

# Poverty Isn't Destiny:

An analysis of Ohio's  
2018–19 school report cards

Aaron Churchill  
December 2019

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# Glossary

**Achievement** (in uppercase) is a report-card component that gauges student performance on state exams; the term (in lowercase) can also be used more generally to describe student performance on an exam at a certain point in time. **Achievement levels** refer to Ohio’s five categories for reporting state exam results; from lowest to highest, they are: limited, basic, proficient, accelerated, and advanced.

The **ACT** and **SAT** are college entrance exams that students take during high school.

The **Big Eight** refers to Ohio’s major cities: Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown.

**Components** refer to the six main dimensions of the school report card; **subcomponents** refer to indicators within a larger component. Components are capitalized in this report, while subcomponents are not.

**Economically disadvantaged (ED)** students are generally identified on the basis of eligibility for federally subsidized lunches (that is, their family income is less than or equal to 185 percent of the federal poverty level). However, some Ohio schools report 100 percent ED on the basis of the federal Community Eligibility Program (CEP), which allows the school to provide subsidized meals to all students, no matter their household income. In turn, CEP-participating schools report all students as ED, including students from families above 185 percent poverty.

**End-of-course exams (EOC)** are state assessments given to high school students in English language arts, math, biology, U.S. history, and U.S. government.

**ELA** is an acronym for English language arts.

**Gap Closing** is a report-card component that considers subgroup performance on state exams (both their performance-index and value-added scores), along with their graduation rates.

**Growth measure** is a general term used to describe an indicator that depicts changes in student achievement over time.

**ODE** is an acronym for the Ohio Department of Education.

**Overall rating** refers to Ohio’s “summative” school rating, which combines results from the various dimensions of the state report card.

**Performance index** is a subcomponent within the Achievement component that awards more credit to schools when students score at higher achievement levels on state exams.

**Proficiency** describes pupil achievement in terms of whether they meet (or do not meet) the state’s proficiency standard, which is a minimum scale score of 700 on state math and ELA exams.<sup>1</sup> This proficiency bar is lower than the score indicating that students meet college- and career-readiness benchmarks. ODE notes that reaching **accelerated** on state exams—one achievement level above proficient—“suggests that a student is on track for college and career readiness.”<sup>2</sup> A **proficiency rate** refers to the percentage of students reaching the proficient or above achievement level.

**Progress** is a report card component that gauges student growth on state exams, as measured by value-added scores. The Progress component incorporates both overall (that is, schoolwide) value-added scores and the value-added scores of three specific subgroups within the school (students with disabilities, low-achieving students, and gifted students).

**Subgroups** refer to groups of students who share similar characteristics; under federal law, Ohio identifies subgroups by race/ethnicity, ED status, students with disabilities, and English-language learners. Ohio includes two additional subgroups in its accountability system: low-achieving and gifted students’ growth data are used in the Progress component.

**Value-added** is a statistical model that estimates a school’s contribution to student growth based on pupils’ prior achievement; the term **overall value-added** refers to a subcomponent of the Progress component on Ohio’s school report card.

## Preface and acknowledgments

The assumption that demography is destiny has infiltrated our thinking about education. It crops up in various forms. Some might think, “Students from low-income backgrounds can’t be expected to succeed academically.” Another might suppose, “Boys will be boys, and they’re unlikely to excel in school” or “girls just aren’t wired to do well in science and math.”

Such pernicious beliefs have also crept into our discourse around schools. Following Ohio’s release of its 2018–19 school and district report cards, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* ran a headline titled, “See how closely Ohio school report card grades trend with district income.” One analyst told the *Dayton Daily News*, “Schools with more disadvantaged (for example by poverty or disability) students perform worse, and this has little to do with anything happening in the school.” And the *Marion Star* ran an editorial from a local school board member carping about the ratings: “Slapping this district and others with a ‘grade’ that measures little more than socioeconomic status discourages quality people from moving to our community.”<sup>3</sup>

Such statements leave an impression that schools are helpless in the midst of adversity. This defeatist notion is wrong. In reality, a growing body of evidence confirms that high-performing, high-poverty schools exist—and that, over time, they do indeed assist students to overcome barriers and achieve at high levels. In a recent review of charter school studies, for example, Sarah Cohodes of Columbia University concludes with the following:

*Attending an urban, high-quality charter school can have transformative effects on individual students’ lives. Three years attending one of these high-performing charter schools produces test-score gains about the size of the black-white test-score gap.*<sup>4</sup>

Of course, it’s not just charters that are brightening the outlook for America’s neediest kids. Many of these “opportunity factories” are operated by traditional school districts, others are private schools (some of which accept vouchers), and still others are STEM schools or career-technical centers.

One of the main purposes of this report is to shine a light on Ohio’s excellent high-poverty schools. They serve as important reminders that every school is capable of moving achievement in the right direction. Indeed, these “needles in a haystack” dispel notions that schools can’t do much for needy kids. To be sure, children growing up in poverty face significant challenges, and it takes tireless work to help them catch up. Quality high-poverty schools remain scarce in Ohio—and policymakers should continue to work to increase their numbers. Yet the outliers give us reason to believe that poverty *isn’t* destiny—not for schools and certainly not for the students they serve.

### Acknowledgments

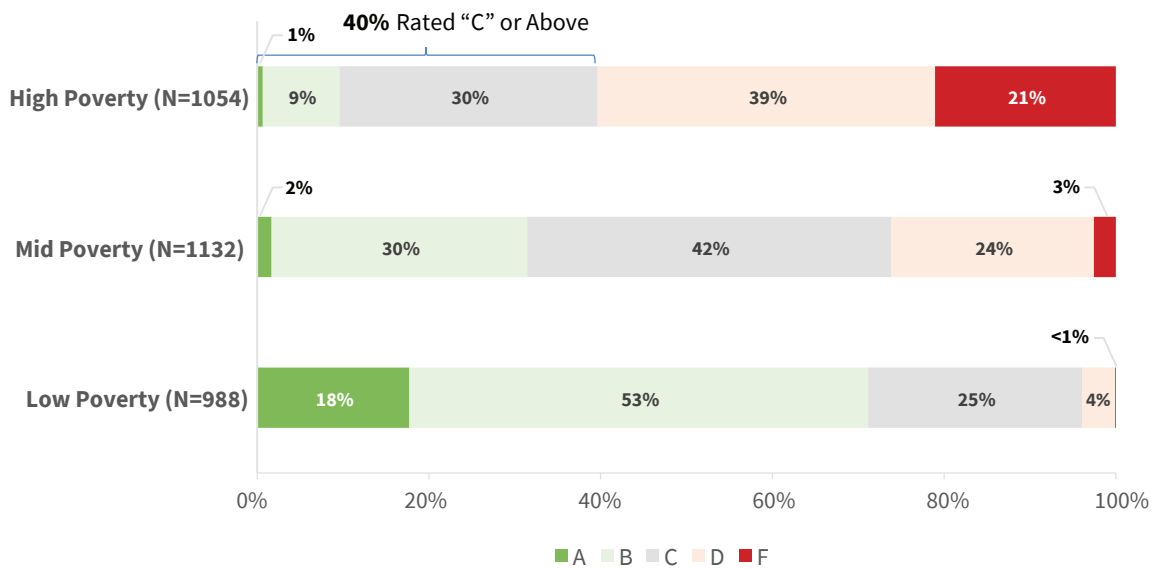
The time and talents of many individuals helped to create this report. Special thanks to my Fordham colleagues Michael J. Petrilli, Chester E. Finn, Jr., and Chad L. Aldis for their thoughtful feedback during the drafting process. Also on the Fordham team, I wish to thank Jeff Murray, who led report production and dissemination, and intern Tran Le, who provided research assistance. Pamela Tatz copyedited the report, and Andy Kittles produced the layout. All errors are my own.

– Aaron Churchill, Ohio Research Director

# Summary

Starting with the 2017–18 school year, Ohio began to assign overall A-to-F school ratings. Like a final grade point average that combines results from various courses, this composite rating offers a user-friendly summary of school performance across the multiple dimensions of Ohio’s report card (more detail can be found on page 9). A reasonable starting point in our search for excellence among Ohio’s high-poverty schools is with this prominent “summative” rating. Figure 1 displays the overall ratings of Ohio schools along three poverty tiers. Although the general pattern shows that affluent schools tend to fare best, we also see that a solid 40 percent of high-poverty schools earn respectable C rating or higher, and 10 percent earn an A or B.

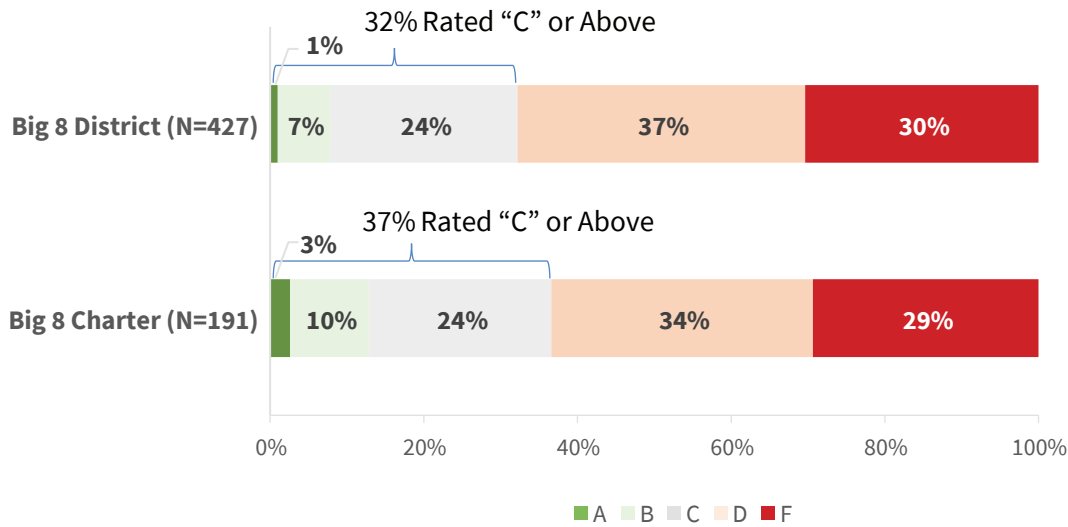
**Figure 1. Overall ratings by poverty level, Ohio schools, 2018–19**



**Note:** High-poverty schools enroll 66 percent or more ED students; mid-poverty schools enroll 33–66 percent ED students; and low-poverty schools enroll less than 33 percent ED students.

Among Ohio’s high-poverty schools, those located in its major cities—known as the Big Eight—tend to have more concentrated student poverty.<sup>5</sup> When we view their ratings, we see that roughly one in three Big Eight schools receive overall Cs or above. The large majority of Ohio’s public charter schools are located in these cities, and as figure 2 indicates, they outperform their district counterparts (37 to 32 percent rated C or above). Taken together, figures 1 and 2 show that earning solid marks on the state’s overall rating system is indeed feasible for high-poverty schools, whether they are located in less affluent rural areas and small towns or in large cities. Though some may view a C as a mediocre overall rating, reaching this mark serves an important purpose in allowing quality schools to stand out from nearby schools receiving Ds and Fs.

**Figure 2. Overall ratings among Ohio’s Big Eight schools, 2018–19**

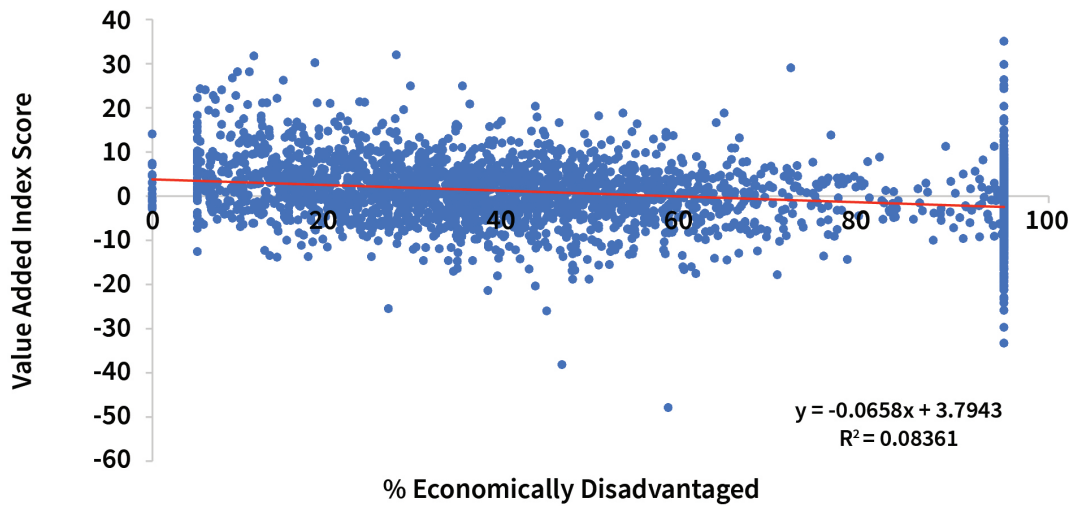


Though it offers a useful summary, the overall rating may gloss over schools’ weaknesses and strengths. Researchers have long found a relationship between students’ socioeconomic status, on the one hand, and their achievement on the other. Hence, schools serving primarily low-income students tend to struggle on measures that look at proficiency at a single point in time. That pattern continued in 2018–19, with 84 percent of high-poverty schools receiving Ds and Fs on the performance index, a weighted measure of proficiency. In a similar vein, high-poverty schools are more likely to receive low ratings on components that look at pupil readiness for success after high school. Although these static measures remain important dimensions of performance—families and citizens deserve an honest check on how many students reach proficiency and college- and career-readiness targets—they tend to depress the overall ratings of less advantaged schools.

To provide another critical view of school quality, Ohio has long deployed a value-added growth measure, a statistical method that is commonly used in education research to control for the influences of nonschooling factors. By focusing on student growth over time, value-added produces a more even playing field for schools serving children of varying backgrounds, while also holding schools accountable to a uniform expectation that all students—no matter their starting point—can meet state growth standards.

