

MY SCHOOL INFORMATION DESIGN CHALLENGE:

Building a Better School Performance
Report Card for Parents &
Students



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FOREWORD



Across the nation, the scene plays out the same in every home, as parents ask their children, “What did you do at school today?” The answer usually comes back as a blank stare, or some version of “I don’t know” or “I can’t remember.” As parents, we want to know not only how our own children are doing, but also how well our schools are working for all the students in their care. Often, getting or understanding the details we need about our schools can be just as difficult as getting the details we want from our children.

In most cases, our children aren’t intentionally keeping details about their day a secret. It’s just that there’s a lot to report, and all of the teachers, classmates and assignments they interact with each day can get jumbled up into one big blur. The same can happen with school- and district-level information. There’s so much to gather and report, from so many different sources, that putting it all together in a readable and easy-to-understand format can be an enormous and complex task.

State departments of education across the country have been grappling with this issue in their own unique ways—creating a diverse landscape of school information “report cards” that vary widely from state to state. Despite their best efforts, these departments often lack the capacity to tackle what is essentially a design challenge. In an effort to help address this challenge and to give parents access to useful school information, the Foundation for Excellence in Education (Ex-celinEd) has found a creative way to build on existing efforts and inspire a new generation of school report cards.

The report that follows describes why report cards matter and what the research says about the current challenges associated with reporting school information. This context builds support for an important call to action—the announcement of the My School Information Design Challenge. We are eager to invite thought leaders and design experts to reimagine the presentation of school information. And we hope you will join us in this exciting venture!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Levesque".

Patricia Levesque

Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Excellence in Education

BACKGROUND



Today, most decisions begin with an Internet search for information. Few people select a hotel without visiting TripAdvisor or a similar site. Most don't choose a restaurant before checking in with Zagat or Yelp. In fact, many people are unwilling to spend \$10 on a movie ticket without scrutinizing reviews on Rotten Tomatoes. And yet our education system forces most parents to send their children to a school without having a clear understanding of that school's strengths and weaknesses.

In an effort to provide transparent information to the public and improve student performance, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires that all states publish an annual report card for each school with information about student demographics, performance, graduation rates and other academic indicators. Unfortunately, research indicates—and the experiences of far too many parents confirm—that many of today's school report cards are difficult to find online and often impossible to understand once found. Too often school information is presented in an unwieldy and unintelligible way that makes it difficult for parents and community members to use.

There is a greater need than ever before for easy-to-understand information about school performance. Transitioning to new, higher standards presents new challenges to communicate to parents these higher expectations and subsequent changes. New accountability systems require parents to understand the key metrics that inform them. And a growing array of options for parents requires that they have information to make informed decisions.

ExcelinEd believes that parents, students and policymakers deserve better. That is why ExcelinEd is seeking the help of the design community to bring school performance report cards into the modern information era—and onto the computers and mobile devices of parents and the public at large. Offering prizes totaling \$35,000, ExcelinEd's My School Information Design Challenge seeks to attract top talent from across numerous fields—including design, technology, education and parental advocacy—to reimagine a 21st-century school report card and create a better user experience.

WHY REPORT CARDS MATTER



“Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it’s worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains.”

Steve Jobs

Every day, parents, teachers, policymakers and community members seek information about their schools.

- A parent wants to know more about the elementary school that her kindergartner will attend in the fall.
- A group of parents needs to understand complicated performance data to help them be more effective advocates at the next school board meeting.
- An eighth grader works with his parents to choose a high school that meets his unique interests and needs.
- A parent wants to know whether the local charter school might be a better option for his fourth grader.
- A veteran teacher is looking for a job with a higher-performing school.
- A state legislator wants her policy decisions to be informed by the performance of local schools.
- A community member contemplates a run for the local school board.
- A policymaker wants to understand a state’s school rankings.
- An advocate wants to know if all students in a city have equal access to high-quality schools.
- The local newspaper is trying to identify schools that “beat the odds” in terms of serving low-income students with higher-than-average performance.
- A philanthropic funder is trying to identify a set of schools for a specific grant.

