

# Information for Parents

# School Report Cards

October 2012

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In October, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will issue a **School Report Card** for your child's school and for every public school in Wisconsin. The School Report Card will help parents understand how their child's school is doing and where it can improve. The new report cards will help all Wisconsin public schools get a better picture of how well they help 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 School Report Cards developed?** The School Report Cards are just one part of a new, statewide accountability system for schools. DPI worked closely with parents, educators, and members of the business community to develop the system. The Governor, State Superintendent, legislative leaders, and DPI staff worked with educators throughout Wisconsin and with the U.S. Department of Education to shape the new accountability system. This system, and the report cards, will continue to evolve in future years.

**How does the School Report Card work?** Each school will earn a "score," called an accountability index score, from 0 to 100. This score is displayed on the report card. The accountability index score that your school receives is based on the school's performance in four priority areas:

- **Student Achievement** in reading and mathematics on state tests
- **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 racial or ethnic group with their peers)
- **On-track/Postsecondary Readiness**, including graduation or attendance rates, reading and math achievement, and ACT participation and performance.

In addition, the School Report Card displays the school's performance on three areas of student engagement:

- **Test Participation Rate** in reading and mathematics state tests
- **Absenteeism Rate** measuring chronic absenteeism
- **Dropout rate** measuring the number of students dropping out of school

A school is placed into one of five ratings—based on its performance in the above areas—from *Significantly Exceeds Expectations* to *Fails to Meet Expectations*. The new statewide accountability

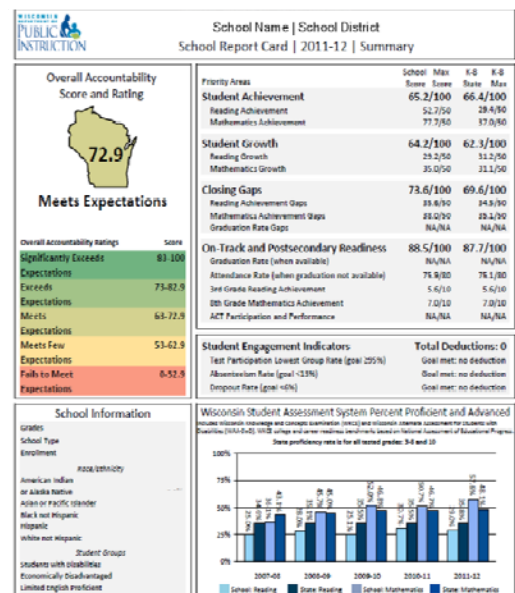
system will include ways to spread effective practices of high-performing schools and support to help struggling schools improve.

**What does the “score” on the School Report Card mean?** A school’s accountability score reflects many measures that factor into a school’s performance. The accountability score will help school staff determine what areas the school does well in and where it needs improvement. The School Report Card provides detailed information about the performance of student groups at the school, including racial groups, disability, poverty, and English language learners.

It’s 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 does the School Report Card look like?** The Department of Public Instruction will provide two documents when School Report Cards are released:

- The School Report Card, a one-page (front and back) document that summarizes a school’s performance and provides the accountability score and rating; and
- A lengthier Report Card Detail packet with detailed data about each of the priority areas, student engagement indicators, and other data that will inform local conversations about school performance and improvement.



**How often will my child’s school receive a School Report Card?** School Report Cards will come out every year. Once finalized, the School Report Cards will be publicly available on the DPI website, organized by district.

**As a parent, how can I use the information on the School Report Card?** Review your child’s School Report Card every year. The School Report Card is designed to inform parents and the community, and to spur discussion about our children’s learning. Parents can:

- Bring the School Report Card to parent-teacher conferences and talk about the student achievement data on it. Ask how you can help your child improve and be on-track to graduate.
- Ask school staff to sponsor a parent meeting to talk about the School Report Card and the areas of strengths and improvement it indicates for your child’s 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.