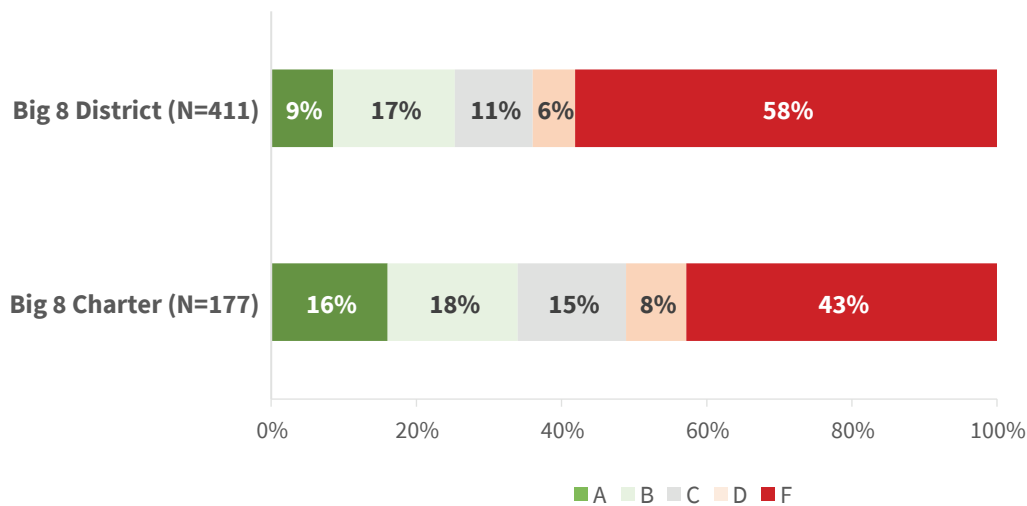
Figure 3 shows that value-added yields more poverty-neutral results across Ohio schools. The generally flat trend line (in red) indicates a weak correlation between schools’ proportion of ED students and their value-added scores.<sup>6</sup> Put another way, students’ socioeconomic characteristics are not highly predictive of the growth they can achieve during a year. Moreover, the chart reveals a sizeable number of high-poverty schools—represented by the dots at the top right—where students are making impressive gains.

**Figure 3. Relationship between economic disadvantage and value-added scores in Ohio schools, 2018–19**



Ohio recognizes these high-growth, high-poverty schools in its rating system. The chart below shows that a sizable number of Big Eight schools received As and Bs on the value-added rating. Of the Big Eight charter schools, 34 percent received As and Bs on this measure in 2018–19, while 26 percent of their district counterparts did so.

**Figure 4. Overall value-added ratings among Big Eight schools, 2018–19**



This overall value-added rating, along with three subgroup value-added measures, are combined to create a larger component rating known as Progress. Starting with the 2017–18 report cards, Ohio incorporates additional subgroup value-added data into its Gap Closing component (for more on this, see page 14). Together, Progress and Gap Closing contribute roughly 35 to 65 percent of schools’ overall ratings, depending on their grade levels. To illustrate how these growth-oriented components help to identify quality high-poverty schools, consider the ratings of some of the charters sponsored by our sister organization, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. The table below shows that, despite their low Achievement component ratings (which includes the performance index), their solid marks on Progress and Gap Closing compensate, yielding overall ratings of B or above. Though overall As are likely to be rare in high-poverty communities, as in all parts of the state, schools that produce solid academic growth can and do earn ratings that set them apart from other schools in their community.



**Table 1. Illustration of the overall and component ratings of quality high-poverty charter schools**

School name	Overall rating	Achievement	Progress	Gap Closing	K-3 Literacy	Graduation	Prepared for Success
Columbus Collegiate Academy	B	D	A	B			
Dayton Early College Academy	B	C	A	A		A	F
KIPP Columbus	B	D	A	A	C		
United Preparatory Academy (Columbus)	B	C	A	A	B		

\* \* \*

Nearly two decades ago, George W. Bush famously used the phrase, “The soft bigotry of low expectations” to describe the error of expecting less from low-income and minority children. We’ve come a long way since then. Across the nation, school reformers have insisted on academic standards and accountability systems that challenge all students—and their schools—to meet equally rigorous goals. With a “no-excuses” mindset, school leaders have started hundreds of charter schools that now provide the education needed to break the cycle of poverty.

Yes, Ohio still has miles to go before it can claim that all students have the knowledge and skills to pursue the American Dream. And yes, we can’t be naïve about how challenging the work of educating students from less advantaged backgrounds can be. But we shouldn’t turn back the clock to an era when it was acceptable to hold such youngsters and their schools to a lower standard. Fortunately, the outliers, some of which are listed in our honor roll on the next page, prove that schools can do right by their students even in an era of more challenging expectations. In an interview last year with the *Dayton Daily News*, state superintendent Paolo DeMaria said, “My mission is to keep pushing the system to break those correlations because I believe that poor children can learn to the levels of other students.”<sup>7</sup> Amen.

## Honor Roll: 58 high-performing urban schools

The following tables name the public schools located in Ohio’s Big Eight cities that achieved an overall rating of a C or above and earned an A on their overall value-added rating. The first table includes the thirty-nine schools that met those criteria in both 2017–18 and 2018–19, while the second table lists nineteen schools that met them for the first time last year (because Ohio first assigned overall A–F ratings in 2017–18, we can only track high-performing Big Eight schools for two years using this framework). These fifty-eight schools represent 10 percent of all Big Eight district and charter schools. Twenty-six public charter schools and thirty-two district schools made our Big Eight honor roll.

**Table 2. Two-year awardees (2017–18 and 2018–19)**

School name	District or charter	City	Enrollment	% black or Hispanic*
Akron Early College High School	District	Akron	396	36.9
Akron STEM High School	District	Akron	325	37.2
Findley Community Learning Center	District	Akron	569	52.1
Evanston Academy Elementary School	District	Cincinnati	333	90.4
Roberts Academy: A Paideia Learning Community	District	Cincinnati	821	92.5
Clark School	District	Cleveland	595	74.1
Paul L Dunbar Elementary School	District	Cleveland	371	76.8
Cleveland Early College High	District	Cleveland	311	89.7
Cleveland School of Architecture & Design	District	Cleveland	314	90.8
Rhodes College and Career Academy	District	Cleveland	267	65.6
Clara E Westropp School	District	Cleveland	367	63.5
New Technology HS@East Tech	District	Cleveland	122	95.0
Denison	District	Cleveland	281	53.4
Cleveland Entrepreneurship Preparatory School	Charter	Cleveland	332	88.0
Horizon Science Academy-Denison Middle School	Charter	Cleveland	326	80.7
Constellation Schools: Westpark Community Elementary	Charter	Cleveland	315	37.8
Village Preparatory School Willard	Charter	Cleveland	313	81.4
Hope Academy Northwest Campus	Charter	Cleveland	222	69.3
Columbus Alternative High School	District	Columbus	799	60.2
KIPP Columbus	Charter	Columbus	1,373	88.4
Columbus Humanities, Arts and Technology Academy	Charter	Columbus	560	74.1
Horizon Science Academy Columbus Middle School	Charter	Columbus	505	91.1
Horizon Science Academy Columbus	Charter	Columbus	492	86.2
Focus Learning Academy of Northern Columbus	Charter	Columbus	482	95.0
United Preparatory Academy	Charter	Columbus	297	66.4
Columbus Collegiate Academy–West	Charter	Columbus	240	59.6
Columbus Collegiate Academy	Charter	Columbus	237	91.1
Westside Academy	Charter	Columbus	225	96.5
South Columbus Preparatory Academy	Charter	Columbus	171	43.3
Midnimo Cross Cultural Community School	Charter	Columbus	116	95.0
Stivers School For The Arts	District	Dayton	861	54.2
Horace Mann PreK–6 School	District	Dayton	419	31.5
Klepinger Community School	Charter	Dayton	569	95.0
Dayton Early College Academy	Charter	Dayton	342	86.3
Chase STEM Academy	District	Toledo	313	68.7
Toledo Technology Academy High School	District	Toledo	324	23.2
Glendale-Feilbach Elementary School	District	Toledo	416	52.9
Toledo Preparatory and Fitness Academy	Charter	Toledo	192	70.9
Youngstown Rayen Early College High School	District	Youngstown	259	80.7

**Table 3. First-year awardees (2018–19)**

School Name	District or charter	City	Enrollment	% black or Hispanic*
I Promise School	District	Akron	224	60.3
Carson Elementary School	District	Cincinnati	603	76.7
George Washington Carver	District	Cleveland	409	95.0
Miles School	District	Cleveland	428	92.8
Thomas Jefferson School	District	Cleveland	549	76.0
Louis Agassiz School	District	Cleveland	286	58.4
The School of One	District	Cleveland	214	73.9
Wings Academy 1	Charter	Cleveland	223	95.0
Constellation Schools: Stockyard Community Middle	Charter	Cleveland	66	39.4
Indianola Informal K–8 School	District	Columbus	696	36.7
Southwood Elementary School	District	Columbus	310	35.5
Columbus Spanish Immersion K–6 School	District	Columbus	404	85.9
Watkins Elementary School	District	Columbus	350	71.7
Burroughs Elementary School	District	Columbus	451	45.5
Columbus Preparatory and Fitness Academy	Charter	Columbus	419	84.3
Performance Academy Eastland	Charter	Columbus	342	92.1
Cesar Chavez College Preparatory School	Charter	Columbus	326	95.0
Educational Academy for Boys & Girls	Charter	Columbus	129	91.4
Horizon Science Academy Youngstown	Charter	Youngstown	395	83.8

\* We display the percentages of black and Hispanic students as a proxy for pupil disadvantage because all schools in six of the eight Big Eight districts—except for Cincinnati and Toledo—report 100 percent ED students due to participation in the federal CEP meals program.<sup>8</sup> Some schools in these districts do not actually enroll 100 percent ED students yet still report blanket rates because all students thereby become eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. The average percentage of black and Hispanic students among the schools listed in tables above is 72 percent, slightly above the Big Eight district average of 66 percent. Statewide, 23 percent of Ohio public school students are black or Hispanic. According to U.S. Census data, children of these racial/ethnic backgrounds are far more likely to be from low-income households and, on average, achieve at lower levels than their peers.<sup>9</sup>

# Ohio's accountability framework

Federal education law requires states to report their exam results and produce school ratings based on them (see appendix A for a description of Ohio's exams). Though several parameters exist, the law gives states significant autonomy in how they design their school rating, or "report card," system. Ohio's current iteration of report cards features multiple measures, including gauges of both student achievement and growth, which together offer a more holistic view of performance. They also include A–F letter grades, a school-rating system pioneered by Florida and used today in sixteen states (including Ohio).<sup>10</sup> And starting with release of the 2017–18 report cards, Ohio has issued overall A–F ratings that provide a user-friendly summary of school performance.<sup>11</sup> The format of the 2018–19 report cards was largely the same as the year before, save for minor changes made within the Gap Closing and Progress components.<sup>12</sup>

The table below lists the elements of the report card. It has a hierarchical structure in which the overall rating sits at the top, with component ratings feeding into it. Below three of the component ratings—Achievement, Progress, and Graduation—are graded subcomponents that contribute to the larger component ratings. Ohio assigns A–F ratings on all of the elements displayed below, yielding fifteen possible letter grades. Districts typically receive ratings in all fifteen categories, while individual schools receive fewer, depending on the relevant components based upon the grade levels served. The report-card structure shown in the table applies to the vast majority of Ohio districts and schools, although career-technical planning districts (CTPDs) and dropout-recovery charter schools receive alternative report cards with different measures; their ratings appear in the appendix (tables B1 and B2).

**Table 4. Ohio's school report card, at a glance**

Report-card element	Brief description
<b>Overall rating</b>	Summary rating that combines the six report-card components. For more on the calculations, see table 5 below.
<b>Report-card components (in bold) and subcomponents (nonbold)</b>	
<b>Achievement</b>	Composite of the performance-index (75%) and indicators-met (25%) ratings.
Performance index	Weighted measure of student achievement, with greater weight given to pupils who achieve at higher levels.
Indicators met	Based on proficiency rates in each of the twenty-three possible grade/subject state exams. In addition, there is an indicator based on gifted-student data, chronic-absenteeism rates, and year-to-year improvement on EOC exams, yielding twenty-six possible indicators.
<b>Progress</b>	Composite of the overall and subgroup value-added measures (55% weight on overall and 15% each on the subgroup value-added categories listed below).
Value-added: Overall	Based on the growth over time of all students in a district or school.
Value-added: Lowest 20%	Based on the growth over time of students within the lowest 20 percent in achievement statewide.
Value-added: Gifted	Based on the growth over time of gifted students. For those identified as gifted in math, results from math exams are used; for those identified as gifted in reading, ELA exams are used; for those identified as gifted in science, science exams are used; and for those identified as superior cognitive, math, science, and ELA test results are used.
Value-added: SWD	Based on the growth over time of students with disabilities.
<b>Gap Closing</b>	In general, based on the achievement and growth across various student subgroups (for example, ED and race/ethnicity).
<b>Graduation Rate</b>	Composite of four- and five-year high school graduation rates (60% on the four-year rate and 40% on the five-year rate).
Four-year graduation rate	Percentage of students who earn a diploma within four years of entering ninth grade.
Five-year graduation rate	Percentage of students who earn a diploma within five years of entering ninth grade.
<b>Improving At-Risk K–3 Readers</b>	Generally, based on the percentage of K–3 students that a school moves from "not on track" to "on track" in reading proficiency.
<b>Prepared for Success</b>	Indicator of college and career readiness based on various high school measures such as ACT/SAT scores, AP/IB scores, honors diplomas earned, and industry credentials earned.

District and school report cards are used in various ways.

- First and foremost, they offer parents and citizens an important annual check on student performance in their local schools. For school-shopping families, in particular, the ratings can help to inform their search for a quality school for their sons and daughters.
- Second, they offer oversight authorities objective information that can drive decision-making. Charter sponsors, for example, typically use data produced by report cards to decide whether to renew (or nonrenew) school contracts. Districts may use these data to provide extra supports to schools needing the most help (and under federal law, they are required to do so for certain schools flagged as low-performing by the state).<sup>13</sup> They may also rely on report-card results to identify schools whose instructional practices are models for others to follow.
- Third, the ratings undergird specific state policies. Though not used to determine state funding levels—a widespread misconception—consistently poor district ratings result in state intervention via academic distress commissions (for more, see page 25) and automatic closure for persistently weak charter schools. Moreover, the state relies on ratings to determine pupil eligibility for one of its private school scholarship programs (EdChoice), to establish the geographic areas in which charters may locate, and to identify quality charters that can receive supplemental state aid.

