibiting HIGH rates of proficiency OR HIGH rates of growth for all students AND the low 25% group.</p> <p>B-rated schools typically perform at a MODERATE to HIGH level across multiple indicators including acceleration, college and career readiness, and graduation rate (high schools only). It is uncommon but possible for a B-rated school to have an indicator rated below MODERATE.</p>
C	<p>Signifies school meets expectations overall. Students generally have MODERATE rates of proficiency OR MODERATE rates of growth for all students AND the low 25% group.</p> <p>C-rated schools usually exhibit MODERATE performance across indicators including acceleration, college and career readiness, and graduation rate (high schools only), but some may be LOW. It is uncommon for these indicators to be VERY LOW.</p>
D	<p>Identifies a school exhibiting unsatisfactory performance below the state's expectations. Students generally have LOW rates of proficiency OR LOW rates of growth for all students AND the low 25% group.</p> <p>D-rated schools usually exhibit LOW performance across indicators including acceleration, college and career readiness, and graduation rate (high schools only) with some exception. However, the majority of indicators are not VERY LOW.</p>

For more information: mdek12.org/communications/raisingthebar