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Refined Illinois School Report Card Released

New format offers inside look at funding and student growth

SPRINGFIELD (Oct. 31, 2018) - Today, the Illinois State Board of Education released its annual — and more comprehensive — 2017-18 Illinois School Report Card, a report that will offer families across the state more information about how students are learning, school quality, and school funding levels.

“Advance Illinois is always eager for the school report card to be released each year, but today — for the first time — the report will contain information aligning the state’s new accountability system and recently implemented evidence-based funding formula. This new information will help us understand the type of supports and resources schools need to achieve positive student outcomes.” said Ginger Ostro.

“New financial data alongside the academic information gives us all a better sense of what we need from the state in order to improve. The financial data shows that all of us in the state should own the results. Our funding and resources inequity is part of the challenge to equity and excellence we must overcome” said Dr. Sharon Kherat, Superintendent of Peoria Public Schools.

The new and improved design of the report card provides easy navigation for parents, teachers, and community members and offers definitions and examples to help all users better understand each piece of data.

“Our ultimate success as a district should come from the collective success of 44 schools. We’re working through student achievement data, and the new report card will aid in outlining school-specific plans to prioritize growth and achievement,” said Rockford Public Schools Superintendent Ehren Jarrett. “We’re also pleased that the tool now clearly illustrates the state’s funding formula, and we’re grateful that formula has provided additional resources for our district to do that critical work.”

Here’s what’s new in the 2017-18 report:

School Performance - For the first time, schools will earn 1 of 4 ratings based on much more nuanced data than in the past, including more sophisticated measures of academic performance

and school quality. Those schools placed into lower designations will receive targeted supports from ISBE and additional resources to facilitate improvement.

- **Exemplary:** Schools performing in the top 10 percent of schools statewide with no underperforming student group.
- **Commendable:** Schools that have no underperforming student groups, performance is not in the top 10 percent of schools statewide, and for high schools, graduation rate is above 67 percent.
- **Underperforming:** Schools where one or more student group is performing below the level of the “all students” group in the lowest performing 5 percent of schools.
- **Lowest performing:** Schools in the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools statewide and any high school with a graduation rate of 67 percent or less. [Click here for more information on how to calculate a school’s performance.](#)

Elevating the importance of equity, these designations are not just based on how well a school serves all of its students on average, but also how well specific student groups, such as students of color and low-income students, are performing. A district is automatically in the underperforming category if *any* student group is performing below the “all students” group in the lowest 5 percent of schools. This holds schools to high standards for serving all students in the school.

Student Academic Growth – One of the new measures this year is student academic growth, worth 50% of an elementary school score. Academic growth measures how much students have learned over the year, rather than based on a single moment. While a student’s proficiency level in subjects like math and reading continue to be measured, growth is a more accurate gauge of how much a student is learning in school.

Funding Capacity – To get a full picture of how schools are performing, we must know how well a school is currently funded compared to the actual cost of providing its students with a high-quality education. The state’s new funding formula calculates a unique cost representing the adequate funding level for each school district in the state, based on student needs. This year’s report card includes a measure of how close — or far — a school district is from reaching full-funding capacity.

“The new report card data provides a wealth of information, but it’s up to all of us to wield this powerful tool to understand where we need more support, financial and otherwise. If we use this tool like a hammer rather than a flashlight, we won’t get far. If we all work together and own the results, we can improve so that both our schools and communities are able to thrive,” said Dr. Jennifer Garrison, Superintendent of Vandalia Public Schools in south central Illinois.