Next, we take a closer look at the overall rating, along with the overall value-added, Gap Closing, and performance-index ratings. Though it does not include an analysis of district and school ratings, a recent Fordham Institute report, *The Mountain Ahead*, examines the college- and career-readiness data presented in the Prepared for Success component.<sup>14</sup> More extended discussion around the Graduation and K–3 Literacy components, as well as the other parts of the report card, can be found in our 2017 report *Back to the Basics*.<sup>15</sup>

## Overall ratings

The formula for calculating overall grades is based on weights assigned to each of the six major components. As the table below illustrates, the exact weights depend on which components apply. The general formula, applying primarily to districts, places equal weight on Achievement and Progress (20 percent each) and lesser weight (15 percent each) on the other four components. Adjustments are made for elementary, middle, and high schools when they do not have the full range of components. The calculation of overall ratings is based on the number of points earned on each component and then multiplied by the weights to generate a weighted average number of points. That average is then translated into an overall grade.

**Table 5. Weights used to calculate Ohio’s overall school ratings**

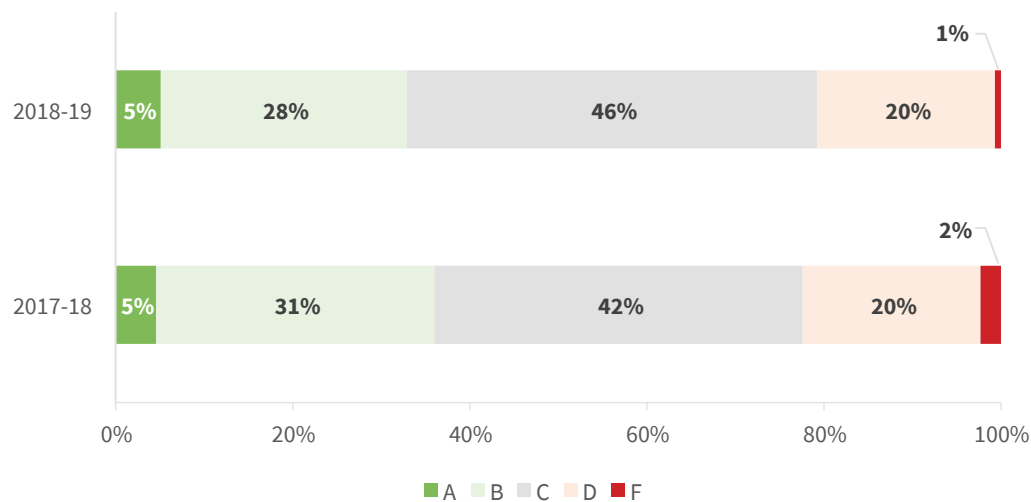
Component	District weights (grades K–12)	Elementary school weights (grades K–5)	Middle school weights (grades 6–8)	High school weights (grades 9–12)
<b>Achievement</b>	20%	27.5%	35%	23%
<b>Progress</b>	20%	27.5%	35%	23%
<b>Gap Closing</b>	15%	22.5%	30%	18%
<b>Graduation</b>	15%			18%
<b>Improving At-Risk K–3 Readers</b>	15%	22.5%		
<b>Prepared for Success</b>	15%			18%

**Note:** This table displays the weights for several common grade spans. For more detail about the calculations and the weights under all possible scenarios, see ODE, “2018–19 Overall Grade Technical Document” (February 2019).

## Results at a district level

At a school-district level, the distribution of overall ratings was largely unchanged from 2017–18 to 2018–19, likely reflecting the minimal changes to the underlying accountability framework. Over the past two years, the most frequent overall rating has been a C—46 percent of Ohio districts received this rating last year—with Bs the next-most common. Very few districts receive the top and bottom ratings, with just 5 percent of districts earning As and 1 percent earning Fs in 2018–19.

**Figure 5. Distribution of overall ratings of Ohio school districts, 2017–18 and 2018–19**



The next table offers a more detailed analysis of the year-to-year changes in district overall ratings. It shows that two in three Ohio districts—401 out of 608 districts—received the same overall rating from year to year (gray cells in the table below). Meanwhile, 106 districts improved their rating compared to the year prior—those shaded in green—including twelve districts previously rated an overall F that moved up to a D. On the other side of the coin, 101 districts saw their rating decline in 2018–19 versus the year prior (shaded in orange). Save for one district, all of the changes in overall ratings, whether up or down, were of just one category.

**Table 6. Year-to-year changes in district overall ratings, 2017–18 to 2018–19**

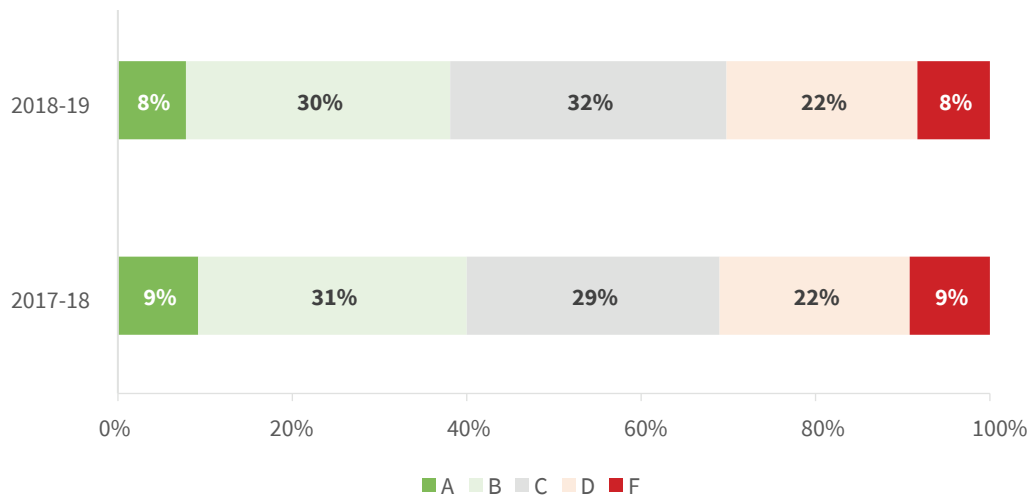
		2018–19 overall rating					N districts (FY18)
		A	B	C	D	F	
2017–18 overall rating	A	22	6	0	0	0	28
	B	9	126	55	1	0	191
	C	0	37	179	37	0	253
	D	0	0	48	72	2	122
	F	0	0	0	12	2	14
	N districts (FY19)	31	169	282	122	4	

**Note:** The green cells display the number of districts whose overall ratings increased from 2017–18 to 2018–19; the gray cells display the number of districts whose overall ratings remained the same; and the orange cells display the number of districts whose overall ratings decreased.

## Results at the school level

The next figure displays the breakdown of overall ratings at the school-building level and includes both district and public charter schools. Akin to the district-level analysis, this distribution was generally unchanged from year to year. The most common overall rating in 2018–19 was C (32 percent), with Bs close behind at 30 percent. Compared to the district-level distribution (figure 5 above), higher fractions of schools are identified as As and Fs—8 percent in each category in 2018–19—likely reflecting the wider variation in school-to-school performance.

**Figure 6. Distribution of overall ratings, Ohio schools, 2017–18 and 2018–19**



The next table compares schools' overall ratings in 2017–18 and 2018–19. Most retained the same rating: 58 percent received the same mark in both years (shaded in gray) but 20 percent—shaded in light green—moved up at least one category and another 22 percent received a lower rating. As the table indicates, the vast majority of changes, whether positive or negative, in schools' overall ratings were a change of just one category. Still, we observe a few cases of schools with more significant swings—six schools, for instance, jumped from an F to an A. Some of these cases are explained as early-elementary schools whose overall ratings are based entirely on meeting, or not meeting, the chronic-absenteeism indicator within indicators met. Because their overall ratings are based on just one data point, their ratings are more likely to fluctuate.

**Table 7. Year-to-year changes in school overall ratings, 2017–18 to 2018–19**

		2018–19 overall rating					N schools (FY18)
		A	B	C	D	F	
2017–18 overall rating	A	179	107	6	3	10	305
	B	66	653	259	36	5	1019
	C	3	205	532	212	12	964
	D	4	32	221	385	78	720
	F	6	7	34	88	159	294
	N schools (FY19)	258	1,004	1,052	724	264	

**Note:** The green cells display the number of schools whose overall ratings increased from 2017–18 to 2018–19; the gray cells display the number of schools whose overall ratings remained the same; and the orange cells display the number of schools whose overall ratings decreased.

The table below shows district and school overall ratings along three broad poverty tiers, based on their enrollment of ED students. Low-poverty districts generally perform better on this metric than their counterparts, with 68 percent earning As and Bs. A similar pattern is evident at the school level, though with more variation in ratings, especially among the high-poverty schools. Within this group, a solid 40 percent received C or better ratings, versus 33 percent at the district level. On the other end of the spectrum, 21 percent of high-poverty schools received Fs compared to just 4 percent of districts.

**Table 8. Distribution of overall ratings for Ohio districts and schools, 2018–19**

Overall rating	Districts				Schools			
	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All districts	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All schools
A	15%	0%	0%	5%	18%	2%	1%	6%
B	53%	18%	2%	28%	53%	30%	9%	30%
C	31%	63%	31%	46%	25%	42%	30%	33%
D	1%	19%	63%	20%	4%	24%	39%	23%
F	0%	0%	4%	1%	<1%	3%	21%	8%
Number of districts/schools	213	296	98	607	988	1,132	1,054	3,174

**Note:** A high-poverty district or school enrolls 66 percent or more ED students, a mid-poverty district or school enrolls 33–66 percent ED students, and a low-poverty district or school enrolls less than 33 percent ED students. The school-level data include both district and charter schools. A few high-poverty districts or schools may be misclassified due to the CEP (see page 1 for details). Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

## Value-added

Districts and schools deserve credit when their students make significant academic growth, even if they haven’t yet reached designated targets. Value-added growth measures rely on student-level data collected over time and statistical techniques that attempt to isolate districts’ or schools’ contributions to achievement gains (or losses). The value-added computations are done by data-analytics firm SAS, and although detailed technical documentation is available, the exact specifications are proprietary.<sup>16</sup> In simple terms, the concept behind Ohio’s value-added model is that students are expected to maintain their position in the achievement distribution from one year to the next. If students maintain their position, they’ve met the growth standard, while an upwards move would be interpreted as a positive gain and vice versa. Since value-added models start with students’ prior achievement, the results can be understood as estimates of school effectiveness.<sup>17</sup>

Ohio reports value-added results as index scores, which take into account both the size of the estimated value-added gain (or loss) and the margin of error in the statistical estimate.<sup>18</sup> The value-added results are averaged across the three most recent years, which helps to smooth any year-to-year fluctuations—though it also means that the results are not fully reflective of the current school performance.<sup>19</sup> The index scores are translated into A–F ratings using the scale shown in the table below.<sup>20</sup> Starting in 2018–19, districts and schools receiving As on their overall value-added rating are now subject to a one-letter-grade demotion if any of their subgroup value-added ratings are C or below (previously, the state applied this demotion to the Progress rating). This resulted in more B overall value-added ratings compared to prior years.



**Table 9. Scale used to determine value-added ratings in 2018–19**

Value-added rating	Index score	Interpretation <sup>21</sup>
A	+2.0 or above	<b>Significant</b> evidence that students made more than expected growth
B	+1.0 to 1.99	<b>Moderate</b> evidence that students made more than expected growth
C	-0.99 to 0.99	Evidence that students made growth similar to statewide expectation
D	-1.0 to -1.99	<b>Moderate</b> evidence that students made less than expected growth
F	-2.0 or below	<b>Significant</b> evidence that students made less than expected growth

At a district level, table 10 indicates that low-poverty districts tend to fare best on value-added—almost three in four earned As and Bs—while just 16 percent of high-poverty districts earn such ratings. However, the district ratings, especially among high-poverty districts, hide wide variation in performance at the school level. There, we see much higher percentages of As and Bs among high-poverty schools (31 percent). Although that proportion still trails their more affluent counterparts, earning these top marks remains an achievable target for high-poverty schools, much more so than the proficiency-based performance index (compare with table 13).

**Table 10. Distribution of overall value-added ratings, Ohio districts and schools, 2018-19**

Value-added rating	Districts				Schools			
	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All districts	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All schools
A	25%	9%	3%	14%	22%	12%	11%	15%
B	48%	31%	13%	34%	37%	31%	20%	29%
C	10%	12%	12%	12%	14%	14%	13%	13%
D	4%	8%	5%	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%
F	13%	40%	66%	35%	21%	36%	49%	36%
Number of districts/schools	213	296	98	607	957	1,091	1,015	3,063

**Note:** For more on how the poverty levels are defined, see notes under table 8. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

## Gap Closing

This component is designed to hold schools accountable for the performance of subgroups specified in federal and state law. They include six racial/ethnic subgroups, ED students, English-language learners, and students with disabilities; a final “all-students” group is also added. The concept behind subgroup accountability is that school-wide ratings could mask underperformance among smaller groups. Ohio looks at subgroup performance in math, ELA, and graduation rates separately. In 2018–19, districts and schools must have at least twenty students in a particular subgroup to have their performance evaluated as a separate subgroup.

Gap Closing remains one of Ohio’s more complex report-card components. In brief, districts and schools can receive full credit in the calculations when a subgroup does any of the following:

1. Meets or exceeds annual performance-index score targets in math and ELA set forth by the state;<sup>22</sup>
2. Increases its performance-index score by at least 10 percent relative to the year prior; or
3. Demonstrates evidence of growth, as indicated by a value-added index score of +1.0 or above.

When these targets aren't met, a school can still earn partial credit when the subgroup's performance-index score rises by 0 to 10 percent compared to the year prior. If none of these conditions apply, however, the school receives zero credit—it's penalized—for the performance of that subgroup.<sup>23</sup> Although the component offers various pathways to demonstrate subgroup success, some schools may receive high ratings without necessarily closing gaps.<sup>24</sup>

The inclusion of the year-to-year performance-index data and the subgroup value-added data—which Ohio began to incorporate in 2017–18—enables high-poverty schools to receive solid marks on this component. Though their percentages of As and Bs are lower than more affluent schools (which typically receive high marks), the table below shows that nearly two in five high-poverty districts and schools earn As and Bs on Gap Closing.

