



The A-F Letter Grade System

Revised 07/30/2013



August 1, 2013

Dear Parents and Education Stakeholders:

Included in this A-F Letter Grade Accountability System Guide you'll find answers to commonly asked questions, learn how the letter grade scoring system works and see how points received by a school translate to a corresponding letter grade.

Letter grades should be used as just one measure of how well a school is performing. With the A-F Letter Grade Accountability System, parents benefit by having, at their fingertips, an easy-to-understand, equitable school grading system to help decide which educational environment best meets their children's needs. Schools benefit by identifying both areas of strength and areas that need improvement.

To hold schools accountable in a fair and systematic fashion, each school is equally evaluated both on AIMS performance and how much students grow academically from one year to the next. Other factors such as AIMS improvement, dropout rate, graduation rate and English language learner proficiency rates are taken into consideration, when applicable.

While schools cannot control the knowledge level of new students (students starting kindergarten or transfer students), they can affect and are responsible for how much their students learn from one grade to the next in a full-academic year. The new accountability system measures and compares this student learning on a school-by-school basis.

All students deserve a quality public education that moves them academically ahead every year. The new letter grade accountability system measures that progress, grading schools on an intuitive and practical A to F scale. In the end, information obtained from the A-F letter grade system will serve as an important starting point for parents making decisions about their children's education.

Empowering parents with useful information is a top priority. Collaborating with schools to ensure every student has access to an excellent education is essential.

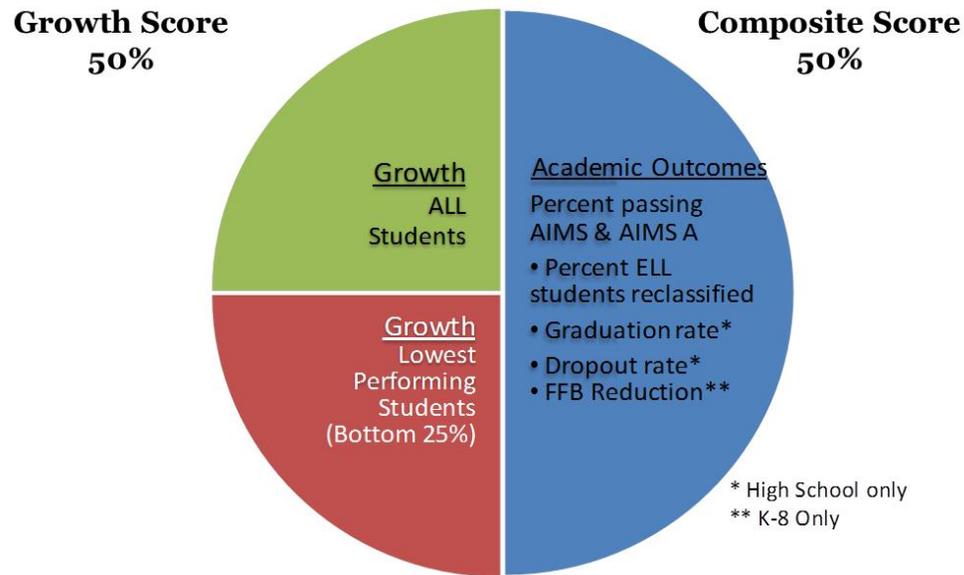
Sincerely,



John Huppenthal
Superintendent of Public Instruction



A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – Traditional Schools



$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{Growth Score} & + & \text{Composite Score} & = & \text{A-F Letter Grade} \\ (100 \text{ points possible}) & + & (100 + 3 + 3 + 3 \text{ points possible}) & = & 200+ \text{ points possible} \end{array}$$

Academic growth is determined by comparing the change in AIMS test scores from one year to the next for similarly achieving students across the state. This is done to evaluate how well a school is growing its students, academically, as they advance from one grade to the next.