All of these individuals—and many additional stakeholders within our education system—should be able to evaluate any public school after a click of a mouse or a swipe of a mobile device. And what we have learned is that it is not enough to merely publish the data—the numbers of school performance. Design—the way this information is presented and visualized—is critically important to helping individuals make decisions and take action.

PARENTS WEIGH IN ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORT CARDS

“I’ll be honest, I really don’t understand all of the information. I don’t think a lot of parents where I’m from can understand it. All I want to know is how the kids are performing. Are they growing and exceling each year? Are the teachers doing what they are supposed to do? How does the school compare to other schools with the same type of children, who come from the same background and circumstances? I want to be educated and know what is going on in these schools.”

“I have known many parents that have moved so their children can attend a higher- performing school. A report card makes the information easily accessible and highlights performance.”

“[Report cards] matter because they keep everyone responsible accountable.”

“Report cards are good for accountability, informing the public whether schools are meeting goals set for them. Report cards can be used to improve the areas that are not satisfactory and commend areas that are outstanding. [I] would like to see a summary of changes happening at the school on the report card: what are the things that have been done to make improvements.”



CURRENT LANDSCAPE: WHAT ARE TODAY'S SCHOOL REPORT CARDS LIKE?



Creating an effective, easy-to-understand report card is an incredibly difficult task. ESEA requires all states to publish an annual report card for each school in the state using a variety of complex data calculations, and in many cases, state laws add to these requirements. The report cards must contain demographic information and student performance data, including proficiency rates (broken out by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and disability status), graduation rate (for high schools), teacher quality data, and performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

These requirements were modified as part of the U.S. Department of Education's ESEA waivers awarded to 43 states and the District of Columbia. These waivers have allowed states to create new accountability systems that incorporate additional components, including student growth and complex indices that award points to schools based on their performance on a variety of metrics such as student proficiency, growth by subgroups, and graduation rates. While these changes are likely improving the mechanics and incentive structures of state accountability systems, they are also making it increasingly challenging for states to explain these systems through school report cards.¹

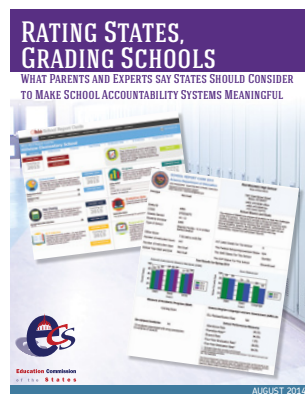
1. For a detailed description of current federal requirements for school performance report cards, see the U.S. Department of Education's State and Local Report Cards Non-regulatory Guidance (Feb. 2013) at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/state_local_report_card_guidance_2-08-2013.pdf.

States are also wrestling with how to use these report cards as a way to facilitate the public's understanding of changes that will be introduced as they transition to new higher standards, such as the Common Core State Standards, teacher evaluation systems, and results from new assessments, such as the [PARCC](#) and [SBAC](#).

All of these are immensely complicated systems that require sophisticated data analysis and calculations. States have appropriately focused on getting these systems right. Often, the presentation of this information, such as on the school report cards, is viewed as a secondary concern. Even when presentation is a priority, states are finding that there is a difference between simply publishing a chart and making data intuitively understandable. What makes sense to a policy expert may not necessarily translate for a parent.

Research by the Education Commission of the States (ECS)—as well as Exce-
linEd's own observations—confirms the results of this mix of challenges. Despite their best efforts, far too many states publish annual school report cards that are difficult to find on the Web, are poorly designed, are awkward to navigate, and lack key pieces of data—or they include so much information that parents are overwhelmed.

At the same time, some states have overcome legal, political and financial hurdles and have created thoughtful, well-designed, understandable school report cards. And some are making efforts to think creatively about design, including Arizona, Colorado, Illinois and the District of Columbia. What lessons can be learned and replicated from real-life examples of usable report cards?



What Does the Research Say?