**Table 11. Distribution of Gap Closing ratings among Ohio districts and schools, 2018–19**

Gap Closing rating	Districts				Schools			
	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All districts	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All schools
A	60%	24%	4%	33%	60%	35%	14%	36%
B	37%	46%	35%	41%	27%	29%	25%	27%
C	2%	12%	21%	10%	5%	10%	9%	8%
D	1%	10%	12%	7%	4%	9%	11%	8%
F	<1%	8%	28%	8%	3%	17%	41%	20%
Number of districts/schools	213	296	98	607	983	1,127	1,044	3,154

**Note:** For more on how the poverty levels are defined, see notes under table 8. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

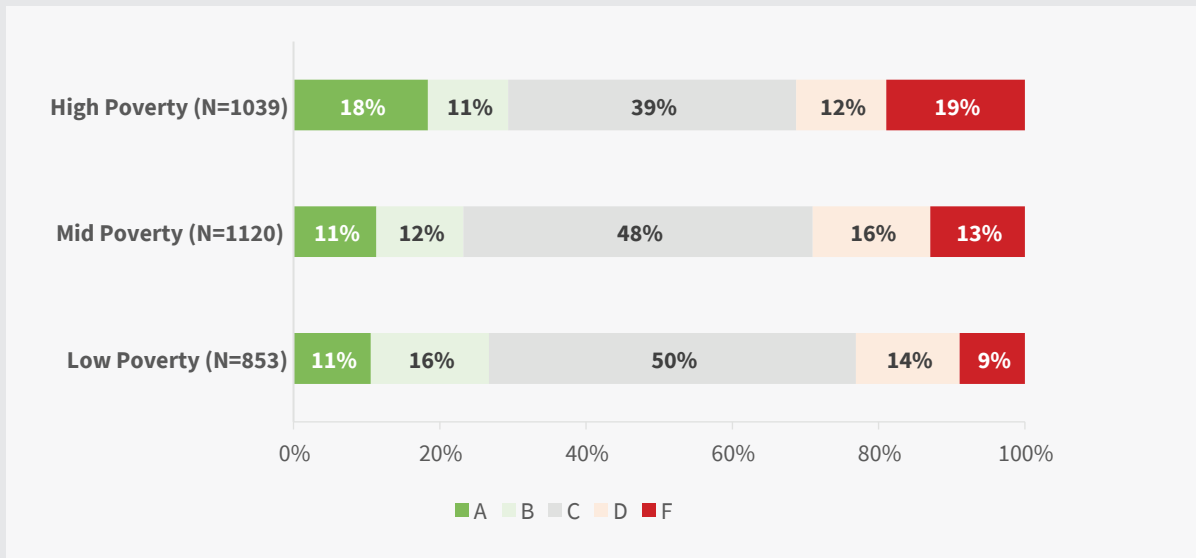
**Sidebar: Do less advantaged students make stronger growth when attending wealthier schools?**

Some analysts assert that attending more integrated schools—those with more socioeconomic diversity—provides an academic boost for disadvantaged students, while growth may be slower in schools with more concentrated poverty. With the introduction of additional subgroup value-added data by race/ethnicity and economic disadvantage into the Gap Closing component, we can explore whether students in these subgroups make greater academic progress if they attend schools with less concentrated poverty.

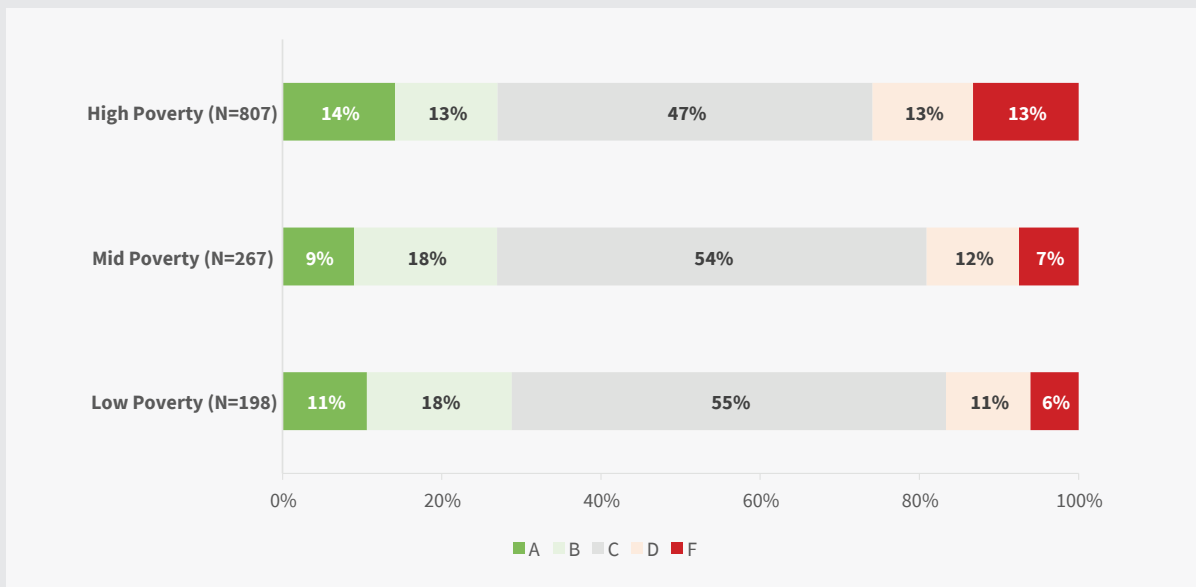
The charts below display the breakdown of ELA subgroup value-added ratings for ED and black students by the poverty level of the school they attend. Because high-poverty schools are identified as such via ED enrollment, they have more ED students in that subgroup—and in some cases, the entire school is represented in the ED subgroup. The figures indicate that growth among ED and black students is broadly similar across schools of varying poverty levels. For example, figure 7 shows that 29 percent of high-poverty schools produced significant gains for their ED students (As and Bs), whereas 27 percent of low-poverty schools did so. The results are almost the same for black students attending high- versus low-poverty schools. Though not displayed below, the distribution of math value-added results for these subgroups is not appreciably different from the ELA results.<sup>25</sup>

In sum, the subgroup value-added data, at least for 2018–19 and in these grades and subjects, don't seem to indicate that wealthier schools produce stronger learning gains for the ED and/or black students attending them.

**Figure 7. Distribution of English language arts value-added ratings for economically disadvantaged students in Ohio schools**



**Figure 8. Distribution of ELA value-added ratings for black students in Ohio schools**



**Notes:** Figures 7 and 8 display unofficial A–F subgroup ratings based on the value-added scores reported within the Gap Closing component. Within the Gap Closing component, ODE relies on one-year value-added scores, instead of multiyear averages (as in the Progress component). It also only includes value-added data from grades 4–8, math and ELA, thus excluding results from the EOCs and science (which are included in the Progress value-added measures).

## Performance index

Student achievement in core academic subjects has long been central to school accountability systems. Parents and the broader public deserve an honest assessment of how many students are meeting rigorous academic benchmarks *en route* to college, career, and whatever else may follow high school. To this end, the performance index provides an important overview of achievement in Ohio’s districts and schools. It’s a composite measure that combines results from Ohio’s various state exams to offer a snapshot of pupil achievement. To calculate scores, the state uses a weighting system that provides more credit as students achieve at higher levels. Table 12, below, shows the five achievement levels that students may reach and their respective weights.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 12. Achievement levels and weights used to calculate performance-index scores**

Achievement level	Weight
Advanced	1.2
Accelerated	1.1
Proficient	1.0
Basic	0.6
Limited	0.3

Table 13, below, shows that the results on the performance index tend to track more closely with poverty than components relying on growth measures. Undoubtedly affected by out-of-school factors that influence achievement, high-poverty districts and schools receive very few As and Bs on this measure (less than 5 percent), while the vast majority of them receive Ds and Fs. On the other hand, low-poverty districts and schools typically receive higher performance-index ratings, with only a handful falling below C. In summary, the vivid contrast in the results of low- versus high-poverty schools on the performance index brings to light, once again, the wide achievement gaps between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. They also remind us of the urgent need for excellent schools—such as those listed in our honor roll—that can help needy students beat the demographic odds.

**Table 13: Distribution of performance-index ratings by student poverty levels in Ohio districts and schools, 2017–18**

Performance-index rating	Districts				Schools			
	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All districts	Low poverty	Mid poverty	High poverty	All schools
A	9%	0%	0%	3%	8%	0%	<1%	3%
B	31%	2%	1%	12%	54%	16%	3%	24%
C	49%	34%	2%	34%	33%	55%	13%	34%
D	11%	64%	79%	48%	5%	28%	54%	29%
F	0%	<1%	18%	3%	0%	1%	30%	10%
Number of districts/schools	213	296	98	607	983	1,128	1,047	3,158

## Performance in the Big Eight

Schools in the Big Eight have historically served disproportionate numbers of Ohio’s low-income students and children of color. In 2018–19, these eight districts—Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown—combined to enroll 66 percent black and Hispanic students, three times the statewide average of 23 percent. Though Ohio’s ED data are no longer reliable indicators of student poverty in these eight districts, as six of them report 100 percent ED (see page 1 for details), Census data show that these cities have substantially higher childhood-poverty rates than the rest of the state. For instance, about 50 percent of Cleveland and Dayton children come from households with incomes at or below the federal poverty line, more than double the state average of 21 percent.<sup>27</sup>

Due to the state’s geographic restrictions on charters, the Big Eight has long been the locale for the large majority of the state’s public charter schools. That was no different in 2018–19, as three in four Ohio charters were located in these cities. Over the years, we at Fordham have examined the performance of charter schools located in the Big Eight by comparing their results to district schools in these cities. Though not a perfect comparison—more rigorous analyses compare similar students rather than schools—this analysis offers a broad picture of whether charters are providing quality options relative to families’ main alternative.

Generally, we’ve found that Big Eight charters perform much like nearby district schools. Yet in more recent years, 2018–19 included, there are signs that Big Eight charters improve student learning at a faster pace than their district counterparts. In each of the past three years, a higher percentage of Big Eight charter schools have achieved As and Bs on the state’s value-added measure than Big Eight district schools.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, a recent report released by Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes provides some evidence that Ohio’s urban, brick-and-mortar charters are delivering significant learning gains when compared to their district alternatives.<sup>29</sup> That analysis, however, looked at data only through 2016–17.

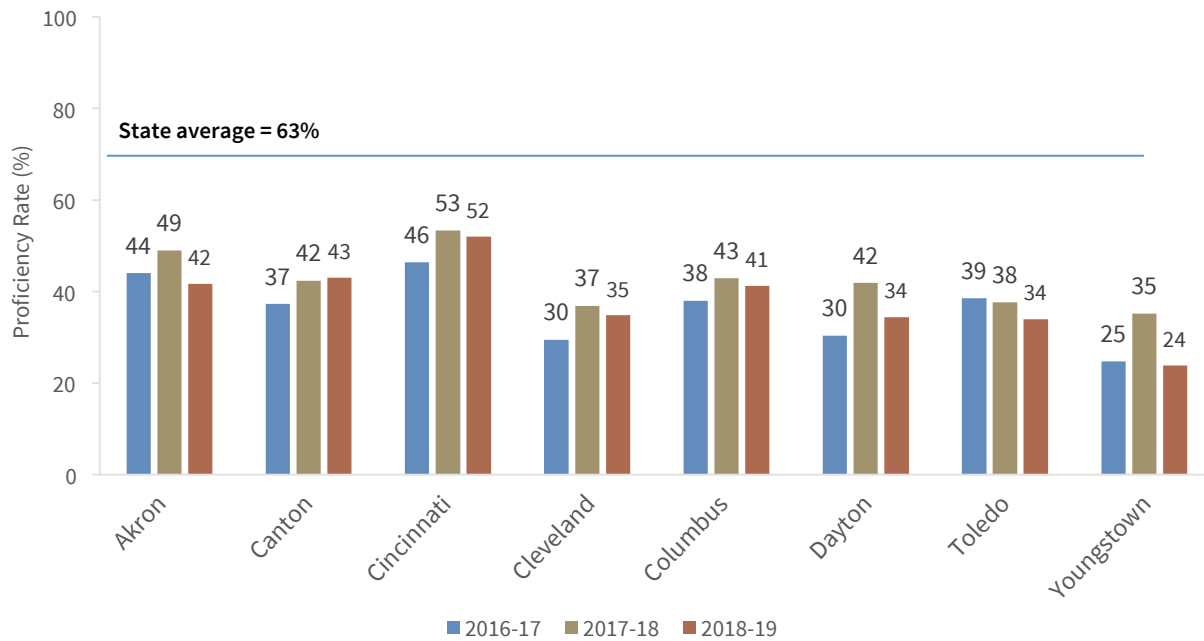
The following sections analyze outcomes within the Big Eight, starting with pupil achievement on state exams and then turning to charter and district school ratings on key report-card measures.

### Achievement in the Big Eight

The following charts display fourth- and seventh-grade proficiency rates for students attending district schools in the Ohio Big Eight. As in prior years, proficiency rates in 2018–19 across these districts fall short of the statewide average. Though not shown in the figures below, pupils attending charters in the Big Eight achieve at roughly similar levels, as indicated by charters’ comparable performance-index ratings (see figure 17).

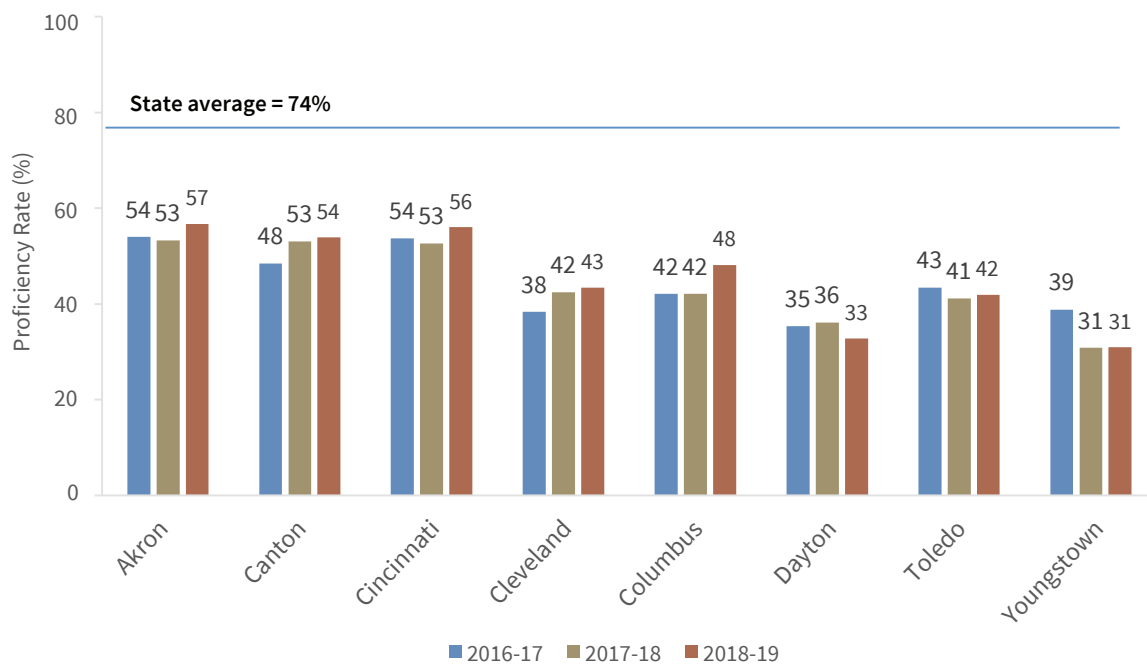
Starting with fourth-grade ELA, figure 9 shows that Cincinnati students perform the best among the group—52 percent of its students reached proficiency—while Youngstown posts the lowest rate, just 24 percent. Over the past three years, Canton has been the only Big Eight district to record increasing fourth-grade ELA proficiency rates, while Toledo’s has slid. On the math side, Akron leads the Big Eight with 57 percent of students reaching proficiency, with Cincinnati and Canton close behind. Youngstown again registers the lowest proficiency rate among the Big Eight, at 31 percent. Akin to its ELA results, Canton displays rising math proficiency rates over the past three years; Cleveland students also show steady improvements in math proficiency.

