

Why A-F school performance grades?

In 2013, the NC General Assembly passed the Excellent Public Schools Act as part IX of its [Appropriations Act of 2013](#). Section 9.4 of this Act calls for the annual awarding of individual A – F school performance grades based on:

- 80% of the weight of the grade is based on test results (end-of-grade, end-of-course, graduation rate, college/workplace readiness measures)
- 20% of the weight of the grade is based on school growth as measured by SAS EVAAS (Education Value-Added Assessment System).

Are all schools subject to receiving an A-F performance grade?

- Only public, charter, and alternative schools are graded. Public schools are compared to other schools in the same district. For 2013-14, 2,424 of 2,564 public and charter schools received a grade.
- Charter schools are independent of the school districts in which they are located and are not part of a local comparison.
- Private, Federal, state-operated and other special schools are not graded due to differences in the way data are reported for these schools.
- Per the Department of Public Instruction, “quality teacher data are limited for charter schools due to the flexibility allowed in their operations.” All traditional public school teachers must be certified, while only 50% of charter school teachers are required to be certified.

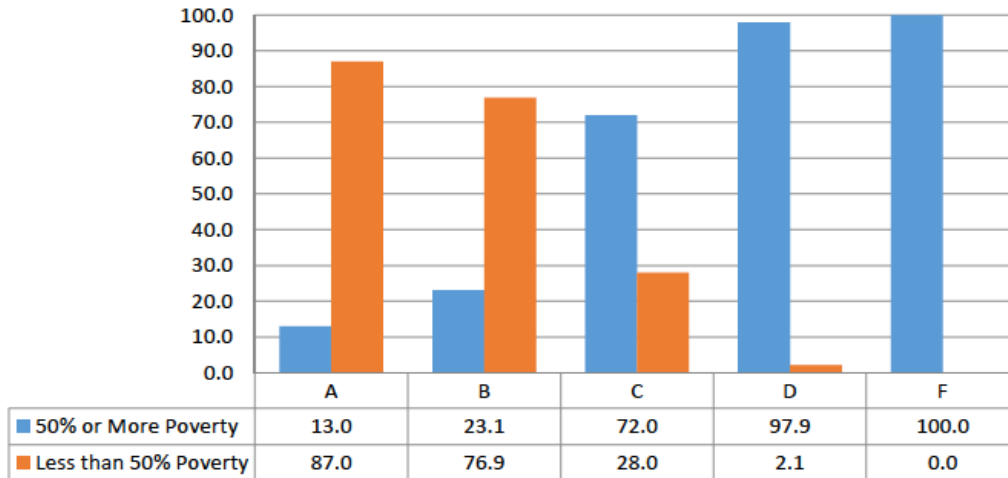
What scale is used for grading?

Letter Grade	2013-14 Values	Beginning in 2014-15
A	85	90
B	70	80
C	55	70
D	40	60
F	<40	<60

How did North Carolina schools fare?

- Public schools had a lower percentage of Ds and Fs than charter schools (29% vs. 31.2%).
- Charter schools had a higher percentage of As and Bs than public schools (40.8% vs. 28.8%).
- Schools with greater poverty had more Cs, Ds, and Fs than schools with less poverty.
- All schools that received an F grade had 50% or more poverty.

Grades by School Poverty Percent



Source: 2013–14 School Performance Grades (A–F) for North Carolina Public Schools Executive Summary, NC DPI

Supporters of school performance grades believe

- Students will benefit from holding schools more accountable
- Parents will have better data about school performance that they can understand
- Grades will encourage more targeted school improvement

Critics of a single school measurement believe that grades

- Do not reflect the learning in our schools
- Undervalue student growth and other important measures of school quality
- Could result in more attention to borderline students while underserving the lowest and highest performing students
- Will have negative economic impacts on a community (lower home values/sales)
- Do not come with resources/financial support to improve grades

References

NC Policy Watch: The Flawed Formula for North Carolina's A-F School Grades

<http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2015/02/12/the-flawed-formula-for-north-carolinas-a-f-school-grades/>

North Carolina Public Schools: School Performance Grades 2013-14: Questions and Answers

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/spgqna15.pdf>

NPR: When a School Gets a Bad Report Card

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2015/02/13/385480670/when-a-school-gets-a-bad-report-card>

North Carolina Public Schools: North Carolina Report Cards

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/src/guide/>

Why Report Cards Merit a Failing Grade

<http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/pb-statereportcards.pdf>

Advocating for high-quality public schools for North Carolina.

PO Box 6484, Raleigh NC 27628 • 919-576-0655

Visit us at: publicschoolsfirstnc.org • Write us at: info@publicschoolsfirstnc.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/publicschoolsfirstnc](https://www.facebook.com/publicschoolsfirstnc) • Twitter: @PS1NC