

NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL – SCHOOL LETTER GRADES

What do these letter grades mean and how do they impact our community?

What are school grades and how are they determined?

- North Carolina schools and school districts are judged based on multiple pieces of data. Some examples include test scores, student academic growth, and graduation rate. Each school receives a letter grade based on a formula that takes into consideration these, and other, pieces of information. The results of this formula generates a number between 0 and 100. The current school letter grade is based on a fifteen point scale.
 - A 85 - 100
 - B 70 - 84
 - C 55 - 69
 - D 40 - 54
 - F Less than 40

Currently, test scores have the largest impact on the school letter grade

- The current model used by North Carolina is 80/20. 80% of a school letter grade is based on test scores while 20% is based on student academic growth.

Concerns with current model

- The current model does not accurately reflect what is taking place within a school.
- Places too much emphasis on one to three days of testing that only take place at the end of a semester or end of an academic year.
- The best, and most accurate way, to measure student growth and performance is across a continuum or over time.
- Academic growth should be measured at the individual level. For example, determine where a student starts the year, assess them at various points throughout the year, and at the end of the year to determine how much they have learned.

Concerns with current model

- The current model does not allow schools and school districts to use the results to impact or adjust instruction in an effective or timely manner.
- Schools and school districts do not receive the results until October of the following year.
- Some students deal with test anxiety regardless of their academic performance throughout the year.

What do others say about the current accountability model?

- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction conducted a survey regarding school performance grades last Fall.
- 26,262 people participated
- These participants included teachers, parents, administrators, university/college faculty, business/industry leaders, and members of state and local government.
- Three findings from this survey stand out from the others.

What do others say about the current accountability model?

- *The current formula for school performance grades, which is calculated using a weight of 80% student achievement and 20% student growth, should remain in place*
 - 69% Disagree 14% Agree 18% Unsure
- *The North Carolina General Assembly needs to reform school performance grades*
 - 79% Agree 7% Disagree 14% Unsure
- *School performance grades should include measures beyond test scores and student growth*
 - 90% Agree 5% Disagree 5% Unsure

Potential impacts of 80/20 model on schools and school districts

- Makes it more difficult to recruit and retain staff.
- Could potentially lead to some families leaving a school or school district.
- This loss of adm (average daily membership) would have a negative impact on operating budgets.

Potential impacts of the 80/20 model on the community

- Could have a negative impact on economic development
- Could make it harder to recruit new business and industry
- Could make it more difficult for current business and industry to recruit and retain staff

Possible solutions

- As educators, we believe the 80/20 model is flawed and needs to be replaced with a new formula.
- We believe the new formula should be, at minimum, based on a model where proficiency (test scores) is weighted at 50% and student academic growth is weighted at 50%.

What can you do to help?

- Contact your state representatives and share your concerns with the current model