**Figure 9. Fourth-grade ELA proficiency rates among Big Eight districts, 2016–17 through 2018–19**



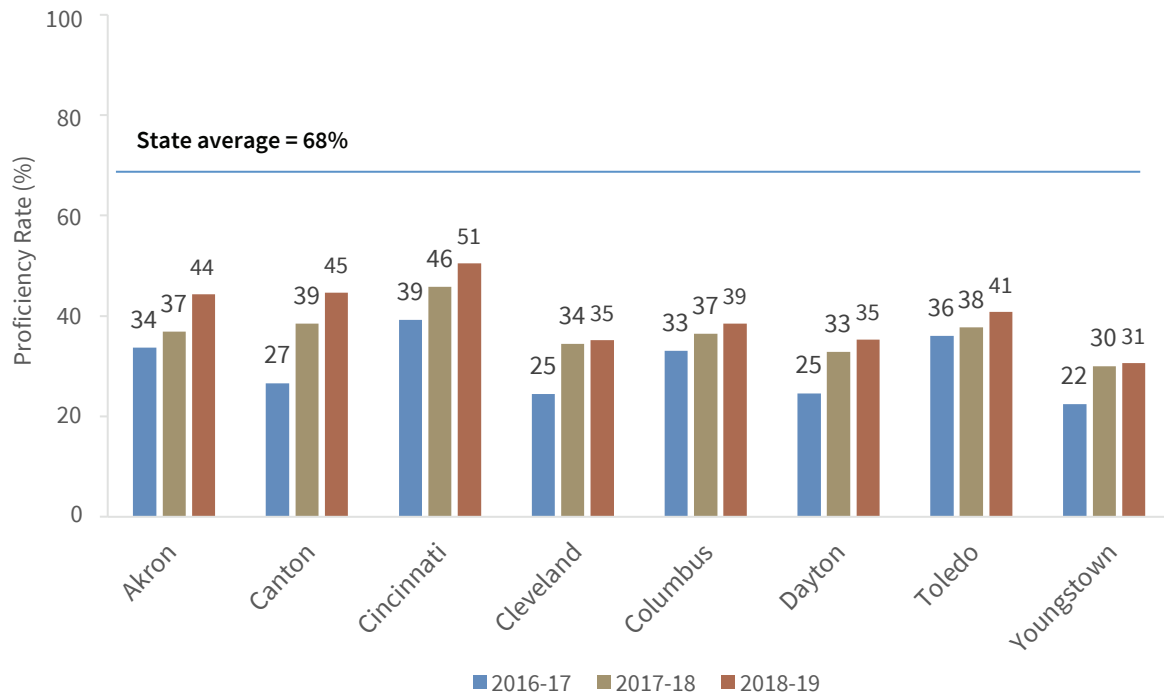
**Note:** The statewide proficiency rates displayed in figures 9–12 are for 2018–19.

**Figure 10. Fourth-grade math proficiency rates among Big Eight districts, 2016–17 through 2018–19**

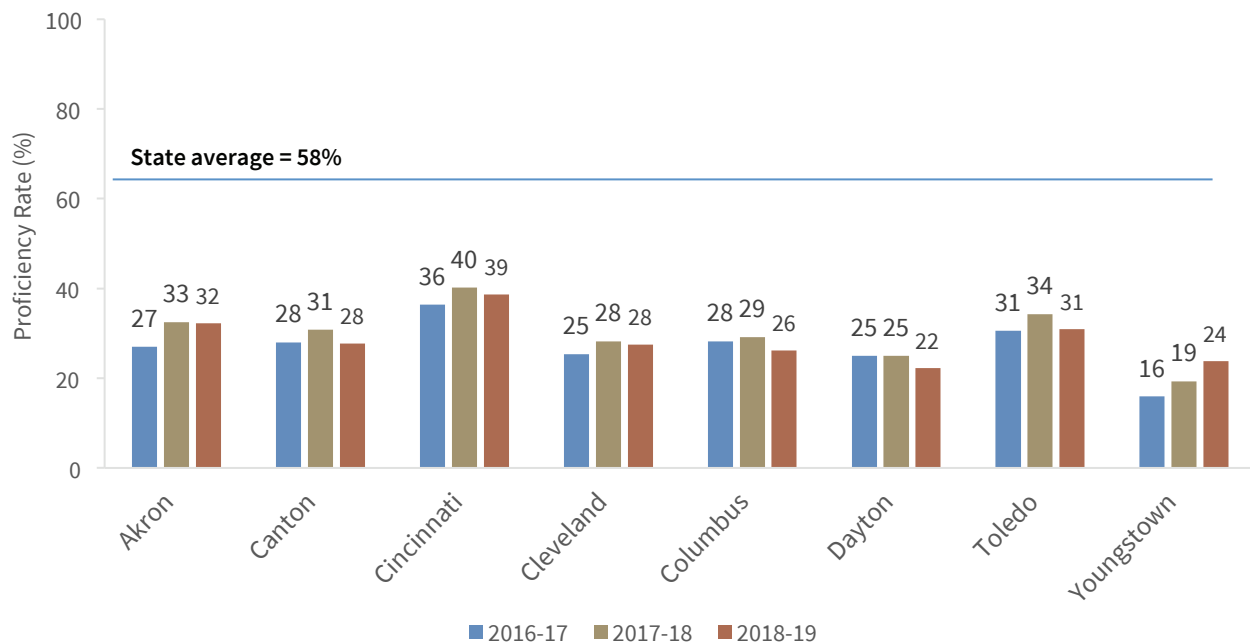


The next set of charts displays seventh-grade ELA and math proficiency rates. In both subjects, Cincinnati is the strongest performer among the Big Eight, while Youngstown falls furthest behind in ELA (31 percent) and Dayton does so in math (22 percent). In an encouraging sign, all eight school districts recorded increasing proficiency rates in seventh-grade ELA from 2016–17 to 2018–19, with some of the improvements being quite substantial. For instance, Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, and Youngstown have all posted double-digit gains in seventh-grade ELA proficiency.<sup>30</sup> On the math side, consistent improvements are less evident, save for increasing proficiency rates in Youngstown.

**Figure 11. Seventh-grade ELA proficiency rates among Big Eight districts, 2016–17 through 2018–19**



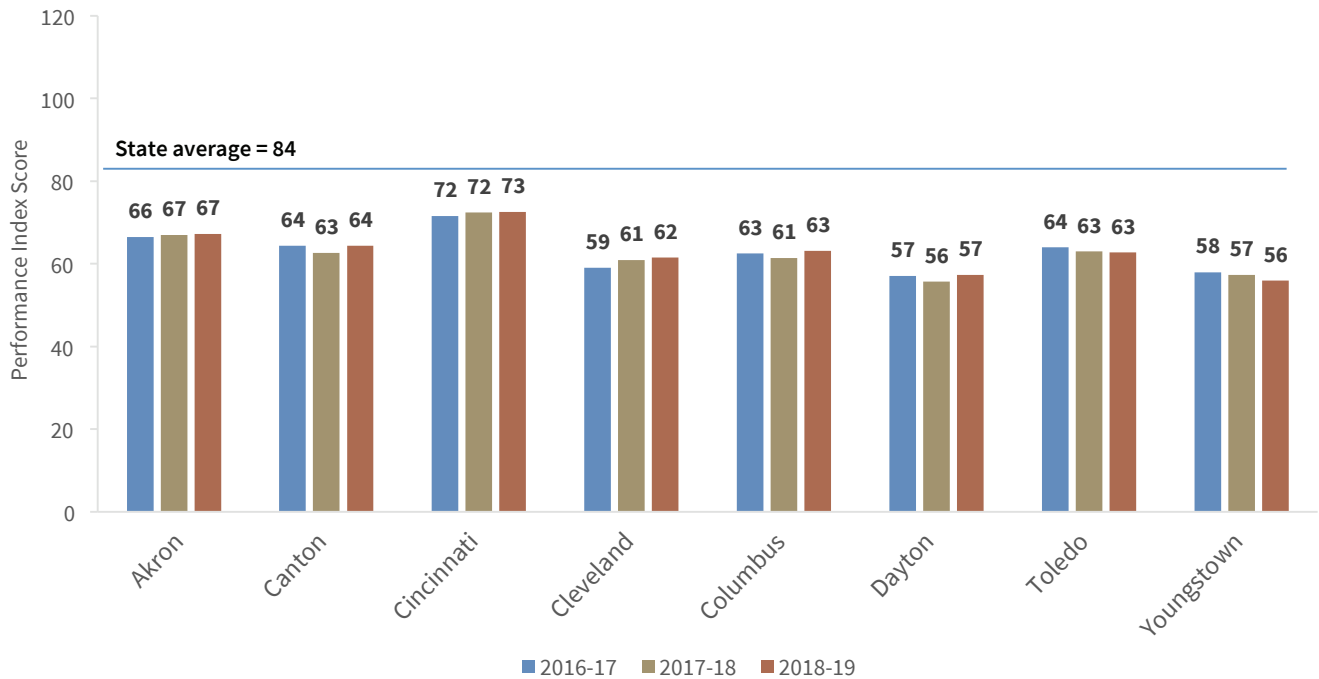
**Figure 12. Seventh-grade math proficiency rates among Big Eight districts, 2016–17 through 2018–19**



As a widely understood metric, proficiency rates offer a straightforward picture of how students in the Big Eight fare on state exams. But they’re also limited due to the coarseness of the binary reporting system—either proficient or not—and it can be difficult to capture student performance on a wide range of grades and subjects in an efficient manner. To provide a broader picture of achievement in the Big Eight, figure 13 displays the performance-index scores. All of these districts register lower scores than statewide average score of eighty-four. Cincinnati fares best among the Big Eight, with a score of seventy-three, with Dayton and Youngstown posting noticeably lower scores (fifty-seven and fifty-six, respectively). As

for improvements, Cleveland demonstrates increases over this period, moving from a score of fifty-nine to sixty-two. On the other hand, Youngstown has been on a slight downward trend since 2016–17.

**Figure 13. Performance-index scores among the Big Eight districts, 2016–17 through 2018–19**



**School ratings: District and charter schools**

Districtwide proficiency rates offer a broad overview of student achievement, revealing once again the long road to ensuring that all students in the Big Eight are academically on track. But the district averages conceal individual schools where achievement is high and/or students are making significant growth over time. School-level analyses also help us understand the quality of charter schools located in these cities. As table 14 below shows, 78 percent of Ohio’s brick-and-mortar charters are located in the Big Eight (excluding dropout-recovery charters, some of which are in the Big Eight).

**Table 14. Breakdown of Ohio charter schools in 2018–19**

	Number of schools	Number of students
General education charter schools		
Big Eight: brick and mortar	191	54,408
Non-Big Eight: brick and mortar	54	14,938
Statewide online schools	5	20,123
Dropout-recovery charter schools	69	13,161
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>102,630</b>

**Note:** Big Eight charter schools are identified as such via ODE, “Community School Directory” (file accessed October 2019).

Charters have a presence in all of the Big Eight cities, though the share of public school enrollment varies from city to city. Dayton has the largest charter share (33 percent), while Akron and Canton have the smallest (9 percent). Because statewide online charters draw students widely from Ohio districts, they are excluded from the Big Eight analysis, as it’s not possible to disentangle the outcomes of students residing in the Big Eight from those who don’t (virtual charters’



report-card results are displayed in the appendix). Some charters located in the Big Eight attract pupils from neighboring districts; however, the results of a charter school’s Big Eight versus non-Big Eight students cannot be distinguished in the school-level data.

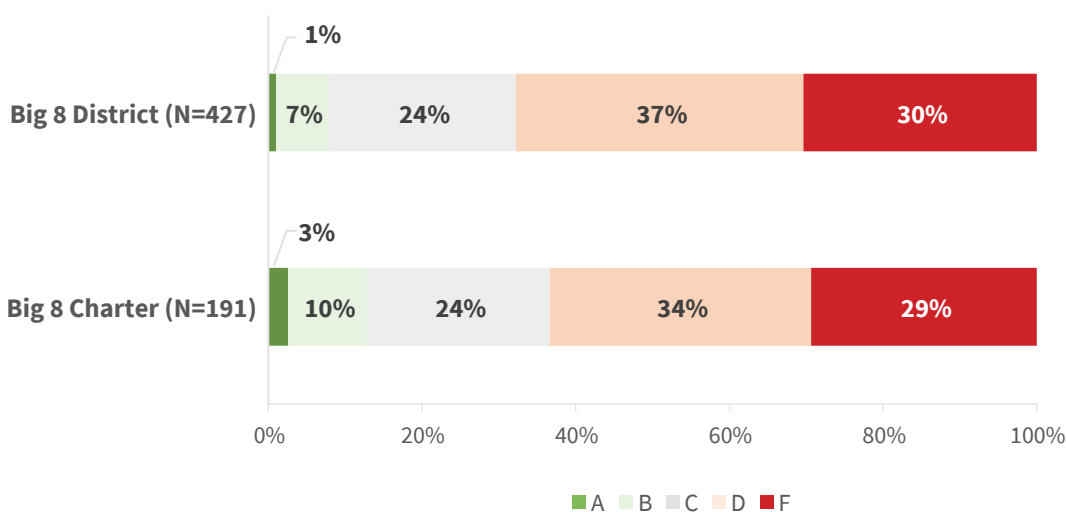
**Table 15. Big Eight district and charter school enrollments, 2018–19**

City	N district schools	N district students	N charter schools	N charter students	Charter share
Akron	43	20,581	13	1,958	9%
Canton	22	8,393	5	832	9%
Cincinnati	57	35,736	17	5,250	13%
Cleveland	105	37,321	53	14,092	27%
Columbus	110	48,813	55	17,447	26%
Dayton	26	12,526	17	6,156	33%
Toledo	50	22,308	24	6,787	23%
Youngstown	14	5,237	7	1,886	26%
<b>Total Big Eight</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>190,915</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>54,408</b>	<b>22%</b>

**Note:** This table excludes dropout-recovery charter schools, which receive alternative school ratings, and students attending online charter schools. Charter share is the charter enrollment divided by the charter plus district school enrollments.

