

How do the school ratings work?

The Tennessee Department of Education has provided data about schools and districts on its state report card for many years. Since 2018, to conform to new requirements by federal law, we have been providing more information about schools' performance.

To make sure all community members understand how their school is doing on a variety of metrics that encompass student success, we have worked with families, educators, school and district leaders, community organizations, and state leaders in previous years to identify a rating system that provides helpful and well-rounded context. Since 2018, the department has been using a numerical system to provide a rating on up to six metrics for each school.

Each of the metrics or indicators on the report card are presented like a dashboard. Just like the dashboard in a car, each indicator looks at a different aspect of a school, and users can decide that indicator's importance to them. A school receives a rating on each indicator ranging from 0.0 to 4.0, like a GPA scale, with 4.0 being the highest. Additional information underlies each rating, and the department encourages users to click through and learn more. The six indicators are:

- **Academic achievement** (whether students are performing at or above grade level or whether the school improved from year to year)
- **Student academic growth** (whether students are making progress from year to year)
- **Chronically out of school** (whether students are absent more than 10% of the year)
- **Progress on English language proficiency** (whether English learners are making progress in their understanding of the English language)
- **Ready graduate** (whether students are prepared for postsecondary education or career paths after they leave high school)
- **Graduation rate** (percentage of students graduating from high school on time)

How were schools rated in 2018-19?

- **Academic achievement:** 61% of schools earned higher than a 2.0
- **Student growth:** 49% of schools earned higher than a 2.0
- **Chronically out of school:** 83% of schools earned higher than a 2.0
- **English language proficiency:** 61% of schools earned higher than a 2.0
- **Ready graduate:** 74% of schools earned higher than a 2.0
- **Graduation rate:** 84% of schools earned higher than a 2.0

When possible, ratings are based either on **how well the school is doing** on that metric OR **how much the school improved** in the past year. The school gets the higher rating between the two. Every school can earn a high score on each indicator, either by showing excellent performance or by showing exceptional improvement.

The rating system also reflects the belief that every student's success matters. Within each indicator, the performance of the full student population is weighted at 60% of the rating, and the performance of students who are part of a student group – black, Hispanic, or Native American students, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities – is 40%. Ratings for each group are on the indicator's page.

The information and ratings on the report card are intended to be a catalyst for conversation, not a defining characteristic. Ultimately, a quality education is more than a score, and these ratings provide one perspective on how a school is performing. If you have questions or want to learn more about a specific school, we encourage you to reach out to the principal or district leader.