



Arizona State Board of Education

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**For Immediate Release
September 26, 2017**

State Board of Education Finalizes the A-F Accountability System

Yesterday, the Arizona State Board of Education finalized the A-F Accountability System and later this week, the Arizona Department of Education will award letter grades to schools based on a range of academic measures. The letter grades measure achievement in the 2016-2017 school year as a tool to help schools improve, parents to better understand which school is best for their child, and the state to know where more support can be given.

“Arizona’s new transparent A-F system has clear objectives and metrics that focus less on the results of one test, but place a greater emphasis on student growth,” explained Tim Carter, President of the Arizona State Board of Education. “It was developed by educators and business leaders that understand the needs of Arizona’s schools and want to empower teachers and students in our state.”

The State Board of Education was charged with developing a new system to comply with state and federal requirements while using the opportunity to measure the quality of a school and its effectiveness across a broader range of measures. To aid in the effort, the Board appointed an ad hoc committee consisting of a wide range of stakeholders and utilized the technical expertise of the Arizona Department of Education and the Accountability Advisory Group, a group of assessment, accountability and data administrators.

The Board also sought public input by conducting 17 public hearings across the state and distributing a survey that yielded nearly 1,700 responses. As a result of this work, the Board adopted a new A-F Accountability Plan in April 2017. Soon after, the [Thomas B. Fordham Institute](#) recognized Arizona’s plan as a national leader in school accountability for its clear labels, focus on all students, and fairness to all schools.

“In addition to national recognition, the A-F system is being heralded by local leaders because it quickly highlights schools that could use additional support and offers a plan for the Department of Education to work with those respective schools on improvement,” stated Luke Narducci, Vice President of the State Board of Education.

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The system quantitatively measures student proficiency and annual growth in key areas, as well as student readiness. Specifically, schools earn letter grades based on a range of comprehensive measures including:

- Proficiency in English Language Arts, Math and Science
- Growth in English Language Arts and Math
- Proficiency and Growth of English Language Learners
- Graduation Rate
- Acceleration and Readiness Measures, which consists of several measures including chronic absenteeism and the improved growth of subgroups
- College and Career Readiness Indicators, which include several indicators of a school's ability to prepare students for college and career including the number of students passing the ACT or SAT or earning an industry credential, certificate or license.

In order to earn an A letter grade, schools must earn at least 86% of the total points possible.

"The A-F Accountability system that was adopted to grade schools for the 2016-17 school year provides a fair system to measure the effectiveness of public schools. The system takes into consideration the unique challenges facing the diverse schools found across Arizona," said Sean Rickert, Superintendent of Pima Unified School District.

The Board and the Department have worked together on a toolkit that will be distributed to schools and the public and posted on the Board's website. The toolkit will offer additional information and guidance for schools to use to educate staff, teachers, parents and students.

For more information on the A-F Accountability System, including how grades are calculated and the timeline for implementation, please visit <https://azsbe.az.gov/f-school-letter-grades>. Letter grades will be released this week. Schools will be notified on the process for accessing their letter grade via ADEConnect. Letter grades will be publicly released on October 9th.

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