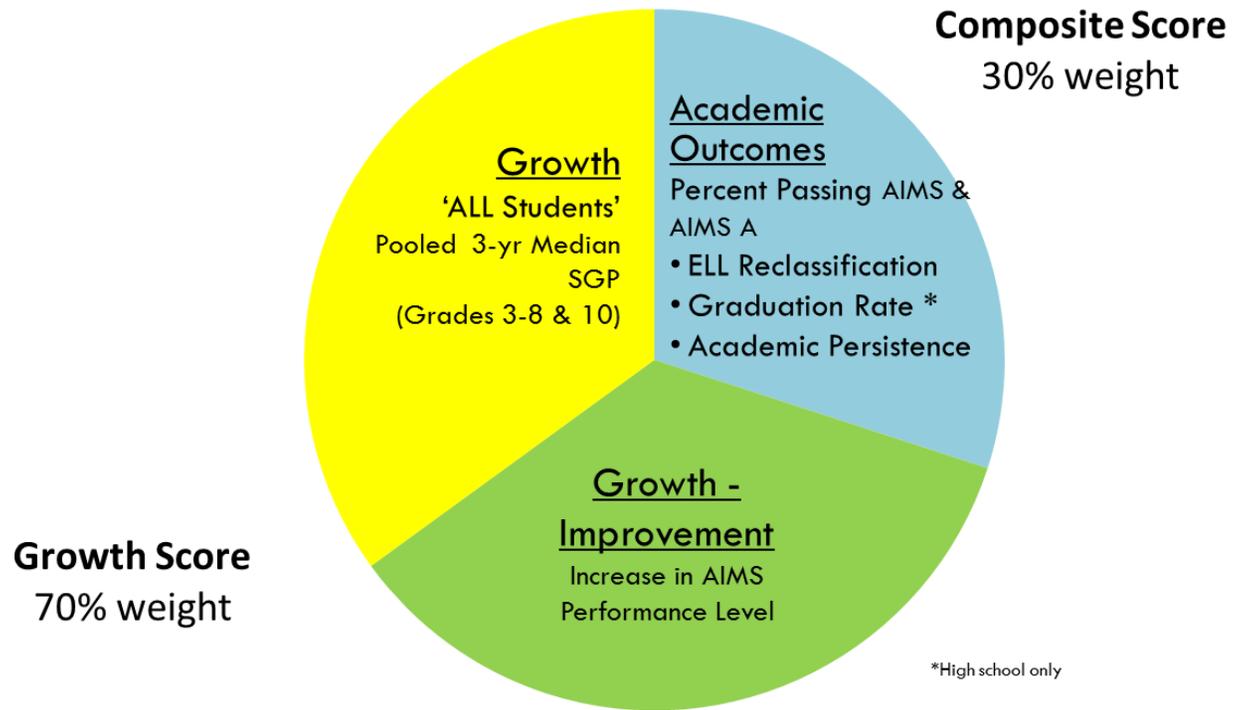
A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – Traditional Schools

Grade	Total Score*
A	140-200
B	120-139
C	100-119
D	0-99

**These scores were approved by the AZ State Board of Education.*



A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – Alternative Schools



Composite Score + Growth Score = A-F ALT Letter Grade



A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – Alternative Schools

Grade	Total Score*
A	171 & above
B	140-170
C	109-139
D	0-108

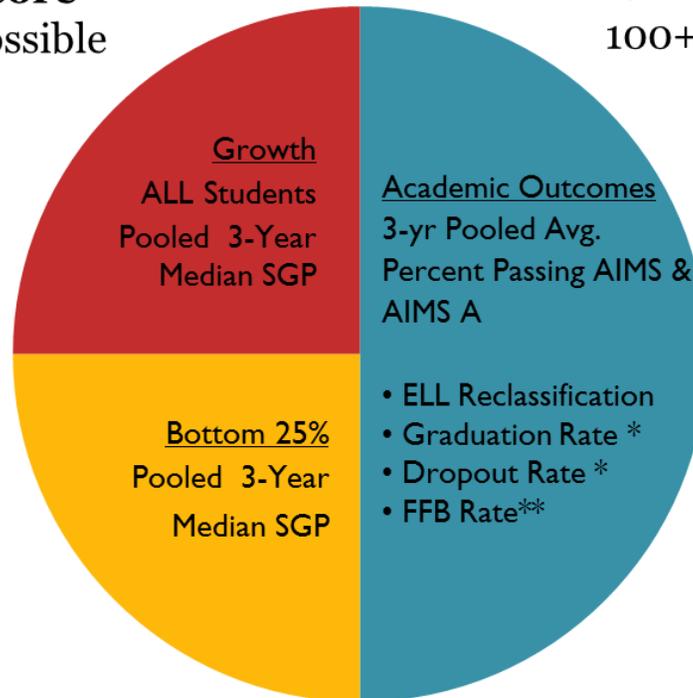
**These scores are applicable for 2013.*



A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – Small Schools

Growth Score
100 points possible

Composite Score
100+ points possible



*High School only
**K-8 only

Growth Score + **Composite Score** = **A-F Letter Grade**
 (100 points possible) + (100 + 3 + 3 + 3 points possible) = 200+ points possible