The following figures display results across three key school ratings among the Big Eight schools, with district and charter ratings shown separately. The first chart shows a modest amount of differentiation in overall ratings, with a handful of As and Bs—8 and 13 percent of district and charters, respectively—while another 24 percent in both sectors receive Cs. Combining the C or above overall ratings, Big Eight charters hold a slight advantage over their district counterparts (37 to 32 percent). The most common rating, however, is a D for both district and charter schools. Within the Big Eight, 30 and 29 percent of district and charter schools, respectively, receive overall Fs.

**Figure 14. Distribution of overall ratings of Big Eight charter and district schools, 2018–19**



Greater differentiation is observed in the overall value-added ratings at the building level. Among district schools, 26 percent receive As or Bs on this measure, as do 34 percent of charters. At the other end of the spectrum, a majority of Big Eight district schools receive Fs (58 percent), while 43 percent of charters do so. The value-added results slightly favor charters, a pattern also seen in the past two years’ data; they also help to explain the higher overall charter ratings seen in figure 14, above.

**Figure 15. Distribution of value-added ratings among Big Eight charter and district schools, 2018–19**

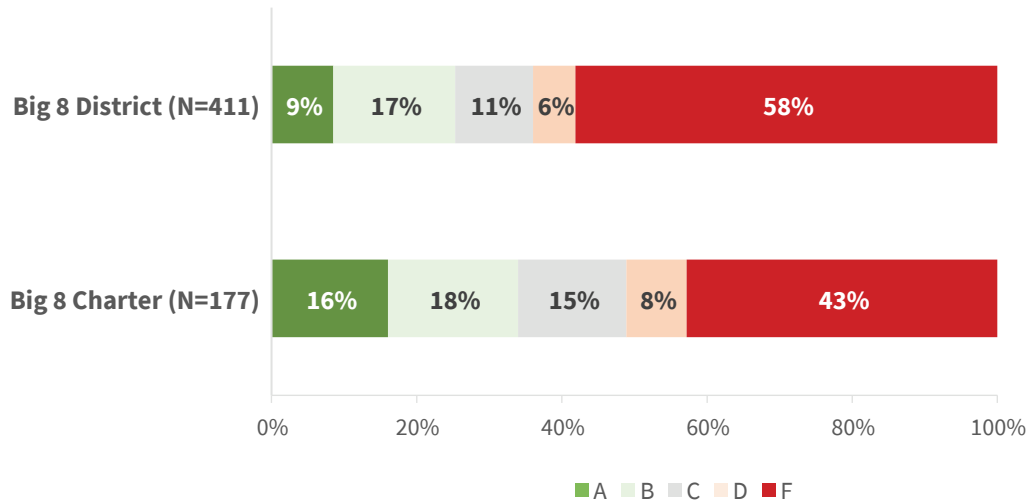
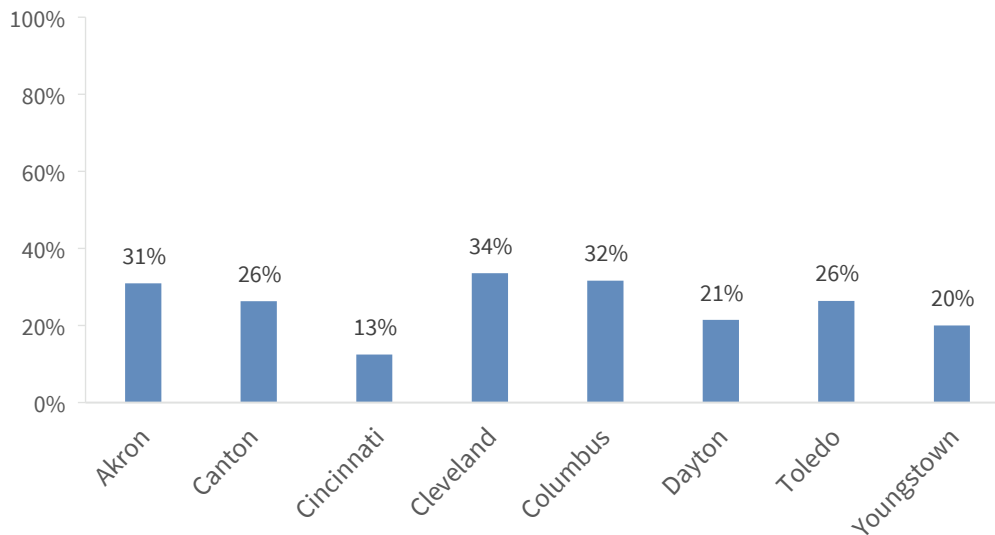


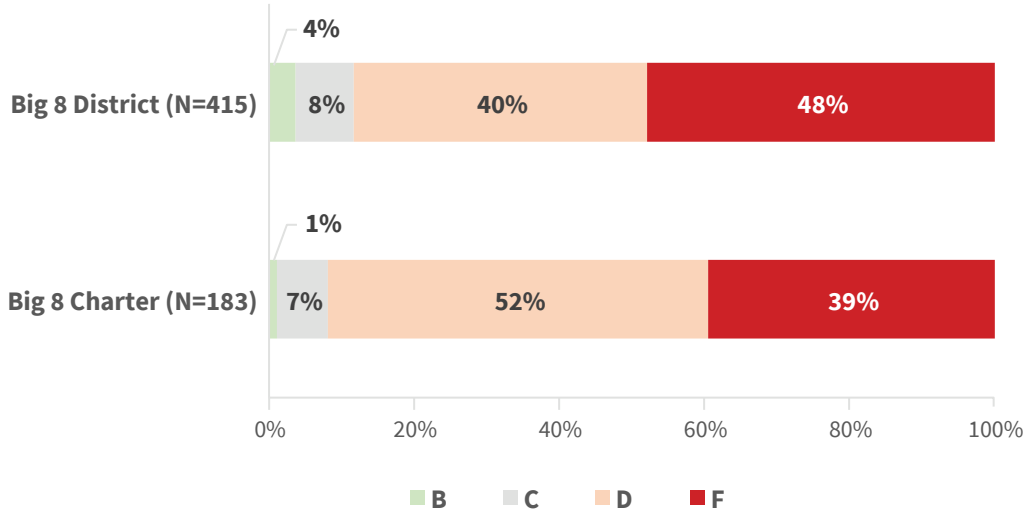
Figure 16, below, offers a closer look by city at the schools (district and charter, combined) rated A or B on value-added. Among the Big Eight, Cleveland leads the way, with 34 percent of its schools earning these high value-added ratings; Columbus and Akron follow close behind. On the other end, while Cincinnati students tend to achieve at the highest levels among the Big Eight, the city’s schools fall noticeably behind in terms of growth. Just 13 percent of Cincinnati schools earn As or Bs on the state’s value-added measure. A more detailed breakdown of the charter-district ratings appears in the appendix.

**Figure 16. Percentage of schools receiving A or B overall value-added ratings, 2018–19**



The performance-index ratings of both Big Eight district and charter schools are systematically low, reflecting the achievement gaps visible in figures 9–13 above. On the district school side, 12 percent earn Bs or Cs as their performance-index rating, while just 8 percent of charters receive such marks.

Figure 17. Distribution of performance-index ratings, Big Eight charter and district schools, 2018–19



## Academic distress and school performance

Of the Big Eight districts, only Youngstown presently is subject to Ohio’s much-debated intervention policy known as academic distress commissions (ADCs). The current iteration, enacted in 2015 through House Bill 70 (HB 70), calls for state action via an ADC when districts receive failing overall ratings for three consecutive years. ADCs consist of three state appointees and two locally appointed members. Though the individuals comprising these commissions differ from district to district, all ADCs are responsible for hiring a CEO who has significant managerial authority and is responsible for implementing a district improvement plan. Three Ohio districts—East Cleveland, Lorain, and Youngstown—are currently overseen by ADCs.<sup>31</sup>

The rationale is straightforward: when school districts consistently produce poor academic results, the state has an obligation to step in on behalf of students. Moreover, the policy intends to put pressure on low-performing districts to improve via threat of intervention. Critics respond by arguing that ADCs undermine “local control,” as the policy requires governing arrangements that weaken the power of local school boards. They have also alleged that the existing ADCs in Youngstown and Lorain haven’t worked, perhaps resulting in even worse district performance.

Though no evaluation of the academic impact of ADC policy exists, the 2018–19 report cards offer a view of performance trends in Youngstown and Lorain. Because East Cleveland’s commission was established halfway through the 2018–19 school year, it’s too soon to examine results under its ADC.

### Youngstown

In June 2016, Krish Mohip took the helm as the district’s first CEO, and though it was likely a transition year, 2016–17 is a reasonable baseline to begin tracking performance under Youngstown’s ADC. Table 16 below displays data compiled over the past five years on key performance indicators. It shows that academic performance was low in Youngstown in the year immediately prior to ADC intervention, and progress since then has been sluggish. The districtwide value-added ratings haven’t budged, nor do we observe higher percentages of students attending A-rated schools on this measure (the only school to accomplish this feat since 2014–15 is Youngstown Early College High School, which has done so for four years running). Although Youngstown school district has underperformed for many years, significantly higher performance hasn’t yet materialized under the new governing arrangements: district students continue to struggle on state exams, and too few attend the high-growth schools needed to change these trajectories.

**Table 16. Key performance indicators for Youngstown school district**

Indicator	Pre-HB 70 implementation		Post-HB 70 implementation		
	2014–15†	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
District value-added rating	F	F	F	F	F
Percent of students attending a school rated A on value-added	27%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Performance-index score	68.9	57.8	58.0	57.4	56.0
Overall district rating	No rating assigned	No rating assigned	No rating assigned	F	F
Total enrollment	5,344	5,251	5,123	5,266	5,264

**Note:** The statewide performance-index score was 81.6 in 2015–16 and 84.7 in 2018–19. Though not an official rating, Youngstown would have received a value-added rating of F had Ohio used a one-year value-added score for 2018–19.<sup>32</sup> † Ohio used different state assessments in 2014–15 than in the more recent years; the statewide average performance-index score that year was 84.3.

## Lorain

David Hardy was hired as Lorain’s CEO in July 2017. Although his first year, 2017–18, was likely transitional, we can now track the performance of Lorain for two years after ADC implementation. Overall, the results from Lorain under its ADC show more promise. In the two years immediately prior to ADC implementation, Lorain received a value-added rating of F and no students attended an A-rated school, according to this measure. The district’s overall value-added rating has remained depressed in the two most recent years, but one Lorain school posted a value-added rating of A last year, the only school to accomplish that feat during this four-year period. The district’s performance-index scores have also risen over the past two years, a promising sign of improvement. And the district’s overall rating changed from F to D in 2018–19.

**Table 17. Key performance indicators for Lorain school district**

Indicator	Pre-HB 70 implementation		Post-HB 70 implementation	
	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Districtwide value-added rating	F	F	F	F
Percent of students attending a school rated A on value-added	0%	0%	0%	5%
Performance-index score	61.2	61.6	62.9	64.4
Overall district rating	No rating assigned	No rating assigned	F	D
Total enrollment	6,650	6,546	6,582	6,391

**Note:** The statewide performance-index score was 81.6 in 2015–16 and 84.7 in 2018–19. Though not an official rating, Lorain would have received a value-added rating of F had Ohio used a one-year value-added score for 2018–19. That said, Lorain demonstrated noticeable improvements in its value-added results compared to years prior.<sup>33</sup>

## Districts on “ADC watch”

Not only do ADCs seek to turn around chronically low-performing districts, but they may also spur improvements among struggling districts hoping to avoid state intervention. In 2018–19, ten districts were on ADC watch due to failing ratings. Of these districts, just one, Dayton, had received two such ratings and was in immediate jeopardy. Media accounts indicate that districts facing the threat of an ADC worked to boost their ratings to avoid intervention.<sup>34</sup> Though not conclusive, the performance-index data below show that—whether it was the threat of intervention or something else—higher student achievement resulted. In all but one of these districts, performance-index gains exceeded the statewide average, which includes the vast majority of Ohio districts not in jeopardy of intervention. Ashtabula and Mansfield, for instance, registered strong improvements, +4.3 and +2.4 points respectively, as did big-city districts such as Columbus (+1.7) and Dayton (+1.6).

**Table 18. Districts under ADC watch in 2018–19**

District	2017–18 performance-index score	2018–19 performance-index score	Year-to-year change in performance-index score
Dayton	55.7	57.3	+1.6
Ashtabula	69.6	73.9	+4.3
Canton	62.7	64.4	+1.7
Columbus	61.4	63.1	+1.7
Euclid	62.9	63.9	+1.0
Lima	66.7	68.5	+1.8
Mansfield	69.3	71.7	+2.4
North College Hill	59.4	60.1	+0.7
Painesville	65.3	66.7	+1.4
Toledo	63.0	62.8	-0.2
<b>Statewide average</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>84.7</b>	<b>+0.5</b>

**Charter schools located in ADC districts**

Charter schools offer public school options to families residing in struggling districts under ADC supervision. Table 19 below presents information about the ratings of charters located in these districts to explore whether they provide quality options.<sup>35</sup> In Youngstown, four of the seven charters perform noticeably better than the district—three of them, in fact, received overall Cs or above in 2018–19. A similar story emerges in Lorain, where four of its eight charter schools outperform the district (of note, four of the Youngstown and Lorain schools that lag behind specialize in serving students with disabilities). In East Cleveland, the sole charter school posted superior ratings compared to the district. On the balance, these data indicate that charter schools in the ADC districts are providing important public school options.