In June 2014, ECS published an influential report on the state of school report cards. In [Rating States, Grading Schools: What Parents and Experts say States Should Consider to Make School Accountability Systems Meaningful](#), ECS convened panels of researchers, parents and experts to answer three key questions:

- **Of researchers**—Are the report cards findable, readable and understandable?
- **Of parents**—Are the report cards easy to read and useful?
- **Of experts**—What indicators are essential for measuring school and district performance?

Inspired by the important findings in the ECS report, ExcelinEd conducted its own report card review. To replicate the parent experience, we asked a colleague to locate the school report card for Lincoln Elementary School in each state (45 states have a Lincoln Elementary School). Our colleague started by searching on Google; and, when that failed, she navigated to the report cards through state department of education websites. She noted how long it took to find each report card, the effectiveness of a Google search, and how easy (or difficult) it was to navigate to and within the report cards. As explained below, our observations echoed many ECS findings.

For illustrative purposes, [page 10](#) includes samples of Lincoln Elementary School report cards from 12 different states. These examples demonstrate the enormous design challenges facing states and help capture the diversity of ways—some more successful than others—that states have approached these challenges.

According to Researchers, Are Report Cards Findable, Readable and Understandable?

ECS asked education researchers to identify state report cards that were findable, readable, understandable, and used effective graphics. The researchers identified eight states with report cards that were above average in all four categories: Arizona, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine and Ohio. One researcher noted that Arizona’s format was “reader-friendly” and that “[t]he graphics are well-done and convey information at a glance.”

Unfortunately, even the experienced researchers struggled to locate many online report cards. One frustrated participant complained, “Could not find using a Google search—lots of confounding search results.” The researchers also noted that some report cards were “clearly not designed with parents in mind. It looks like it’s just to meet federal/state reporting requirements.”

ExcelinEd's observations were similar. Fewer than half the states were judged "easy to find" in that the report cards could be located through a quick Google search or via a few clicks from a state's department of education homepage. On the other hand, finding report cards from 10 states took more than five minutes, and for three states, finding report cards took more than 10 minutes.

According to Parents, Are Report Cards Easy to Read and Useful?

ECS selected 14 parents representing a mix of educational attainment, ethnicity, income levels and geography to evaluate whether states' report cards were easy to read, useful, and provided sufficient data. Their favorites were from Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Ohio and Wisconsin.

The parents preferred these report cards because they include a high-level summary of school performance and have clear graphics accompanied by plain language explanations and the option of consulting additional resources for deeper exploration. Parents also praised these report cards because they offer the option of drilling down into particular data points and provide context by allowing parents to compare their school to district and state averages.

However, far too many school report cards failed to give parents the information they needed to judge the quality of the school in several main respects:

- **Lack of context for data.** One ECS parent stated: "Not much reference or explanation of the 'B' grade...", and another noted that there was "[n]o growth comparison from years past." Similarly, the ExcelinEd analysis found that one state's report card labeled Lincoln Elementary as having a "continuous improvement" status based on an index score of 291 without easy-to-find explanations of the total number of possible points, or whether "continuous improvement" is good or bad.
- **Failure to explain report card components.** In many states, accountability decisions are now based on complex indices. School report cards should help parents understand how a school's grade



or score is calculated and what each individual component of the grade or score means. Unfortunately, as one ECS parent noted, report cards often “use words that are not meaningful to the general public.” ExcelinEd found an example in which a state awarded its Lincoln Elementary School 17.29 points for an “average growth z score” without further explanation.

- **Too much information.** In some cases, parents were overwhelmed by the volume of data, describing one report card as “[l]ike reading a corporate financial report of 20 pages.”

The sample of report cards on [page 11](#) illustrates a number of these weaknesses.

According to Experts, What Indicators are Essential for Measuring School and District Performance?

ECS also convened a panel of 12 educational experts to identify the essential indicators of school quality. The panel concluded that every state report card should include the following indicators:

- Student achievement
- Student academic growth
- Achievement gap closure
- Graduation rates
- College and career readiness

According to the experts, just 14 states include all five essential indicators: California, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah and Wisconsin.

Notably, there was little overlap between the states picked by parents, researchers and experts as having the best report cards. This may indicate that most of the report cards containing all of the components essential to an effective accountability system lack the transparency and accessibility that parents want and deserve. ExcelinEd’s My School Information Design Challenge will attempt to bridge that gap.

LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPORT CARD EXAMPLES (12 STATES)

[illegible]

School Number	School Name	Reading	Science	Writing	Math	History	Art	Physical Education	Foreign Language	Other	Total
021	CHARLES W. DUVAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	59	24	48	15	47	40	40	40	40	400
031	J. J. FINLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	71	61	57	64	71	64	70	60	60	600
041	STEPHEN FOSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	73	76	75	84	84	67	76	67	60	600
051	AQUILIN JONES/EXCEP STUDENT C	11	14	20	13	16	50	50	50	50	300
071	LAKE FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	29	29	28	33	38	36	30	30	30	300
082	HOSPITAL HOMBURG										
091	LITTLEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	61	62	67	58	54	54	53	54	50	500
101	W. A. METCALFE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	36	36	44	43	65	65	69	69	60	600
111	W. A. METCALFE MIDDLE SCHOOL	56	56	64	63	63	63	63	63	60	600
121	ABRAHAM LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL	61	59	67	67	67	67	67	67	60	600
121	HOWARD W. BISHOP MIDDLE SCHOOL	57	55	54	59	67	66	62	61	60	600
141	WESTWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL	58	60	58	49	69	67	67	67	60	600
153	GLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	61	71	75	55	72	72	68	68	60	600
161	ALACHUA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	48	45	27	39	60	60	60	60	60	600
171	ARCHER ELEMENTARY	67	74	74	72	63	63	63	63	60	600
201	HAUNTHORNE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL	22	21	28	24	24	24	24	24	24	240
201	A. L. WEFANE MIDDLE SCHOOL	50	45	28	35	35	35	35	35	35	350

[illegible][illegible]

Dashboard & Accountability Scorecard

Help | MUE | CEPS | MUE

Dashboard | Dashboard for a particular | Accountability Scorecard | Help to locate various |

Scorecard Summary | Help for a particular |

Logout | Downloadings | Links to Report | Help

2012-13 Accountability Scorecard

Scorecard | Select | Complete | Rate | Other | Faculty | Historical Data

Overall School Status: **Yellow** 26.78 (77.41% Points Possible)

Overall Score: **Score** | **Score** | **Score**

Category	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	Subcategory	% of Status Points	Completion Rate
Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic	91.18%	
Financial	Financial	Financial	Financial	Financial	Financial	58.28%	
Operational	Operational	Operational	Operational	Operational	Operational	44.10%	
Student	Student	Student	Student	Student	Student	44.10%	
Community	Community	Community	Community	Community	Community	91.18%	

Points of Praise

Below are the points of praise for the University of North Carolina. The Points of Praise are provided to provide information about the progress of the University and to provide information about the University's performance.

See Search to display for the current report settings.

University of North Carolina | MUE | CEPS | MUE | Help | Downloadings | Links to Report | Help

[illegible]

Elementary-Middle-Level English Language Arts Results for Accountability							
All accountability groups made AYP: 90%							
Student Group	Score	Percent Meeting or Exceeding Standard	Percent Meeting or Exceeding Standard in AYP	Percent Meeting or Exceeding Standard		Percent Meeting or Exceeding Standard	AYP
				2007-2008	2008-2009		
All Students	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
American Indian or Alaska Native	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Black or African American	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Hispanic or Latino	161	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
English Learners	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Students with Disabilities	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Economically Disadvantaged	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Continuously Enrolled	164	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Results for the following groups are NOT used to determine AYP:

Student Group	Standard Exceeded	Percent Meeting or Exceeding Standard with Valid Test Scores	Percent Meeting or Exceeding Standard with Valid Test Scores
All Students	164	100%	100%
American Indian or Alaska Native	164	100%	100%
Black or African American	164	100%	100%
Hispanic or Latino	161	100%	100%
White	164	100%	100%
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	164	100%	100%
English Learners	164	100%	100%
Students with Disabilities	164	100%	100%
Economically Disadvantaged	164	100%	100%
Continuously Enrolled	164	100%	100%
English Proficient	178	100%	100%
Students with Disabilities	164	100%	100%
Black	167	100%	100%
Hispanic	165	100%	100%
Female	165	100%	100%
English Proficient	9	100%	100%
Black or African American	164	100%	100%

There were 48 all students enrolling in the first semester period in the district of the Student Group. All 48 had Test Scores and are represented in the accountability group. All 48 students enrolling in the first semester period in the district of the Student Group. All 48 had Test Scores and are represented in the accountability group.

