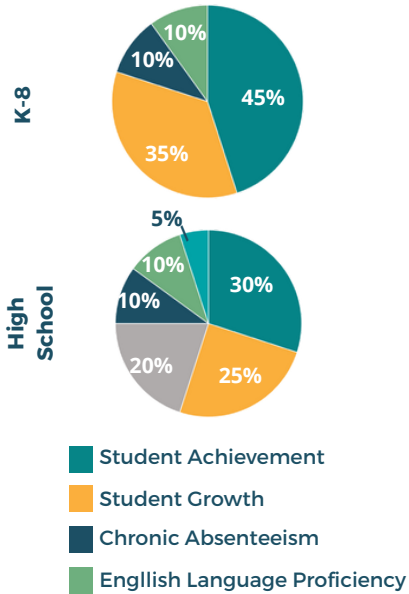


# What is the New A-F School Accountability System?

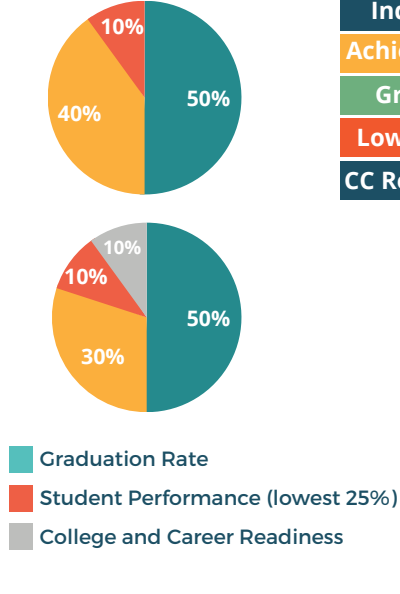
Since the passage of the Education Improvement Act in 1992, Tennessee has published school and district report cards as part of its statewide accountability system. In 2016, the state passed a law requiring A-F grades for schools and districts as part of the accountability system, but implementation was delayed because of testing issues and the pandemic. Read on to understand what the new system, which rolls out next month, entails.

## Tennessee's Two Accountability Systems

### Federally-Required Accountability System



### New State A-F System



### Calculating the Letter Grades

Indicator	Level (1-5)	Weight	Score	Letter Grade	Score
Achievement	X	50%	=	A	4.5-5
Growth	X	30%	=	B	3.5-4.5
Lowest 25%	X	10%	=	C	2.6-3.5
CC Readiness	X	10%	=	D	1.6-2.5
Aggregate Score = Total				F	1-1.5

### Examples of How the New A-F System Works

Happy Valley Elementary					Red Rocks Elementary						
Achievement	2	X	50%	=	1	Achievement	5	X	50%	=	2.5
Growth	5	X	30%	=	1.5	Growth	2	X	30%	=	0.6
Lowest 25%	3	X	10%	=	0.3	Lowest 25%	5	X	10%	=	0.5
<b>2.8</b>					<b>3.6</b>						
C					B						

## What We Know about A-F School Accountability

### Impact on Student Learning Mixed

While some states with A-F systems have seen gains in student achievement, others have not. And because states have adjusted criteria for determining letter grades, it can be difficult to compare results over time.

### Impact on Morale and Retention Can be Negative

Stigmatization of lower-performing schools has been shown to negatively impact teacher morale and retention and can affect student and family morale as well.

### Simplifies Information for Families...

By using a grading system that is universally understood and being transparent about how grades are calculated, states can make it easier for families to assess schools and make decisions for their children.

### ...But Can also Oversimplify School Quality

A-F indicators like achievement and growth are essential to assess school quality. Yet many A-F systems exclude other key factors that can lead to quality schools, like school culture, student engagement, and teacher diversity and satisfaction.

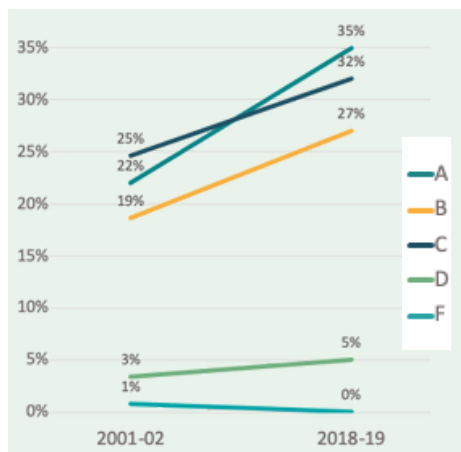
SOURCES: Amrein-Beardsley, A., Geiger T., Winn K. (2022); Howe, K. & Murray, K. (2015); Kupscznk, L. Aubry (2020)

## What We Can Learn from Florida

In 1999, Florida became the first state to assign letter grades to schools. Today, Florida's system includes 4 achievement measures, 4 growth measures, a middle school acceleration measure, a college and career measure, and graduation rate.

### Schools' Grades Have Improved

More schools are receiving As and fewer are receiving Fs today than two decades ago.



### Grading Criteria Have Changed

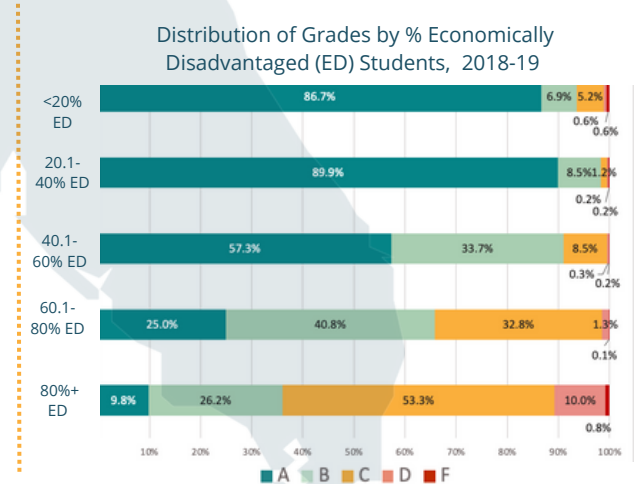
The state has adjusted requirements several times, making it difficult to compare results over time.

- 2000** Learning gains for lowest students adjusted
- 2002** Greater emphasis on student growth with roll out of new annual state assessments
- 2013** Safety net provision added to prohibit more than one letter grade drop (repealed 2016)
- 2016** Removal of automatic demotion of a letter grade if school meets certain criteria

Sample of adjustments only

### Grades are Highly Correlated with Poverty

The system may reveal more about which students are being served than how well they are being served.



SOURCES: Di Carlo, M. (2016); Tanner, J. (2016); Blazer, C. (2018); Florida Department of Education website, <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7506/urlt/AccountabilityUpdate.pdf>