

# Information for Parents

## District & School Report Cards

### 2013-14 School Year

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In September, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will issue **District** and **School Report Cards** for your child's school and district. The information within the School Report Card is based on data primarily from the previous school year. These report cards will help parents understand how their child's school is doing and help schools identify where they can improve to help all children learn, advance to the next grade, and graduate ready for college and career. Our goal is to help every student in a Wisconsin school succeed, graduate, and be ready to pursue further education and a career.

**How were the Report Cards developed?** The report cards are just one part of a statewide accountability system for schools. The State Superintendent, Governor, legislative leaders, and DPI staff worked closely with parents, educators, and members of the business community to develop the system. The U.S. Department of Education has reviewed the recent changes to the accountability system. Both the accountability system and the report cards will continue to improve and evolve in future years as more data becomes available.

**How do the Report Cards work?** Each district and school will earn a "score," called an overall accountability index score, from 0 to 100. This score is displayed on the report cards. The accountability index score that your school and district receive are based on performance in four priority areas:

- **Student Achievement** in reading and mathematics on state assessments
- **Student Growth** measured by year-to-year improvements in achievement
- **Closing Gaps** in performance between specific student groups (comparing English language learners, low-income students, students with disabilities, and members of a racial or an ethnic group with their peers)
- **On-track and Postsecondary Readiness** including graduation or attendance rates, reading and math achievement, and ACT participation and performance

In addition, the report cards display the district or school's performance on three areas of student engagement:

- **Test Participation** in reading and mathematics state assessments
- **Absenteeism Rate** measuring chronic absenteeism
- **Dropout Rate** measuring the rate of students leaving school without graduating

A district or school is placed into one of five rating categories—based on its performance in the above areas—from *Fails to Meet Expectations* to *Significantly Exceeds Expectations*. The statewide accountability system includes sharing effective practices of high-performing schools and support to help struggling schools improve.

**How does the District Report Card differ from the School Report Card?** The District Report Cards are calculated for the district as a whole. In other words, these report cards treat the district as if it were "one big school" responsible for all students in the district. District Report Cards look very similar to the School Report Cards with one primary exception: District Report Cards include both attendance and graduation scores.

**What do the “scores” on the Report Cards mean?** An accountability score reflects many measures that factor into a school’s performance. The School and District Report Cards are intended to help all districts and schools get a better picture of how well they prepare students to graduate ready for college and career.

It is important to note that the 0 to 100 accountability index score is not a “percent correct” measurement, so the scores are not the same as grades.

**What do the Report Cards look like?** The Department of Public Instruction will provide each district and school with two documents:

- The Report Cards, one-page (front and back) documents that summarize performance and provide the accountability score and rating; and
- A lengthier Report Cards Detail packet with detailed data about each of the priority areas, student engagement indicators, and other data that will inform local conversations about performance and improvement.

**How often will my child’s district and school receive Report Cards?** Report Cards will come out every year and will be publicly available on the DPI website.

**As a parent, how can I use the information on the Report Cards?** Review your child’s District and School Report Cards every year. The report cards are designed to inform parents and the community, and to drive discussion about student learning. Parents can:

- Ask school staff to sponsor a parent meeting to talk about the report cards and the areas of strengths and improvement they indicate for your child’s district and school. Ask school staff what steps the school is taking to help students succeed and improve.
- Support your child’s learning and your child’s school. Ask your school principal how parents can help the school improve. Attend school events such as family learning nights with your child. Volunteer to help at school events or to work one-on-one with children to improve their skills. Join your school’s parent group to learn more about school programs and efforts that make the school a better place for all students.
- Bring the report cards to parent-teacher conferences and talk about student achievement data. Ask how you can help your child improve and be on-track to graduate.