[illegible]

Lincoln Elementary School
 1000 Lincoln Ave. • Lincoln, NE 68502 • 402.441.2200
 www.lincolnelementary.org

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Parent and Community Involvement

Lincoln Elementary School is proud to be a community of learners and the only elementary school in Lincoln that has a dedicated parent and community center on its campus. We encourage all parents to become involved in their child's education and in our school's programs.

Extracurricular Activities

Lincoln Elementary School offers a variety of extracurricular activities for students. The school's participation in the Lincoln Area Athletic Association (LAAA) is a source of pride for the school and its community. The school's participation in the LAAA is a source of pride for the school and its community.

Student Demographics

Lincoln Elementary School is a diverse community. The school's student body is made up of students from many different backgrounds and ethnicities. The school's student body is made up of students from many different backgrounds and ethnicities.

Overall Test Ratings

Lincoln Elementary School's overall test ratings are as follows:

Grade	Reading	Math	Science	History	Art	Music	Physical Education
1st	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%
2nd	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%
3rd	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%
4th	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%
5th	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%
6th	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%
7th	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%
8th	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%
9th	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%
10th	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%
11th	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%
12th	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%	0%

Teacher Ratings

Lincoln Elementary School's teacher ratings are as follows:

Grade	Reading	Math	Science	History	Art	Music	Physical Education
1st	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%
2nd	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%
3rd	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%
4th	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%
5th	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%
6th	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%
7th	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%
8th	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%
9th	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%
10th	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%
11th	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%
12th	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%	0%

Student Achievement

Lincoln Elementary School's student achievement is as follows:

Grade	Reading	Math	Science	History	Art	Music	Physical Education
1st	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%
2nd	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%
3rd	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%
4th	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%
5th	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%
6th	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%
7th	55%	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%
8th	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%
9th	45%	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%
10th	40%	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%
11th	35%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%
12th	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%	0%

[illegible]

search database

STARS Systemic Teacher Accountability and Reporting System

Anderson HS 1 | Lincoln Class: 06

Subunit Classification: Status

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Percentage
Attendance Percentage	90.00%
Reading Proficient and Advanced	88.74%
Math Proficient and Advanced	90.38%
Reading Participation	100.00%
Math Participation	100.00%

*We have not displayed the subunit or district level if the subgroups have not reached minimum state for reporting purposes.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY 2013 System Safeguards LINCOLN LE 158941018 - EDWINBURG CISD						
	All	African American	Hispanic	White	Asian/Pacific Islander	Other
Performance Rates						
	95%	92%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Reading						
None/Minimal Proficient in Level 2 and above	1.07	1.07	1.07	1.07	1.07	1.07
Total Students	126	126	126	126	126	126
% to Next Proficient in Level 2 and above	84%	84%	84%	84%	84%	84%
Mathematics						
None/Minimal Proficient in Level 2 and above	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08
Total Students	126	126	126	126	126	126
% to Next Proficient in Level 2 and above	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%
None/Minimal Proficient in Level 2 and above	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9
Total Students	63	63	63	63	63	63
% to Next Proficient in Level 2 and above	73%	73%	73%	73%	73%	73%
Science						
None/Minimal Proficient in Level 2 and above	84	84	84	84	84	84
Total Students	126	126	126	126	126	126
% to Next Proficient in Level 2 and above	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%
Social Studies						
None/Minimal Proficient in Level 2 and above	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08
Total Students	126	126	126	126	126	126
% to Next Proficient in Level 2 and above	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%
Participation Rates						
Exempt	81%	81%	81%	81%	81%	81%
Reading: 2010-2012 Assessments						
None/Minimal Proficient	218	218	218	218	218	218
Total Students	218	218	218	218	218	218
Participation Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mathematics: 2010-2012 Assessments						
None/Minimal Proficient	218	218	218	218	218	218
Total Students	218	218	218	218	218	218
Participation Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Science: 2010-2012 Assessments						
None/Minimal Proficient	105%	105%	105%	105%	105%	105%
Total Students	105%	105%	105%	105%	105%	105%
Participation Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Indicates results are masked due to small numbers to protect student confidentiality
 * Blank cell and reference group is masked. Not the second assessment score group is masked (regardless of who
 * Indicates there are no students in the group

