

Arkansas School Grading System

The A-F grading scale is a widely accepted way to identify how well a student is performing in school, especially on tests and assignments. Beginning in 2015, a school's performance was evaluated using this same A-F grading scale, but what does this scale mean? While it's easy to understand that an A school is excellent, other questions arise. What does the school rating really mean?

It is important to understand that several factors are taken into consideration when determining a school's grade. For example, if 93 percent of a school's students score well on statewide tests, a school can still receive a lower grade if subgroups of students are not performing as well as others. This lower grade reflects an achievement gap.

History and Goal:

- The Arkansas Legislature passed Act 696 in 2013. The law, A.C.A. § 6-15-2101 *et. seq.*, required the state to implement an A-F grading scale for schools.
- The goal is to help parents and the public better understand how well a school is performing and to begin conversations to continually improve education.

What the Grades Represent:

- How well students are performing in math and English/Language Arts on state assessments.
- Whether students in the school are meeting annual expected growth in math and English/Language Arts.
- Whether high school students are graduating on time.
- Whether students who receive additional educational services are graduating from high school at a similar rate to other students.
- Whether there are large differences or gaps between the achievement levels among students, especially students who receive additional educational services.
- Whether a school is performing above expectations.

What the Grades Are Not:

- They do not measure how well an individual student or teacher is doing.
- They do not take into consideration other things the school may be doing well, such as meeting students' nutrition and health needs or how well students are performing in other subject areas.

Who Was Involved:

- Educators
- Arkansas Department of Education
- Business and Policy Leaders
- Legislators

What Parents Can Do:

- Become aware of how well schools are performing in the community.
- Talk with teachers and school officials about how to help the school.
- Volunteer at school and engage in areas that need improvement.
- Ensure children have excellent attendance, complete all assignments, and are engaged in learning.

School Grades and Grading Scale

300 Points

A = 270 to 300 points

B = 240 to 269 points

C = 210 to 239 points

D = 180 to 209 points

F = Less than 180 points

Grades are assigned to schools based on points earned. Schools earn points on two or three major measures: performance, growth, and graduation rate (for high schools). Schools may lose a small number of points if there are large differences in achievement or graduation rate levels among students, especially students who receive temporary or ongoing educational services. Schools may also gain a small number of points if the differences among students are small. Schools may gain a small number of points if the performance of students is above expectations.

A Schools: 270 – 300 Points

Schools that earn an A have high levels of performance, growth, and graduation rates without large differences in achievement or graduation levels among students, especially students who receive temporary or ongoing educational services. Schools may have earned extra points in some areas.

B Schools: 240 – 269 Points

Schools that earn a B may have high levels in one or two of the major measures (performance, growth, and /or graduation) but had lower levels in one or two of the other measures. Another way schools earn a B is when the levels of all three measures are high, but the school lost points for differences in achievement or graduation rates among students or did not gain enough extra points to earn an A.

C Schools: 210 – 239 Points

Schools that earn a C may have moderate levels in all measures or may have high levels in one measure but much lower levels in others. In combination, these result in only enough points for a C. Schools may also have lost points for differences in achievement or graduation rates among students or may not have earned enough additional points to earn a B.

D Schools: 180 – 209 Points

Schools that earn a D may have low levels on one or two measures and moderate to low levels in another area. D schools may have lost additional points because of differences in achievement or graduation rates among students or did not gain enough additional points to earn a C.

F Schools: Less than 180 Points

Schools that earn an F may have low levels on all three measures or very low levels on one or more measures and may not have earned additional points.