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Report: Wisconsin among few states with meaningful accountability system

DENVER – Education Commission of the States (ECS) today released a new report identifying Wisconsin as one of nine states measuring and reporting the five essential indicators of a meaningful accountability system. The report, which details findings of a review of school report from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, found a vast majority of states struggle to create school accountability systems that are accessible, meaningful to parents and measuring indicators recommend by education experts.

In [*Rating States, Grading Schools: What Parents and Experts Say States Should Consider to Make Accountability Systems Meaningful*](#), ECS experts conducted a three-part analysis including assigning experienced online **researchers** to find school accountability reports in each state; asking **parents** to rate a school report card in each state on overall usefulness; and convening **experts** to determine essential indicators for meaningful school accountability systems.

Wisconsin was named by parent reviewers as one of six report cards that are informative, readable and useful.

“There is no substitute to an informed and empowered body of parents,” said Jean-Claude Brizard, a contributing expert and the former CEO of Chicago Public Schools. “Therefore school accountability systems must equip parents with the information they need to ensure their children are being well-served – and to insist upon change if that is not the case. That’s why it is so important for states to get these systems right.”

Brizard, along with nine other education experts, identified the five essential indicators of meaningful accountability systems that states should measure and report:

- Student achievement
- Student academic growth
- Achievement gap closure
- Graduation rates
- Postsecondary and career readiness

Other states identified as using and reporting all five indicators: **California, Kentucky, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Utah.**

Wisconsin and Ohio were the only two states whose report cards were top picks by parents while also meeting and reporting all five essential indicators.

“Wisconsin is a state dedicated to creating a high-quality accountability system, and to effectively communicating the results of such a system to the public,” said ECS president Jeremy Anderson. “Transparency of accountability systems is essential for parents, educators and policymakers to make informed decisions about their students and schools.”

ECS asked parents and researchers for their top choices among the accountability report cards and cross-referenced these states with the experts’ essential indicators. Among the findings:

- *Parents* identified six top report cards, with the **District of Columbia** and **Illinois** the clear winners, followed by **Delaware**, then **Arkansas**, and **Ohio**.
- *Researchers* agreed eight state report cards stood out from the rest, with the top three picks being **Arizona**, **Illinois** and **Ohio**. The others included **Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts** and **Maine**.

ECS conducted the review to help state policymakers create accessible, useful and effective school accountability systems. In January, ECS released a 50-state database listing all indicators measured and reported by states.

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[The Education Commission of the States](#) was created by states, for states, in 1965. We track policy, translate research, provide unbiased advice and create opportunities for state policymakers to learn from one another.