Just a Spreadsheet

Jargon and Techno-Latin

Lincoln Elementary Strive HI 2012-13 Step: Continuous Improvement Index Score: 291

Automatic Classification: None

	Step 1	Step 2 - Unweighted Points	Step 3	Step 4 - Weighted Points	Step 5 - All Schools
Achievement	Math Proficiency: 66% Reading Proficiency: 73% Science Proficiency: 27%	Math Achievement: 27 Reading Achievement: 29 Science Achievement: 8	61 pts of 100 pts Achievement: 61 x (1.0) = 61	61 61 x (1.0) = 61	61
Growth	Math Median SGP: 63 Reading Median SGP: 56	Math SGP: 30 Reading SGP: 20	Growth: 170 pts of 200 pts 85 x (2.0) = 170	170 85 x (2.0) = 170	170
Readiness	Chronic Absenteeism: 24%	Chronic Absenteeism: 10	3 pts of 20 pts 15 x (0.2) = 3	3 15 x (0.2) = 3	3
Achievement Gap	Non-High-Needs Proficiency: 88% High-Needs Proficiency: 63% Gap Reduction: 21%	Current-Year Gap: 25 Previous-Year Gap: 35 Gap Reduction: 35	71 pts of 100 pts Achievement Gap: 71 x (0.8) = 57	57 71 x (0.8) = 57	57

291 pts of 400 pts

What do these dots mean???

What's a School Weight?

ACHIEVEMENT PREPARATORY ACADEMY PCS – MIDDLE

OVERVIEW | **REPORT CARD** | PROFILE

SCHOOL CLASSIFICATION

71
RISING

What does the 71 mean?

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

85.5%
2013 SCORE

TIER 1

What does this 85.5% represent? What's a tier?

ATTENDANCE RATE

95%

71 DC AVG

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

% HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

CALL TO ACTION: MY SCHOOL INFORMATION DESIGN CHALLENGE



Underpinning every education reform—be it transitioning to higher standards, supporting student options, or just facilitating an informed discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of a school—is easy-to-access, easy-to-understand information.

Graphic designers have a unique ability to take data, rethink the way it can be visualized, transform it, and make it more valuable and usable. Education can take advantage of the design lessons learned from consumer Web services to improve parents' understanding of their schools. It's time for education to move into the modern information era.

To jumpstart this transformation—and to advance the work conducted by ECS—ExcelinEd announces the My School Information Design Challenge.

Why a Design Challenge?

When the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs sought to reimagine the patient health record, they turned to the talents of the design community. Their tremendously successful [Health Design Challenge](#) attracted 230 submissions. The winners transformed the health record from a receipt-like printed list of text into a 21st-century [resource](#) that makes it easier for patients to manage their health and enables doctors to take better care of their patients.

With this design challenge, ExcelinEd hopes to bring about a similar revolution in school performance report cards. A visually improved, easy-to-find and easy-to-understand report card could improve educational outcomes for students. Equipped with better information, parents can become more effective advocates and make superior educational choices for their children. Communities can demand the funding of accountability measures and can pressure school, district and state leaders to implement much-needed reforms. And policymakers can make more informed decisions about where to direct resources and target interventions.

