



Accountability Issue Brief

NCSBA Position

School Grades: The current formula used to calculate school grades, 80% student achievement and 20% student growth, is too heavily concentrated on test scores and does not adequately reflect school quality or student performance. NCSBA believes consideration should be given to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s advisory group that first convened in September 2022 to create recommendations for redesigning the school accountability model. Additionally, any attempt to reform the State’s model should require a comprehensive review and revamp of the statewide testing program to ensure it aligns with its intended goals.

Low-Performing Schools: The definition currently in place for a “low performing school” is misleading and requires modification. Low-performing schools are currently defined as “those that receive a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of ‘met expected growth’ or ‘not met expected growth.’”¹ To highlight the issue with the current definition, see the chart below.

School Performance Grade	Exceeded Expected Growth	Met Expected Growth	Did Not Meet Expected Growth	Low-Performing School?
A, B, or C			X	No
D or F			X	Yes
D or F		X		Yes
D or F	X			No

As highlighted in the chart above, a school that receives a school performance grade of A, B, or C but does not meet expected growth is **NOT** labeled as a “low-performing” school. On the other hand, a school that receives a school performance grade of D or F and either **meets expected growth** or does not meet expected growth **is labeled as a “low-performing” school**. It is misleading to say that a school that receives a school performance grade of A, B, or C but does not meet expected growth is doing better by its students than a school that receives a school performance grade of D or F but meets expected growth.

According to the 2021-22 Annual Report on the performance and growth of North Carolina public schools:

- 429 public schools with an overall grade of D or F met expected growth but were still labeled as a “low-performing” school.
- 319 public schools with an overall grade of B or C did **NOT** meet expected growth and were **NOT** labeled as a “low-performing” school.²

¹ G.S. §115C-105.37(a)

² 2021-22 Performance and Growth of North Carolina Public Schools, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, September 1, 2022.

Issue Background

The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) is required to issue an annual "report card" for the State, local school districts, and individual public schools.³ The annual report card for each school includes performance data, an overall academic growth score, and an overall performance grade. The annual report card also designates each school as has exceeded, has met, or has not met expected growth.⁴

School Achievement Score

The school achievement score is determined by the sum of points earned by a school on several measures, which are outlined in the charts included at the end of this brief. To calculate the overall school achievement score earned by schools, the SBE

1. Weighs achievement measures based on the number of students in a school
2. Proportionally accounts for the absence of school achievement measures in a school⁵

School Growth Score

The school growth score represents the academic progress that students make over the course of a grade or class. The SBE uses the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) to calculate the overall growth score earned by schools. In calculating the growth score, the SBE weighs:

- Kindergarten – 8th Grade
 - The achievement measures listed in the chart below that have available growth values
- 9th – 12th Grade
 - Either the Algebra I or Integrated Math I end-of-course test or, for students who completed Algebra I or Integrated Math I before ninth grade, another mathematics course with an end-of-course test
 - English II end-of-course test⁶

The numerical values used to determine whether a school has exceeded, has met, or has not met expected growth are translated to a 100-point scale and used for school reporting purposes.

School Performance Grade

The **school performance grade** is calculated by adding the school achievement score and the school growth score. The school achievement score accounts for 80% and the school growth score accounts for 20% of the total sum. For all schools, the total school performance grade is measured on a 100-point scale with the following letter grades:

A = 85-100 **B** = 70-84 **C** = 55-69 **D** = 40-54 **F** = 39 or less

³ G.S. §115C-12(9)c1 and G.S. §115C-83.15(g)

⁴ North Carolina School Report Cards, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, <https://ncreports.ondemand.sas.com/src/index?lng=en> (accessed January 25, 2023)

⁵ G.S. §115C-83.15(b)

⁶ G.S. §115C-83.15(c)

School Achievement Score / Kindergarten – 8th Grade

Grade	Subject	Measure	Point System
3 – 8	Mathematics	Annual Assessments (includes any mathematics course with an end-of-course test)	1 point for each % of students who score at or above proficient
3 – 8	Reading	Annual Assessments	1 point for each % of students who score at or above proficient
5 & 8	Science	Annual Assessments	1 point for each % of students who score at or above proficient
3 – 8	English Language	Annual Assessments	1 point for each % of students who progress in achieving English language proficiency

School Achievement Score / 9th – 12th Grade

Grade	Course	Measure	Point System
9 – 12	Algebra I or Integrated Math I	End-of-Course Test	1 point for each % of students who score at or above proficient
9 – 12	If student completed Algebra I or Integrated Math I before 9 th grade, another mathematics course	End-of-Course Test	1 point for each % of students who score at or above proficient

9 – 12	English II	End-of-Course Test	1 point for each % of students who score at or above proficient
9 – 12	Biology	End-of-Course Test	1 point for each % of students who score at or above proficient
9 – 12	Algebra II or Integrated Math III		1 point for each % of students who complete with a passing grade
9 – 12		Nationally Normed Test of College Readiness	1 point for each % of students who achieve the minimum score required for admission into a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina
9 – 12	Career & Technical Education Courses	Nationally Normed Test of Workplace Readiness	1 point for each % of students who score at Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels
9 – 12			1 point for each % of students who graduate within four years of entering high school
9 – 12			1 point for each % of students who progress in achieving English language proficiency