



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Alabama
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 of Education

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**Alabama Department of Education Releases the Alabama State Report Card
 for Schools and School Systems**

Alabama Schools/Systems Receive a Letter Grade Report Card

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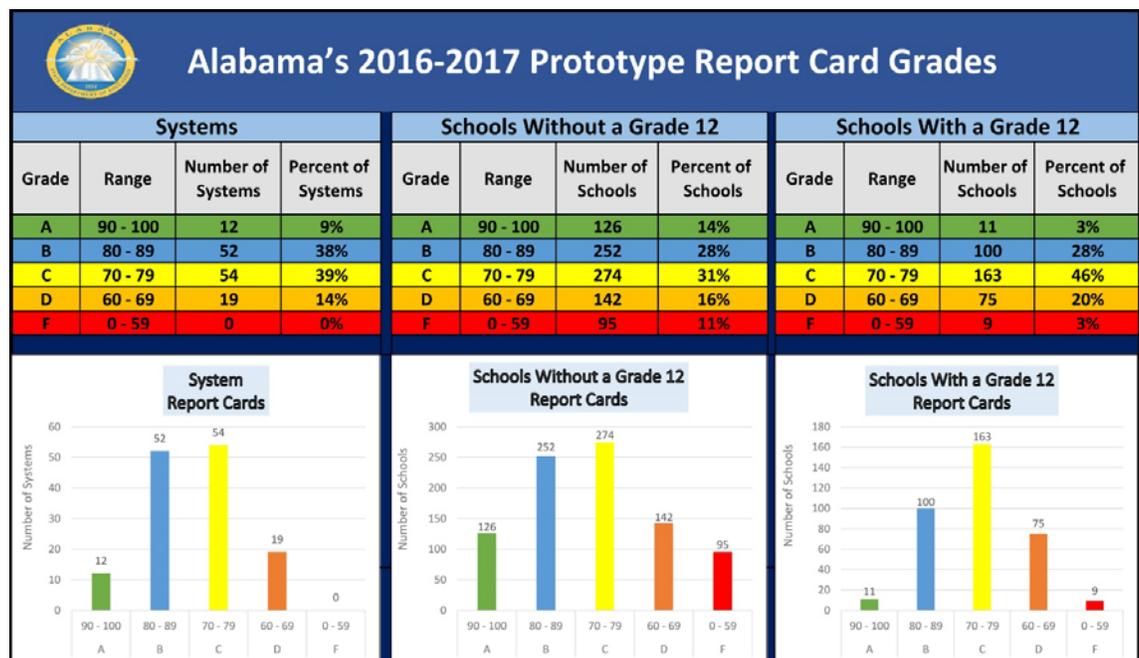
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Montgomery, AL – Adhering to state and federal laws, and desiring to keep the public informed about public schools, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has released a single Prototype Report Card for the state, including all school systems and each school with Grades 3-12.

The Alabama State Report Card is designed so parents, educators, stakeholders, and others can easily understand how their schools are doing, just as report cards help parents understand how their children are doing. The goals of the Alabama State Report Card are to provide a starting point, with easy-to-understand and concise information showing how a school is meeting goals, and to make sure that schools are accountable for explaining that to their communities.

The results are: Of Alabama’s 137 school systems, 76% received either an A, B, or C; 73% of the schools without a Grade 12 received either an A, B, or C; and 77% of schools with a Grade 12 received an A, B, or C. No school *system* received an F, but 95 schools without a Grade 12 and 9 schools with a Grade 12 did receive F’s.



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Act No. 2012-402 of the Alabama Legislature requires an Alabama State Report Card. Federal law, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) also requires an Alabama State Report Card. However, two report cards with different criteria, while offering good information, would be highly confusing to people within a school or school system – as well as parents of schoolchildren.

The concept of the Alabama Report Card is to meet the legal requirements of both laws but with only one *unified* Report Card. The Alabama State Report Card is about more than just one letter grade. Ultimately, it should spawn conversation about ways to improve public education in the future. In a recent AL.com interview, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey and other state leaders said quality education is a priority and must be kept at the forefront of state concerns.

"There is no question that we must improve the quality of our state's education system and I am committed to do so. We have dedicated teachers and students who work hard each day in the classroom. We must provide our teachers with the tools necessary to ensure our children are learning at the highest quality standards," Ivey said. "We must support our students with environments suitable for learning. I am committed to leading the effort to improve education in Alabama from Pre-K to the workforce."

Other education leaders have expressed support for the Alabama State Report Card, understanding that the report card is only the beginning of having a better understanding of how schools are performing. Stephanie Bell, Alabama State Board of Education Representative for District 3, believes the Alabama State Report Card will provide helpful information.

"I think it's a good first step in trying to meet not only the state law but also the federal requirements, which is a challenge, obviously, because the state law was passed before [the Every Student Succeeds Act] was born," Bell said. "I think they've done a very good job [on the report card]. I think it's going to be helpful for parents and locals. Certainly the focus has to be on the students, and I think that in the end that will be a positive for both the students and their parents. I think it's also helpful to the teachers in knowing how to meet the needs of students. It's not supposed to be punitive. It's supposed to be informative. That's crucial."

State Board of Education Representative for District 4, Dr. Yvette Richardson said she feels like the state is moving in the right direction in not only looking at academic achievement but also the growth variable. "It gives us an opportunity to see that students are improving even though the overall achievement score may not show that," Richardson said. "And locally, school districts, with all of the data that will be provided, will be able to look individually at schools and students in order to continue to improve."

The "unified" Report Card was developed by utilizing work done over the past several years by education officials trying to comply with the 2012 State Law, although the work was never completed. Also, the parameters of the ESSA law were recognized and adhered to in the development of this new Report Card. However, the key to an ultimate solution rested on Interim State Superintendent of Education, Ed Richardson's resolve to being compliant with state and federal laws and a commitment to involve representatives of education groups, organizations, and advocacy entities.

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The Alabama Education Association, A+ Foundation, Alabama Association of School Boards, Business Education Alliance, Council for Leaders of Alabama Schools, School Superintendents of Alabama, and the Special Education community all had input and interaction during the development and due to that, Alabama has a Prototype Report Card it can be proud of.

One unique and positive feature of these report cards is the focus on all student population groups. Each report card includes how all segments of the school systems' and individual school subpopulations of students performed. This is a critical feature of any school improvement initiative – improvement for *all* students.

With all of the work that has been accomplished, one may ask, “Is the process complete?” The answer is “No.” The unified Report card is still deemed a Prototype because it is not yet finalized. Until February 23rd 2018, the ALSDE will receive public input through a designated e-mail address ALReportCard@alsde.edu. Once received, the input will be reviewed and the previously mentioned Education Organizations and Associations will finalize recommendations on Report Cards.

The final product will be reviewed by the State Superintendent and Alabama State Board of Education and be submitted to the U. S. Department of Education in an Amendment to Alabama's ESSA Plan. When the Amendment is approved, Alabama will have a state and federally approved Report Card that can be officially issued during the 2018-19 school year and thereafter.

Report Cards certainly do not tell everything about what is happening in every school. However, they do offer information that is not always readily available, and it offers a status that can serve as a Launchpad for school improvements. Overall, Report Cards can and should be a positive step for school improvement statewide.

“How local schools and school systems react to these report cards will be telling about the future of education in Alabama. If report cards as viewed as a tool that causes educators, board members, parents and the community at large to meet, assess, and outline a pathway for improvement, then public education in Alabama has a brighter future,” Ed Richardson said.

Quotes from other state leaders concerning the Alabama State Report Card can be found here: http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/what_folks_are_saying_about_al.html

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