

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Oregon's School Report Card**

### **What is the report card?**

Since 2000, report cards have provided an annual assessment of how well Oregon's public schools are educating students. Every public elementary and secondary school in Oregon receives one of five ratings: Exceptional, Strong, Satisfactory, Low, or Unacceptable. Districts do not receive overall ratings.

Cards include the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) rating required by the No Child Left Behind Act. AYP reports rate each school and district "Met" or "Not Met."

Federal law requires the state to use its state report card as the official communication for informing parents about the AYP ratings. Even if a school does not receive a state rating for some reason, it gets a report card with AYP information.

### **Who rates the schools?**

The state Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for rating schools. This official works with staff from the Oregon Department of Education to create and modify the state rating system based on feedback from educators and the public. The state produces AYP determinations in compliance with federal law and the state's Accountability Workbook approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

### **How are schools rated by the state?**

The overall rating is based on a combination of student performance, student behavior, school improvement and school characteristics:

- Student performance is the percentage of students who meet standards on state tests over a two-year period.
- In elementary and middle schools, student behavior is the percentage of students attending school over a two-year period. In high schools, student behavior calculations include the dropout rate.
- Improvement is based on changes over a four-year period in student performance and student behavior.
- School characteristics are measured by the percentage of students taking the state tests. If that percentage drops below 89.5 percent, a school cannot get an overall rating better than Unacceptable. There are five categories: Unacceptable, Low, Satisfactory, Strong and Exceptional.

### **How do schools receive federal ratings?**

AYP rating is based on these criteria:

- Whether the required percentage of students met state academic standards in the past two years of statewide tests.
- Whether test participation was at the required 94.5 percent.
- Whether required attendance or graduation levels were met.

This information is broken out by student group.

### **How was the report card developed?**

A state law passed in 1999 requires the Oregon Department of Education to issue annual report cards for individual schools and districts. The law sets general guidelines for what must be included. The State Board of Education is responsible for adopting rating criteria and the Superintendent of Public Instruction for assigning ratings. Details about ODE's rating criteria are available at [www.ode.state.or.us](http://www.ode.state.or.us).

### **Is other information in the report?**

Besides the percentages used to calculate the rating, school report cards include information on teachers: percentage with master's degree, average years of experience teaching, and average years of experience in the district. High school report cards also include SAT scores. Elementary reports now include class size. Schools may add local information to the report cards. District report cards include a list of all schools and their overall ratings, student performance districtwide, and ethnicity and staff information. District reports include financial data, such as cost per student for classroom instruction and classroom, building, and central support.

### **How does Oregon's report card compare to report cards in other states?**

Most states issue similar reports. School-level performance reports are part of a national trend toward increased school accountability. Many states report student test scores only. Oregon's report card, which bases ratings on student performance, student behavior, improvement and school characteristics, is more demanding than most.

### **What happens if a school gets a Low or Unacceptable rating?**

Schools with these ratings must review, and revise their school improvement plans and submit them to the state schools superintendent, the district's school board and the school's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Council.

### **Some schools have received low AYP ratings but high state ratings. How is this possible?**

AYP and the state reporting system use different formulas even though they both rely on results of the same statewide tests. Under AYP, if a subgroup fails to make adequate progress because less than 94.5 percent of that subgroup took the test, the entire school is rated "Not Met." Think of the two ratings as incomparable, like apples and oranges, and focus instead on learning how well your school is addressing the areas in which improvement is needed. Talk to your principals and teachers – learn first-hand what's going on in your schools. These report card ratings are just one tool to use in judging a very dynamic, complex system – your child's school.

### **Do all schools receive an overall rating?**

Although all schools receive a report card, not all schools get an overall rating because they may be considered too small or are too new to have required data amassed.

### **What happens next?**

Schools have until Dec. 15 to provide copies of school and district report cards to parents. The method of distribution is up to the school district. Report cards are available from ODE only online, at [www.ode.state.or.us](http://www.ode.state.or.us).