

A-F Grades: 10 Key Talking Points

For school board members explaining the new A-F grade cards to parents, staff, and the community.

1 Every school will get a letter

Executive Order 26-01 gives every public district, building, and charter an A-F grade each year. The State Board approved the framework on September 15, 2026.

6 The first grades are a preview

Draft grades use 2024-25 data, now nearly two years old, and leave out literacy. Districts review them before public release, and full grade cards are not expected until September 2027.

2 It adds to APR; it does not replace it

The APR, which meets federal ESSA requirements, and MSIP 6 accreditation are unchanged. A fully accredited district could still receive a D.

7 Buildings may earn different letters

K-8 and high schools are graded on different scales, and the district grade has its own weighting rather than averaging buildings. Some small buildings may not receive a grade at all.

3 Simple math, complex inputs

Points earned divided by points possible: 84 for K-8, 96 for high school. A is 89% or above, B 76-88%, C 63-75%, D 50-62%, F below 50%.

8 Look behind the letter

Each grade breaks down into points on individual measures. A school with lower achievement may show strong growth, and those details show where we are strong and where we are working.

4 It is built almost entirely on tests

Grades come from MAP achievement and growth, a new growth to proficiency measure, and, for high schools, college and career readiness and the four-year graduation rate.

9 Students start in different places

We expect excellence from every student. The grade does not adjust for English Language Learners, special education, or free and reduced lunch, so growth is the best way to see progress.

5 A letter leaves a lot out

Attendance, school climate, untested subjects, continuous improvement, and students who graduate in five to seven years are not counted, even though APR measures them.

10 Accountability needs support

We welcome accountability. But the framework adds no new supports, and the state currently provides more than \$400 less per student than its own funding formula calls for.