**Table 19. Key performance indicators of charter schools located in ADC districts**

School name	Enrollment	Overall rating	Value-added rating	Gap Closing rating	Performance-index score	District performance-index score
<b>Youngstown</b>						
Horizon Science Academy Youngstown	395	B	A	B	71.5	56.0
Stambaugh Charter Academy	443	C	B	A	84.1	56.0
Southside Academy	149	C	B	B	69.7	56.0
Youngstown Community School	341	D	F	B	74.3	56.0
Youngstown Academy of Excellence	167	D	D	F	57.5	56.0
Summit Academy–Youngstown	212	F	F	F	48.2	56.0
Summit Academy Secondary–Youngstown	179	F	F	F	40.4	56.0
<b>Lorain</b>						
Constellation Schools: Lorain Community Elementary	182	B	A	A	86.5	64.4
Horizon Science Academy Lorain	714	C	B	B	81.6	64.4
Lorain Preparatory Academy	520	C	F	B	69.5	64.4
Constellation Schools: Lorain Community Middle	132	C	F	A	80.0	64.4
Summit Academy Community School Alternative Learners–Lorain	95	D	C	F	66.4	64.4
Monroe Preparatory Academy	212	D	D	F	60.0	64.4
Summit Academy School–Lorain	114	F	F	F	46.9	64.4
Lorain Bilingual Preparatory Academy	104	F	D	F	51.4	64.4
<b>East Cleveland</b>						
Apex Academy	496	B	A	A	78.6	55.3

**Note:** The Summit Academies listed in the table above enroll predominately students with disabilities (all above 70 percent). Ohio law recognizes charter schools serving a majority of SWD students by exempting such schools from their sponsors’ academic evaluations and from automatic closure.

# Conclusion

As a public matter that affects families, taxpayers, schools, and students across the entire state, accountability policy will inevitably and permanently be subject to debate. Unfortunately, no magical framework exists that will satisfy all 12 million Ohioans and empower all 1.7 million public school students to reach their full potential in life. Yet as Ohio's accountability policies, such as report cards and school interventions, continue to be debated, policymakers should consider a few guiding principles to increase the likelihood that Ohio will purposefully place students at the center.

- 1. All students can learn.** A steady stream of media and advocacy content remind us of the ill effects of poverty on student achievement. It's absolutely important to acknowledge these obstacles and work to break them down. But we can't allow our sympathies to cloud our judgment about what children can learn—and what schools can do to support their academic success. This report demonstrates that, with proper supports, low-income students can rise to the challenge and make significant learning gains. Lowering the bar—awarding “easy As”—will make many people feel better about our education systems, yet expecting less from needy students and their schools—the “soft bigotry of low expectations”—will only continue cycles of poverty, not interrupt them.
- 2. Honesty and transparency are the best policies.** Parents and schools preach to children the importance of honesty. Likewise, our school accountability systems should be built on a foundation of honesty, integrity, and transparency. To this end, Ohio should work to accurately communicate to parents and the public whether students are meeting academic milestones on the pathway to college and career, while rejecting the impulse to water down measures in an effort to sugarcoat results. On the transparency side, the state should maintain its clear A–F school rating system. Shifting to “data dashboards,” as some have proposed, will produce a blizzard of numbers but fail to provide meaningful information to families and citizens who are unlikely to grasp the intricacies of report-card measures simply because they work outside of education. In a similar vein, the state should retain its overall rating that provides a user-friendly summary of the results from the various components of the report card.
- 3. Both student achievement and growth matter.** Like a pair of eyeglasses, we need to look through both the achievement and growth lenses to gain a fuller picture of school performance. Ohio has generally created a well-balanced system that takes both into account. Though not enacted, provisions in the state budget bill in early 2019 called for the use of either the performance index or value-added when calculating overall ratings. There is room for debate over how much emphasis, or weight, each should contribute to the overall rating. For instance, focusing more on growth would enable quality high-poverty schools to stand out more prominently (though at the expense of achievement measures). However, simply ignoring one or the other results in a lopsided look at school performance. In some high-achieving schools, for example, ignoring value-added may conceal sluggish growth, while in others discounting the performance index is apt to mask low student proficiency.
- 4. Refine with care.** Under pressure from adult interests and wary legislators, a statutorily required committee will soon convene to review the design of school report cards. Before diving headlong into major changes, its members should step back and consider the advantages of a more stable policy environment, which Ohio has finally settled into. First, consistency in measures lends itself to more accurate tracking of trends over time, allowing us to see whether schools are moving in the right direction. Educators can more easily set performance targets using a consistent set of metrics. And consistency likely inspires public confidence that Ohio is indeed committed to rigorous accountability. Given these benefits, policymakers should pursue any refinements with great care. As they mull changes to the report-card system, they need to recognize the strengths of the current system, be mindful of the benefits of consistent measurement and reporting, and thoughtfully pursue adjustments that could improve the functioning of the system, not simply make grown-ups feel better.<sup>36</sup>



- 5. A little pressure doesn't hurt.** “Everyone works better with someone watching over their shoulder,” the saying goes. That’s a good rule of thumb, whether working in private enterprise, the social sector, or an education think tank. It applies to our schools as well. Rigorous oversight, including consequences if necessary, is unlikely to be embraced by those being held to account. But accountability for student outcomes remains a crucial check that puts healthy pressure on schools to excel. In cases where districts and schools are failing to move the needle, Ohio needs to maintain a policy lever such as ADCs that can drive necessary change.

Over the past decade, Ohio has made great strides forward in its accountability policies. State standards, assessments, and accountability systems are stronger than ever before. Districts and schools, including public charter schools, are being held to higher expectations around what their students must know and be able to do. Discussions at the state level and in local communities now revolve not only around getting young people to the high school finish line but also equipping them with the academic and technical skills needed to succeed in college and career. Reversing these initiatives, especially under the banner of “poverty,” would be a grievous mistake. All Ohio students and schools, no matter their circumstances, *can* achieve great things. Our state and local leaders should expect nothing less.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ohio’s state assessments

Since enactment of No Child Left Behind in 2002 and continuing under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, federal law has required states to perform an annual assessment of students in specific grades and subjects. At a minimum, Ohio must administer math and ELA exams in grades 3–8 and once during high school, along with science exams once during grades 3–5 and 6–8 and again during high school. As table A1 below indicates, Ohio follows these guidelines and administers five additional state exams: a statewide Kindergarten exam and four EOCs. Per House Bill 166, enacted in July 2019, two of the nonfederally required EOCs—the Geometry and English I exams—are scheduled for phaseout starting with the class of 2023. State exams are designed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in partnership with ODE; the AIR/ODE exams were first given in 2015–16. In addition to state assessments, Ohio requires and pays for one administration of either the ACT or SAT college entrance exam for all high school juniors.<sup>37</sup>

**Table A1. Ohio state exams administered in 2018–19**

	Grade assessed	Federally required
<b>Elementary and middle school exams</b>		
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)	K	No
Math	Grades 3–8	Yes
ELA	Grades 3–8	Yes
Science	Grade 5 and 8	Yes
<b>End-of-course exams</b>		
Algebra I (or Integrated Math I)	High school <sup>38</sup>	Yes
Geometry (or Integrated Math II)	High school	No <sup>39</sup>
English I	High school	Yes
English II	High school	No
Biology	High school	Yes
U.S. Government	High school	No
U.S. History	High school	No

State exam results are used in various ways. Perhaps most importantly to parents, Ohio provides families with reports on their own child’s state exam results that they can use in conjunction with class grades. Educators can also use exam results to evaluate what worked instructionally and what didn’t, based on their students’ achievement and growth scores. And though schools seldom use exam results to determine course grades or grade promotions, state policy requires them to be used in two special circumstances. First, as part of Ohio’s Third-Grade Reading Guarantee, third graders must reach a certain score—currently set below the minimum score for proficient—on their ELA exams to be promoted to fourth grade (with some exceptions).<sup>40</sup> Second, under state graduation requirements, high school students must reach a specified performance threshold on their EOCs—again with various exceptions, some significant, especially for the classes of 2018–22.<sup>41</sup> Finally, the results from state exams form the backbone of district and school report cards, which are discussed in the report above.

## Appendix B: Additional report card results

**Table B1: Distribution of career-technical planning district ratings**

Overall rating	Number of CTPDs	Percentage of CTPDs
A	10	11%
B	67	74%
C	12	13%
D	2	2%
F	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** CTPDs are generally multidistrict entities that oversee the implementation of career- and technical-education programs (a few, such as the Dayton and East Cleveland CTPDs, consist of just a single district and the charter schools located there). The measures used to evaluate CTPD performance differ from conventional report cards. For more information, see ODE, “Career Technical Planning District (CTPD) Report Card 2019.”

**Table B2: Distribution of dropout-recovery charter school ratings**

Overall rating	Number of schools	Percentage of schools
Exceeds standards	9	13%
Meets standards	48	70%
Does not meet standards	12	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** Dropout-recovery charter schools are specially designated schools that enroll students who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out. Because of the student populations they serve, Ohio deploys an alternative school report card to gauge their performance, which includes measures and ratings that differ from schools serving the general population. For more information, see ODE, “Ohio’s Dropout Recovery Community School Report Card.”

**Table B3: Key ratings of Ohio’s statewide e-schools**

School name	Enrollment	Overall rating	Performance-index rating	Value-added rating
Ohio Virtual Academy	12,702	D	D	F
Ohio Connections Academy	4,362	D	D	F
Alternative Education Academy	1,940	F	F	F
Buckeye On-Line School for Success	574	F	D	F
Great River Connections Academy	554	F	D	F

**Note:** Ohio has five specially designated online charter schools, also known as “statewide e-schools,” which serve students from anywhere in the state. This table does not include nine e-schools that are designed as dropout-recovery charter schools (their results are included in table B2 above). Statewide e-schools were identified via ODE, “List of E-schools” (accessed October 2019).

## Appendix C. Detailed results for the Ohio Big Eight

The following tables display the breakdown of 2018–19 ratings for the charter and district schools in the Ohio Big Eight cities. Data are shown separately for both district and charter schools, both by the percentage of schools earning each rating (the approach used to display results in the main body of the paper) and the percentage of students attending schools receiving each rating. Though both calculations generally yield similar results, the latter might be preferred if one wants to take into account varying enrollment sizes of schools. Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

**Table C1. All Big Eight**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	5	3%	4	1%	992	2%	4,325	2%
B	20	10%	31	7%	7,567	14%	12,449	7%
C	46	24%	104	24%	14,127	26%	44,344	23%
D	65	34%	158	37%	22,320	41%	72,075	38%
F	55	29%	130	30%	9,402	17%	57,722	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>54,408</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>190,915</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	29	16%	35	9%	10,547	20%	14,364	8%
B	31	18%	69	17%	11,630	22%	28,725	15%
C	26	15%	44	11%	7,297	14%	21,482	11%
D	15	8%	24	6%	3,373	6%	9,106	5%
F	76	43%	239	58%	19,993	38%	113,431	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>52,840</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>187,108</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	2	1%	16	4%	817	2%	10,112	5%
C	13	7%	33	8%	4,790	9%	14,676	8%
D	96	52%	168	40%	32,269	60%	72,018	38%
F	72	39%	198	48%	15,502	29%	91,503	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>53,378</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>188,309</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

**Table C2. Akron**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	396	2%
B	0	0%	6	14%	0	0%	2,067	10%
C	2	15%	15	35%	327	17%	6,575	32%
D	3	23%	14	33%	579	30%	6,584	32%
F	8	62%	7	16%	1,052	54%	4,959	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,958</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,581</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	0	0%	4	9%	0	0%	1,514	7%
B	0	0%	13	30%	0	0%	6,006	29%
C	1	8%	5	12%	122	6%	1,474	7%
D	2	17%	2	5%	321	17%	1,145	6%
F	9	75%	19	44%	1,465	77%	10,442	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,908</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,581</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	396	2%
C	0	0%	11	26%	0	0%	4,164	20%
D	5	42%	19	44%	906	47%	8,788	43%
F	7	58%	12	28%	1,002	53%	7,233	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,908</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,581</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

**Table C3. Canton**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	4	18%	0	0%	1,157	14%
C	0	0%	3	14%	0	0%	846	10%
D	3	60%	7	32%	583	70%	4,329	52%
F	2	40%	8	36%	249	30%	2,061	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,393</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	5	36%	0	0%	1,369	21%
C	0	0%	1	7%	0	0%	306	5%
D	2	40%	1	7%	314	38%	189	3%
F	3	60%	7	50%	518	62%	4,506	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,370</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	1	7%	0	0%	200	3%
C	0	0%	1	7%	0	0%	294	5%
D	1	20%	9	64%	269	32%	3,034	48%
F	4	80%	3	21%	563	68%	2,842	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,370</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

**Table C4. Cincinnati**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	0	0%	2	4%	0	0%	3,334	9%
B	0	0%	5	9%	0	0%	3,273	9%
C	5	29%	19	33%	1,700	32%	10,305	29%
D	4	24%	19	33%	1,920	37%	9,974	28%
F	8	47%	12	21%	1,630	31%	8,850	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,250</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>35,736</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	0	0%	3	5%	0	0%	1,757	5%
B	2	13%	4	7%	728	14%	2,419	7%
C	1	6%	6	11%	583	11%	5,545	16%
D	2	13%	3	5%	422	8%	1,257	4%
F	11	69%	40	71%	3,487	67%	24,569	69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,220</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>35,547</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	8	14%	0	0%	7,087	20%
C	1	6%	3	5%	510	10%	2,271	6%
D	7	41%	32	57%	2,724	52%	16,103	45%
F	9	53%	13	23%	2,016	38%	10,086	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,250</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>35,547</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

**Table C5. Cleveland**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	3	6%	1	1%	635	5%	595	2%
B	6	11%	5	5%	1,705	12%	1,445	4%
C	11	21%	23	22%	2,356	17%	8,092	22%
D	25	47%	44	42%	7,633	54%	16,369	44%
F	8	15%	32	30%	1,763	13%	10,820	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14,092</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>37,321</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	7	14%	15	15%	1,797	13%	5,210	14%
B	8	16%	21	20%	2,173	16%	7,448	20%
C	11	22%	10	10%	2,858	21%	3,313	9%
D	6	12%	4	4%	1,757	13%	904	2%
F	17	35%	53	51%	4,965	37%	20,161	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13,550</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>37,036</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	2	4%	2	2%	817	6%	906	2%
C	2	4%	5	5%	582	4%	1,926	5%
D	33	66%	32	31%	8,646	63%	12,007	32%
F	13	26%	65	63%	3,686	27%	22,366	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13,731</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>37,205</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.



