



NCLB Fact Sheet #6

Understanding School Report Cards

The No Child Left behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA. First passed in 1965, the ESEA provides federal money to schools that serve a high population of students whose families have low income. Since it was passed, the ESEA has been reauthorized several times. The current authorization, NCLB, requires states and schools to comply with new regulations in order to continue to receive these federal funds.

Many of the new regulations under NCLB address parents' "right to know" about school performance. One of the ways the law seeks to inform parents about what is happening in schools is by using School Report Cards. Unlike student report cards that parents receive for their children each semester, School Report Cards are intended to show overall student performance. This is measured by totaling student scores on standardized tests. Maine's standardized tests are called the Maine Education Assessment (MEA) and the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). Under NCLB, students will be required to take a version of the MEA or NECAP in grades 3 through 8, and again in grade 11.

Overall student test scores must be reported to parents and the community annually. There are two types of School Report Cards required under NCLB: local and state. Local School Report Cards include data on student test scores in the entire district and in individual schools. Test scores must be reported in several different ways. An average score for all students in the district and in each school must be shown. In addition, scores must be totaled for the following subgroups: boys, girls, students of specific racial and ethnic identities, students who receive special education services, students whose families have low income, students who have migrant status, and students who are English language learners.

Local School Report Cards must show which schools have been identified as Continuous Improvement Priority Schools (CIPS) and which schools have been placed on monitor (CIM) status. Both of these labels are a result of student test scores below the state Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. State School Report Cards are similar to local School Report Cards, but include data based on the average scores of all schools in the state. Test scores for the entire state must be reported in the same subgroups as the local test scores. In addition, state School Report Cards must show overall graduation and attendance rates and the number of teachers who have met highly qualified requirements.

Districts are required to provide local School Report Cards in a format accessible to all families at the beginning of the school year. Many schools are choosing to do this through local media, primarily newspapers and television. Parents who have not seen their district's School Report Card can request a copy through the local school or district office. Maine's state education reporting system is still being developed. Data on Maine's schools can be viewed online at <http://www.schoolmatters.com>.

For more information on this and other educational topics, contact Maine State PIRC.

State of Maine, Department of Education. September 2010 <<http://www.maine.gov/education/nclb/index.html>>



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Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Rev. 9/10