

Rhode Island School Accountability & Report Cards

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Report Card?

The Report Card is an online platform that displays a range of performance data for Rhode Island public schools and public school districts. The majority of data in the platform are updated annually. The platform makes data accessible and transparent, helping families and the public at large to understand the strengths and challenges facing their school community.

How do Report Cards relate to school accountability?

The Report Card platform includes many different kinds of data. A significant portion of the Report Card, however, is focused on accountability data. School accountability is required under federal law, and it's also key to helping schools improve. Accountability appears as a separate tab within the Report Card platform. For families, our accountability system provides details on school performance and empowers them to make informed decisions for their families.

How is this accountability system different from last year?

The system has updated indicators to include a broader range of performance measures. These measures then result in a Star Rating, which is another new feature. Lastly, unlike the Composite Index Scores, or CIS Scores, that have been used in the past and sum points across all indicators, Rhode Island school accountability now uses a rule-based classification system that combines all indicators through norm- and criterion-based rules to determine a Star Rating.

What is a Star Rating and what does it mean?

A Star Rating is a rating system, from 1 to 5 stars, that simplifies and summarizes overall school performance. Schools must perform well across all measures to earn a high star rating. Student achievement and growth, measured through performance on state tests like RICAS and SAT, are the primary drivers of the Star Rating system. For an even more detailed breakdown of Star Ratings, [this table from our ESSA State Plan](#) has additional information.

| Star Rating | Means a school has... |
|-------------|---|
| ★★★★★ | Strong performance on all indicators |
| ★★★★ | Generally strong performance |
| ★★★ | Some areas of weakness |
| ★★ | Weaknesses at the overall school level |
| ★ | The lowest performance in terms of achievement and growth or graduation |

What measures, other than test scores, are included?

In addition to achievement and growth, other measures include English Language Proficiency, Student Absenteeism, Teacher Absenteeism, Suspension Rate, the percentage of students Exceeding Expectations, and the Graduation rate. In future years, the additional measures of Science, Graduate Proficiency, and Diploma Plus will be added into the system. You can learn more about these measures through this two-page document that we encourage you to share with school leaders, community partners, and families.

I see additional data in the Report Card platform, like school-level spending and SurveyWorks results. Why?

Rhode Island created a system of accountability with broad performance measures, and we wanted to take it a step further. We want to give the most complete picture possible of how our schools and districts are performing, and the types of school cultures they are fostering. In particular, we made a point of including school-level financial data, as well as SurveyWorks, Rhode Island's school culture and climate survey, because we want families to be able to see how their peers and neighbors *feel* about a school, its teachers, and its sense of community.

What happens to schools that receive low star ratings?

From the public's perspective, a Star Rating is a user-friendly, easy-to-understand and simplified way to explain how well a school is doing. In terms of school accountability, low-performing schools will be identified as a 1 Star School in need of "Comprehensive Support and Improvement" – a federal designation – if achievement and growth are in the bottom 5 percent of both measures; the graduation rate is less than 67 percent; or the school has the lowest score for all applicable, non-graduation indicators, and one or two points for graduation if applicable. Also known as "Comprehensive Schools," these schools will need to create a Community Advisory Board and initiate a strategy for School Redesign unless they significantly improve performance, thereby "exiting" Comprehensive status.

How should school communities use this information?

While there are specific actions tied to being federally identified as a Comprehensive School, *all schools* should analyze their accountability data and use the results to improve outcomes for their students. By using a rules-based classification system instead of composite scores, we are reinforcing that all of the measures are important. When indicators are summed together, areas of strength can make up for – and potentially mask – areas of weakness. This system of accountability sheds light on a more complete picture of school performance, identifying areas of improvement for school leaders and helping to inform their policymaking.

What is a Community Advisory Board?

RIDE included the concept of Community Advisory Boards in our school improvement plan because we recognize that there is a collective responsibility among all stakeholders to help support and improve schools. Only when we engage the entire community and represent diverse voices can education policy truly be impactful and sustainable. All communities with Comprehensive Schools are required to assemble a Community Advisory Board, or CAB. The

CAB will empower parents, business leaders, and community partners to have a seat at the table when discussing and implementing school redesign and important school decisions.

What is School Redesign?

Comprehensive Schools identified for four consecutive years must initiate the School Redesign process. Unlike past approaches to school improvement, Rhode Island's current School Redesign process holds schools accountable while allowing for additional flexibility. There are five identified options for School Redesign:

1. **Empowerment:** Two-thirds of teachers must vote to approve, along with local community approval, enabling school leaders to have a comprehensive set of autonomies and regulatory flexibilities.
2. **Small Schools of Choice:** A school reorganizes into two or more new, smaller schools (roughly 100 students per grade) that emphasize student-centered, personalized learning. Students have flexibility to choose which small school they attend.
3. **Restart:** A school goes under the management of a charter or educational management organization or other state-approved managing entity.
4. **Closure:** A school closes and students relocate to higher-performing schools.
5. **LEA Proposed Redesign Model:** A school initiates an LEA-developed school redesign model that includes at least a high-quality school leader, a new school model, and significant school autonomy.

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