**Table C6. Columbus**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	2	4%	0	0%	357	2%	0	0%
B	10	18%	3	3%	4,805	28%	1,697	3%
C	17	31%	34	31%	5,756	33%	14,244	29%
D	11	20%	40	36%	4,234	24%	19,164	39%
F	15	27%	33	30%	2,295	13%	13,708	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,447</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48,813</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	16	33%	7	7%	6,506	39%	3,291	7%
B	10	20%	17	16%	4,133	25%	7,918	17%
C	5	10%	11	10%	1,738	10%	5,547	12%
D	1	2%	9	8%	193	1%	3,576	7%
F	17	35%	63	59%	4,092	25%	27,449	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,662</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47,781</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	841	2%
C	5	10%	9	8%	1,903	11%	4,044	8%
D	29	57%	46	42%	11,148	66%	19,800	41%
F	17	33%	53	48%	3,777	22%	24,128	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,828</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48,813</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

**Table C7. Dayton**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	1	6%	1	4%	342	6%	419	3%
C	5	29%	4	15%	1,714	28%	2,234	18%
D	8	47%	7	27%	3,568	58%	3,350	27%
F	3	18%	14	54%	532	9%	6,523	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,156</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,526</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	2	12%	2	8%	911	15%	1,280	10%
B	4	24%	1	4%	2,120	34%	518	4%
C	5	29%	4	16%	1,460	24%	1,914	16%
D	1	6%	2	8%	199	3%	1,211	10%
F	5	29%	16	64%	1,466	24%	7,337	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,156</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,260</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
C	1	6%	1	4%	342	6%	861	7%
D	8	47%	7	28%	3,936	64%	3,267	27%
F	8	47%	17	68%	1,878	31%	8,132	66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,156</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,260</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

**Table C8. Toledo**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	2	8%	6	12%	320	5%	2,132	10%
C	4	17%	6	12%	1,682	25%	2,048	9%
D	9	38%	24	48%	3,295	49%	11,000	49%
F	9	38%	14	28%	1,490	22%	7,128	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,787</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22,308</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	3	14%	3	6%	938	14%	1,053	5%
B	5	23%	8	16%	1,884	28%	3,047	14%
C	3	14%	6	12%	536	8%	3,042	14%
D	0	0%	2	4%	0	0%	502	2%
F	11	50%	31	62%	3,268	49%	14,664	66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,626</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22,308</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	2	4%	0	0%	682	3%
C	3	13%	2	4%	1,010	15%	857	4%
D	10	42%	21	42%	3,755	55%	8,344	37%
F	11	46%	25	50%	2,022	30%	12,425	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,787</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22,308</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

**Table C9. Youngstown**

School rating	N charter schools	% charter schools	N district schools	% district schools	N charter students	% charter students	N district students	% district students
<b>Overall rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	1	14%	1	7%	395	21%	259	5%
C	2	29%	0	0%	592	31%	0	0%
D	2	29%	3	21%	508	27%	1,305	25%
F	2	29%	10	71%	391	21%	3,673	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,237</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Value-added rating</b>								
A	1	14%	1	8%	395	21%	259	5%
B	2	29%	0	0%	592	31%	0	0%
C	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	341	7%
D	1	14%	1	8%	167	9%	322	6%
F	3	43%	10	77%	732	39%	4,303	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,225</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Performance-index rating</b>								
A	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
C	1	14%	1	8%	443	23%	259	5%
D	3	43%	2	15%	885	47%	675	13%
F	3	43%	10	77%	558	30%	4,291	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,225</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Note:** The % charter/district student columns refer to the percentage of charter/district students attending schools with a given rating.

## Endnotes

- 1 Ohio Department of Education, Understanding Ohio's State Tests Score Reports, 2017–18 (Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Education, May 2018), [https://oh.portal.airast.org/core/fileparse.php/3094/urlt/Understanding\\_State\\_Tests\\_Reports\\_2017-2018.pdf](https://oh.portal.airast.org/core/fileparse.php/3094/urlt/Understanding_State_Tests_Reports_2017-2018.pdf).
- 2 Ohio Department of Education, "Ohio's State Tests Interpretive Guide Family Reports Grades 3–8," (Understanding Your Student's Test Scores Spring 2019, Ohio Department of Education, Columbus, OH, 2019), [https://oh.portal.airast.org/core/fileparse.php/3094/urlt/OST\\_Spring19\\_G3-8\\_School\\_Guide.pdf](https://oh.portal.airast.org/core/fileparse.php/3094/urlt/OST_Spring19_G3-8_School_Guide.pdf).
- 3 Rich Exner, "See how closely Ohio school report card grades trend with district income," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 9, 2019, <https://www.cleveland.com/news/g66l-2019/09/eafdac15366565/see-how-closely-ohio-school-report-card-grades-trend-with-district-income.html>; Jeremy P. Kelley, "Many area school districts get lower grades on state report card," *Dayton Daily News*, September 13, 2019, <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/local-education/many-area-school-districts-get-lower-grades-state-report-card/twcbxD4SkZTcD6oRO8rMKP>; and Dave Claborn, "Are Ohio school district grades based on achievement or demographics?" *Marion Star*, October 7, 2019, <https://www.marionstar.com/story/news/local/2019/10/06/claborn-ohio-district-grades-based-achievement-demographics/3856497002>.
- 4 Sarah Cohodes, *Charter Schools and the Achievement Gap* (Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children, Winter 2018).
- 5 The Big Eight consists of Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown.
- 6 Though not displayed, the correlation between schools' percentage of black and Hispanic students and their value-added index scores is likewise weak ( $r$ -squared = 0.04). Analyses of previous years' data also reveal weak correlations between schools' demographics and their value-added scores.
- 7 Jeremy P. Kelley, "School scores rise, but less than last year; poverty debate continues," *Dayton Daily News*, September 13, 2018, <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/school-scores-rise-but-less-than-last-year-poverty-debate-continues/NDUw7uwFMRvn3jQZLcxmpO>.
- 8 For more, see Ohio Department of Education, "Community Eligibility Provision," Integrated Student Supports, accessed October 29, 2019, <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Food-and-Nutrition/Resources-and-Tools-for-Food-and-Nutrition/Community-Eligibility-Option>.
- 9 U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months (Ohio)," American Community Survey, 2013–17 Five-Year Estimates, accessed October 29, 2019, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>, and Thomas B. Fordham Institute, "Student Achievement: National Exams," *2019 Ohio Education By The Numbers* (Columbus, OH: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2019), <http://www.ohiobythenumbers.com/#student-achievement-national-exams>.
- 10 Foundation for Excellence in Education, "A–F School Grading: Policy Summary" (ExcelinEd Policy Toolkit 2019, Foundation for Excellence in Education, November 2018), <https://www.excelined.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ExcelinEd.PolicyToolkit.AFSchoolGrading.PolicySummary.2018.pdf>.
- 11 Prior to 2012–13, Ohio assigned overall ratings such as "continuous improvement" or "academic watch." As the state transitioned to its A–F system, the state suspended overall ratings until they reappeared in 2017–18.
- 12 Per its ESSA plan, Ohio made a change in the minimum  $n$  size for reporting subgroup results under the Gap Closing component (schools must now have at least twenty students in a subgroup compared to twenty-five in 2017–18). There was also a change in the subgroup "demotion" rules within the Progress component. Previously, schools receiving a Progress component rating of A would see that rating reduced to B if one of its subgroup value-added ratings was C or below. Starting in 2018–19, the state instead reduces the overall value-added rating when the subgroup goal is not met.

- 13** Under ESSA, districts must develop and implement an improvement plan for schools with graduation rates less than 67 percent and those whose overall ratings are in the bottom 5 percent of schools statewide. For more information, see Ohio Department of Education, “Priority Schools,” accessed October 29, 2019, <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/District-and-School-Continuous-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Elementary-and-Secondary-Education-Act/ESEA-Support-Schools-and-Districts/Priority-Schools>.
- 14** Aaron Churchill, *The Mountain Ahead: A report on the college and career readiness of Ohio students* (Columbus, OH: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, September 2019), <https://fordhaminstitute.org/ohio/research/mountain-ahead-report-college-and-career-readiness-ohio-students>.
- 15** Aaron Churchill, *Back to the Basics: A plan to simplify and balance Ohio’s school report cards* (Columbus, OH: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, December 2017).
- 16** For a more detailed explanation of the value-added model, see SAS EVAAS, *Statistical Models and Business Rules of OH EVAAS Analyses* (Cary, NC: SAS, 2019), <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Accountability-Resources/Value-Added-Technical-Reports-1/Technical-Documentation-of-EVAAS-Analysis.pdf.aspx>.
- 17** For accessible reviews of value-added methods, see Thomas J. Kane, *Do Value-Added Estimates Identify Causal Effects of Teachers and Schools?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2014); Mark Ehlert, Cory Koedel, Eric Parsons, and Michael Podgursky, “Choosing the right growth measure,” *Education Next* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2014); and the Carnegie Knowledge Network’s website (<http://www.carnegieknowledgegenetwork.org>), which has articles on various issues related to value-added measurements.
- 18** The index score is the value-added gain or loss divided by the standard error.
- 19** The multiyear averaging applies to the overall value-added ratings and the three subgroup value-added ratings within the Progress component. For the purposes of computing subgroup value-added scores within the Gap Closing component, the state uses data from only the current year.
- 20** Due to provisions in state law enacted via House Bill 166 in July 2019, the value-added grading scale is slated for change starting with the 2019–20 report cards. For coverage, see Patrick O’Donnell, “About 25% of school districts would see key report card grades rise under Senate plan,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, June 28, 2019, <https://www.cleveland.com/news/2019/06/about-25-of-school-districts-would-see-key-report-card-grades-rise-under-senate-plan.html>.
- 21** The evidentiary language is adapted from the descriptions on schools’ report cards.
- 22** For these annual goals, see Ohio Department of Education, *Appendix A: Long Term Goals* (Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Education, 2017), <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-ESSA/ESSA-Appendix-A.pdf.aspx>.
- 23** A more detailed explanation of the Gap Closing calculations is available at Ohio Department of Education, “2018–2019 AMO Gap Closing Measure” (technical documentation, Ohio Department of Education, Columbus, OH, February 2019), <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources/Gap-Closing-Component/Technical-Documentation-AMO-Calculation.pdf>.
- 24** To address this potential concern, we at Fordham have suggested renaming the component “Equity” to better convey that the aim is to ensure that students from all subgroups receive a quality education. For more detail, see Aaron Churchill, *Back to the Basics*.
- 25** Scatterplots showing the relationship between subgroup value-added scores and schools’ percentage of ED students reveal almost zero correlation.
- 26** There is also an advanced-plus category, which has a weight of 1.3. This category is used for students who score proficient or above on an above-grade-level exam. Generally, fewer than 1 percent of students achieve at this level in the various grade-subject exams. Students who do not take an exam are assigned zeros.
- 27** U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey (2013–17 Five-Year Estimates)*.

- 28** Aaron Churchill, “Report cards reveal more signs of improvement in Ohio’s charter school sector,” *Ohio Gadfly Daily*, September 24, 2019, <https://fordhaminstitute.org/ohio/commentary/report-cards-reveal-more-signs-improvement-ohios-charter-school-sector>.
- 29** Center for Research on Education Outcomes, *Charter School Performance in Ohio, 2019* (Stanford, CA: Center for Research on Education Outcomes, February 2019), <https://credo.stanford.edu/publications/charter-school-performance-ohio>.
- 30** The statewide proficiency rate in seventh-grade math has also steadily climbed during these years.
- 31** House Bill 166, passed in July 2019, puts a one-year moratorium on the identification of any new ADC districts. At the time of the writing of this report, Ohio legislators continue to debate changes to ADC policy, including a House-passed proposal that would eliminate ADCs (House Bill 154 of the 133rd General Assembly).
- 32** For more detailed information about Youngstown’s value-added results, see the ODE/SAS database: <https://ohiova.sas.com/welcome.html?as=b&aj=b>.
- 33** For more detailed information about Lorain’s value-added results, see the ODE/SAS database: <https://ohiova.sas.com/welcome.html?as=b&aj=b>.
- 34** See, for example, Bill Bush, “Columbus City Schools targeting 125 students to help avoid state takeover,” *Columbus Dispatch*, March 5, 2019, <https://www.dispatch.com/news/20190305/columbus-city-schools-targeting-125-students-to-help-avoid-state-takeover>, and Jeremy P. Kelley, “Trotwood schools acknowledge takeover fear,” *Dayton Daily News*, August 26, 2018, <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/trotwood-schools-acknowledge-takeover-fear/2UqP8VqtaqqznK6k6HPiEM>.
- 35** Most, if not all, parents living in ADC districts are eligible for private school scholarships, and public school options are also available via interdistrict open enrollment. However, comparable academic-performance data are not available.
- 36** The modifications that we have proposed largely focus on streamlining report cards—for example, removing indicators met—while increasing the emphasis on, and transparency around, value-added measures. See Aaron Churchill, *Back to the Basics* and Aaron Churchill, “Three key questions Ohio’s school report card committee should answer,” *Ohio Gadfly Daily*, August 16, 2019, <https://fordhaminstitute.org/ohio/commentary/three-key-questions-ohios-school-report-card-committee-should-answer>.
- 37** There are a few exceptions to this testing requirement, including certain students with disabilities and juniors who have already met the state’s remediation-free targets on the ACT or SAT. For more information, see Ohio Department of Education, “ACT/SAT Questions and Answers,” accessed October 29, 2019, <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Testing/ACT-SAT-FAQs>.
- 38** Schools are permitted to administer the Algebra I EOC to eighth graders. To avoid double-testing, Ohio has received approval from the federal government to exempt these schools from administering both the eighth-grade math exam and the Algebra I EOC. For more, see United States Department of Education, “Ohio Double Testing Waiver” (United States Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, January 16, 2018), <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/waivers/ohdoubletestingasletter.pdf>.
- 39** Federal policy requires one high school assessment in math and English. Ohio could use either the Algebra I or Geometry exam and still meet minimum math requirement. Similarly, it could choose either English I or English II to meet the federal minimum in that subject.
- 40** For more, see Ohio Department of Education, “Third Grade Reading Guarantee,” accessed October 29, 2019, <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/Third-Grade-Reading-Guarantee>.

**41** Ohio's graduation requirements have been heavily debated in recent years, leading legislators to grant the classes of 2018 through 2022 reprieves from meeting state assessment standards. Although the exact details vary by class, exam alternatives include meeting school attendance, grade point average, and internship/volunteering criteria, among other options. With the passage of House Bill 166 in July 2019, legislators enacted permanent requirements that will generally require students, starting with the class of 2023, to demonstrate competency on the English II and Algebra I EOCs. For more information about graduation requirements, see Ohio Department of Education, "Ohio's Graduation Requirements," accessed October 29, 2019, <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements>.





Thomas B. Fordham Institute  
100 E. Broad St., Suite 2430  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-223-1580  
[www.fordhaminstitute.org/ohio](http://www.fordhaminstitute.org/ohio)