ExcelinEd hopes that this challenge helps states view school reports cards not as a requirement, but as an opportunity to spotlight successful schools and to educate and empower community members with information about their schools. ExcelinEd will use the results of the challenge to support state efforts to improve their ability to share valuable school information. We will develop a white paper, sharing the winning designs as well as ideas for representing individual report card components. And we will partner with states to translate concepts in the winning report card designs into redesigned state-specific report cards. Interested states will have access to a contact list of the winning designers, who will be available to assist in the redesign efforts.

Design thinking in a complex world...

“As more of our basic needs are met, we increasingly expect sophisticated experiences that are emotionally satisfying and meaningful. These experience will not be simple products. They will be complex combinations of products, services, spaces, and information. They will be the ways we get educated, the ways we are entertained, the ways we stay healthy, the ways we share and communicate. Design thinking is a tool for imagining these expereience as well as giving them a desirable form.”

Tim Brown | IDEO

The Challenge

Offering prizes totaling \$35,000, the design challenge seeks to attract top talent to reimagine a school report card that:

- Improves the visual layout and style of the information in a school report card;
- Gives parents intuitive, easy-to-understand and use school performance and student growth information; and
- Increases use and accessibility of school report cards by leveraging Web and mobile applications.

Entrants will submit designs while considering examples of the wide variety of individuals who will use these report cards:

- A young adult who is engaged with technology and mobile devices;
- An adult whose first language is not English or who has low literacy skills;
- A parent who is selecting which school his child will attend; and
- A busy inner-city mom managing her kids' involvement in school activities.

This is an opportunity for talented individuals to touch the lives of Americans across the country through design.

“The world is complex, and so too must be the activities that we perform. But that doesn’t mean that we must live in continual frustration. No. The whole point of human-centered design is to tame complexity, to turn what would appear to be a complicated tool into one that fits the task, that is understandable, usable, enjoyable.”

Don Norman | The Design of Everyday Things and Living with Complexity



Required Components of the My School Information Design Challenge

Although designers will enjoy creative freedom around the design and appearance of the school report card as well as each component within the report card, each submission must include certain required components.

The required components for this challenge are an example of how states may calculate school performance information. States are currently exploring a variety of new school accountability models using flexibilities provided under ESEA waivers. The goal of the challenge is to create a model report card design that can be translated to many states, regardless of the details of their accountability systems.

For simplicity, the challenge will not ask designers to include every single data point required by federal (or state) law. For example, though information on teacher quality and NAEP performance (both required elements of states' school report cards under ESEA) are incredibly important, those are not required components of this design challenge.

Submissions in the My School Information Design Challenge must include the following components:



Student achievement

- » Percentage of students tested on state assessments in English language arts, math, science, social studies and on end-of-course exams
- » Percentage of students proficient on state assessments in English language arts, math, science, social studies and on end-of-course exams, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and disability status



Student academic growth

- » Percentage of students meeting the state's growth expectation for English language arts and math

3 Achievement gap closure

- » Percentage of the lowest performing students meeting the state's growth expectation for English language arts and math

4 Graduation rates

- » Graduation rate

5 Postsecondary and career readiness

- » Acceleration rate (the percentage of 11th and 12th graders taking and passing Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, industry certification or dual-enrollment courses)

Design submissions also must include directory information, demographics, an overall school grade and the school's grade history. Designers also may elect to include information on educational options that are important to parents and course access offerings. For a more detailed explanation of the required components as well as other competition requirements and application processes, please see this [designer packet](#) or check out our challenge website at MySchoolInfoChallenge.com.

“Design thinking is the search for a magical balance between business and art; structure and chaos; intuition and logic; concept and execution; playfulness and formality; and control and empowerment.”

Idris Mootee | Idea Couture Inc.

CONCLUSION



[Prizes](#) have a record of spurring innovation and attracting creative solutions to pressing challenges. At a time when many states are facing new standards, new assessments and new accountability systems, it is more important than ever that parents and other stakeholders have understandable and actionable information about their schools. At the same time, the complexity and breadth of school data are increasing. States need help creating 21st-century report cards that educate parents, engage communities and increase accountability—while also satisfying existing federal and state requirements.

By harnessing the enormous talents of the design community, states can revolutionize the way we consume and use school information, and help improve educational outcomes for millions of American students.