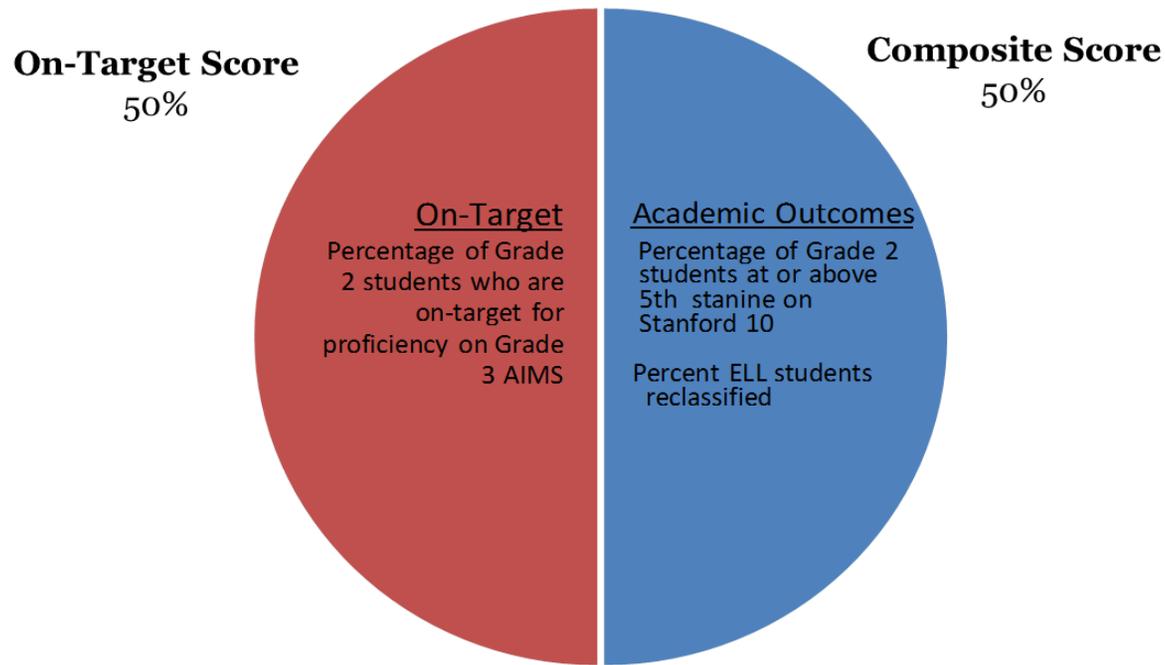
A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – Small Schools

Grade	Total Score*
A	140-200
B	120-139
C	100-119
D	0-99

**These scores were approved by the AZ State Board of Education.*



A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – K-2 Schools



On-Target Score + Composite Score = A-F Letter Grade
(100 points possible) + (100 + 3 points possible) = 200+ points possible



A-F Letter Grade Models and Components – K-2 Schools

Grade	Total Score*
A	140-200
B	120-139
C	100-119
D	0-99

**These scores were approved by the AZ State Board of Education.*



In addition to the components of each of the A-F Letter Grade models described, all schools and LEAs (charter holders and districts) the 95% tested rule requires schools and LEAs to test a minimum of 95% of students taking AIMS and AIMS A in the current year. Entities testing fewer than 95% of their students will have their maximum allowable letter grade capped according to the scale below:

Percentage of Students Tested	Maximum Letter Grade Allowed
95% or higher	A
85-94%	B
75-84%	C
Less than 75%	D



Q&A

Q: *When was Arizona's A-F Letter Grade System created?*

A: Governor Brewer signed SB 1286 into law in 2010 (ARS § 15-241), after it was passed by the Arizona state legislature.

Q: *Why was the A-F Letter Grade System created?*

A: The A-F Letter Grade System was created to provide clear, easy-to understand information to parents so that they could base their educational decisions on the best information available about the overall academic performance of schools and districts/charter holders.

Q: *What is the difference between AZ LEARNS Legacy and the A-F Letter Grade System?*

A: The A-F Letter Grade System uses a combination of students' scores on the AIMS tests (50 percent) and the academic growth of students from one year to the next (50 percent). This more complete view of student learning provides a clearer picture of how well schools and districts/charter holders are educating and growing their students. The AZ LEARNS Legacy accountability system used students' scores on the AIMS tests to determine which of the achievement profiles the school would receive.

Q: *How were the A-F Letter Grades developed?*

A: Based on SB 1286, the Arizona State Board of Education adopted the formula and created the following descriptions for the A-F Letter Grades:

"A" schools demonstrate an excellent level of performance. For example, an "A" school may have the large majority of their students passing AIMS and AIMS A and typical academic growth in at least the 70th percentile.

"B" schools demonstrate an above average level of performance. For example, a "B" school may have about 60% of their students passing AIMS and AIMS A and typical academic growth in at least the 60th percentile.

"C" schools demonstrate an average level of performance. For example, a "C" school may have about half of their students passing AIMS and AIMS A and typical academic growth around the 50th percentile.

"D" schools demonstrate a below average level of performance. For example, "D" schools earn fewer points than a school that has 50 percent of students passing AIMS and has typically lower academic growth than most schools.

"F" schools are those that receive a "D" letter grade for three consecutive years. The Arizona Department of Education monitors the school for three years following the "F" letter grade and requires that "F" schools participate in a school improvement program.

