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ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOLS

September 2, 2026

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Orange County Schools Reaches Historic Academic Milestone with No Low Performing Schools

OCS celebrates districtwide achievement and builds on consecutive years of academic progress

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. — Orange County Schools has reached a historic academic milestone, marking a defining moment in the district's continued pursuit of excellence. For the first time since 2017, no school in the district is designated as low performing, and all 13 schools earned a performance grade of C or higher for the 2025–2026 school year. The achievement reflects years of dedicated work and a collective commitment to student success shared across classrooms, schools, families and the Orange County community.

The milestone represents more than a single year of achievement. It reflects a districtwide culture grounded in the belief that every student can succeed and strengthened by a commitment to academic excellence and continuous growth. These results show what can be achieved when an entire school district moves forward with purpose and turns a shared vision for student success into measurable progress.

The 2025–2026 results also build upon the academic momentum OCS has experienced since Superintendent Dr. Danielle Jones began leading the district in February 2024. During her first two full academic years as superintendent, OCS has reached consecutive historic milestones while strengthening its focus on student achievement and sustained academic progress.

The results are part of North Carolina's annual school accountability reporting administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The state accountability system measures student performance and academic growth to evaluate how schools are progressing.

Key 2025–2026 milestones for OCS include:

- No schools are designated as low-performing, marking a significant districtwide academic milestone.
- All 13 schools earned a performance grade of C or higher.
- Five schools earned a B and eight earned a C.
- Both comprehensive high schools earned B grades.

- Cedar Ridge High School exceeded growth for the tenth consecutive year.
- Orange High School exceeded growth for the third consecutive year.
- Growth was met or exceeded by 85% of all schools.
- Black students, White students and economically disadvantaged students achieved their highest levels of academic performance since North Carolina's current accountability model began in 2013–2014.
- Hispanic students rank as the highest performing subgroup for growth for overall grade level proficiency.
- Academic performance increased across every student group measured, with each group improving by at least two percentage points, demonstrating continued progress toward closing achievement gaps.
- The results follow a historic 2024–2025 school year when 100% of OCS schools met or exceeded academic growth for the first time.

"This milestone belongs to the entire Orange County Schools community," said Superintendent Dr. Danielle Jones. "It reflects the extraordinary work happening in our classrooms, the determination of our students and the belief our families place in our schools every day. What makes this moment especially meaningful is knowing that progress is taking place across our district. We celebrate what we have accomplished together, and we move forward with an even greater responsibility to ensure every student experiences the excellence we know is possible."

The district enters the 2026–2027 school year with that same collective commitment guiding its next chapter through Engage Orange, the new five year strategic plan. Approved by the Orange County Board of Education in June, the 2026–2031 plan provides a shared direction for building upon academic progress and turning the district's momentum into stronger, lasting outcomes for every student. All OCS academic milestones and detailed results from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Accountability Report can be viewed in the 2025-2026 district summary report on the [NCDPI](#) website.

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Orange County Schools' mission is to educate students in a safe, inclusive environment where we engage, challenge, and inspire them to reach their maximum potential. Orange County Schools serves approximately 6,600 students across 13 schools and is committed to fostering belonging, promoting academic excellence, and building strong partnerships with families and the community to prepare every student for lifelong success.



