

OEA Calls For Sweeping Changes To State Report Cards

Members of the Ohio Education Association (OEA) voted overwhelmingly at their December 7th Representative Assembly to recommend a set of comprehensive reforms to the state report card system. The proposed reforms are based on a survey of OEA members about what they believe should be included in a more accurate and useful state report card for Ohio schools. Specifically, OEA calls on the General Assembly to replace letter grades with a system that provides more detailed and useful information on the performance of individual students and key sub-groups.

Instead of a cookie-cutter approach to state report cards, OEA envisions a system that uses a performance dashboard and a student opportunity profile that have proven successful in other states, such as Oregon and Massachusetts, in informing educators, parents, elected officials and policy makers of how districts and schools are faring.

In a recent survey of more than 1,400 OEA members, 96% indicated they do not believe the current state report card system fairly assesses Ohio schools, and 89.4% support the elimination of A-F grades.

"Now is the time to end the destructive practice of rating schools and districts on misleading and punitive A-F letter grades that shame public educators for the poverty of their students," said OEA President Scott DiMauro. "Studies consistently show that there is a direct correlation between ratings and wealth, and for too long, low ratings have been used as cover for diverting taxpayer resources to unaccountable charter and private schools and as an excuse to punish communities and educators by depriving them of local control and collective bargaining rights through state takeover schemes."

OEA's recommended reforms include information on the demographic and financial make-up of schools and districts, and a performance dashboard on how well students are learning that includes three-year trends and comparisons to district and statewide averages. A proposed student opportunity profile would provide detailed information on what students have been offered to enhance their success.

"Current report cards in Ohio are overly complicated, depriving parents, policymakers and communities of understandable information that demonstrates how schools are really doing in providing opportunities for learning to students," said DiMauro. "A new system is needed to ensure transparency, accountability, and fairness with the aim of identifying areas in need of improvement and empowering local stakeholders to make decisions that direct resources where they are most needed."

The OEA Representative Assembly directs the Ohio Education Association to implement a comprehensive member action and lobbying campaign to advocate for an entirely new system of Ohio school district/building report cards that is compliant with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). OEA calls on the General Assembly to replace letter grades with a report card that includes a School/District Profile, Performance Dashboard and Student Opportunity Profile, as detailed below:

1) **School/District Profile:** information that describes the basic demographic and financial make-up of the school and district, including the following:

- enrollment
- average daily attendance
- percentage of students identified in each subgroup (gender, race, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, transient students, gifted students, English learners)
- percentage of teachers, administrators and support staff identified in each gender and racial subgroup
- percentage of teachers with a Master's or higher degree
- student discipline data (percentage of students who are suspended in or out of school, expelled, or removed from regular classroom activities due to violence), by subgroup
- local, state and federal per-pupil revenue
- per-pupil expenditures
- dollars deducted from revenues for charter schools and voucher programs
- district typology (urban/suburban/rural; high/medium/low poverty)
- average family income

2) **Performance Dashboard Indicators:** information that describes how well students are learning. For each indicator, data is to be reported by subgroup and include three-year trends and comparisons to district and statewide averages.

- percentages of tested students performing at or above proficiency, as measured by state tests, at each federally required grade level and subject area (English Language Arts (ELA) and math in grades 3-8 and high school; science in grades 5, 8 and high school)
- year-to-year student growth as measured by a "student growth percentile" measure* for ELA and math
- 4-year and 5-year graduation rate for all students
- 4-year and 5-year graduation rate for students who were enrolled in their high school since the beginning of 9th grade
- percentage of students passing all their 9th grade courses
- post-graduation outcomes: percentage of students employed, enrolled in post-secondary education, enlisted in the military, and serving in an apprenticeship within six months after graduation
- percentage of students who are regular attenders (not chronically absent)

**According to The Data Quality Campaign, the "student growth percentile" measure uses individual student performance data to demonstrate how schools served students with the same academic starting point. The measure uses data about a student's past performance to group the student with other students across the state who received the same or similar score on the same test in the same grade. The student is then assigned a percentile or rank—between 1 and 99—based on how the student's current year performance compares to their academic peers. For example, if a student is in the 70th percentile; compared to a group of academically similar peers, the student did better than 70 percent of them. How that percentile changes from one year to the next determines the measure. If a student's percentile improves significantly, greater than expected growth is made. If a student's percentile declines significantly, less than expected growth is made. As of January 2019, this measure was used in 23 states. Unlike Value-Added Data, which is currently used in Ohio and only eight other states, the measure is simple to understand, limited to apples-to-apples comparisons, and makes no claim to predict future growth.*

3) **Student Opportunity Profile:** information that describes specific opportunities provided to students that support their success. Where appropriate and when data is available, data is to be reported by grade level and subgroup, with district and statewide averages.

- ratio of teachers of record to students (class size) at each grade level
- ratio of school counselors to students
- ratio of school nurses to students
- ratio of licensed librarians/library media specialists to students
- ratio of school social workers to students
- ratio of mental health professionals to students
- ratio of paraprofessionals to students
- rate of teacher turnover (annual/3 years/5 years)
- rate of principal turnover
- percentage of teachers assigned to grades and subjects for which they are fully licensed/certified to teach
- percentage of students enrolled in full-day kindergarten
- percentage of kindergarten students who attended 4- or 5-star Step Up to Quality-rated preschool programs
- percentage of students enrolled in performing or visual arts classes
- percentage of students enrolled in physical education/wellness classes
- percentage of students enrolled in world language classes
- percentage of students in grades 7-12 enrolled in career-technical classes
- percentage of students participating in one or more co-curricular activities
- percentage of students enrolled in advanced-level courses (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Honors, College Credit Plus)
- percentage of identified gifted students receiving gifted services
- percentage of students participating in after-school enrichment or support programs
- percentage of eligible students who receive school breakfast daily
- percentage students eligible for daily transportation by school bus
- ratio of technology devices to students
- ratio of take-home technology devices to students

To support implementation of a new school report card that includes the above components, OEA calls on the Ohio Department of Education to develop a “user guide” statement that the report card is designed for the purpose of informing student support strategies, not as the basis for punishing districts or schools.

In order to meet federal accountability requirements, OEA calls on the Ohio Department of Education to recommend a formula to the State Board of Education and General Assembly to identify schools in need of targeted or comprehensive supports based on a combination of academic achievement and growth indicators, high school graduation rates, and regular attendance and that recognizes improvement in meeting targets.