

Dear Parents and Families,

Knowing where you are and where you want to go is a key part of growth and improvement. Our school regularly uses education data to tell us how our students are progressing and to adjust instruction for better results.

The state is now providing an additional source of information with the release of the Iowa School Report Card. This is a new web-based tool that provides a snapshot of every Iowa public school's performance on certain educational measures, such as student attendance and proficiency rates.

The goal of the Iowa School Report Card is to present certain education data in a way that makes it easier for the public to find and understand. The Iowa Department of Education developed this tool in response to a 2013 legislative requirement (House File 215).

Specifically, the Iowa School Report Card scores schools on up to eight educational measures and then assigns an overall rating to each school based on its performance on the measures. The attached guide provides an explanation of the eight measures. Our school's overall rating is Need Improvement.

While I believe this information can add to conversations in our community about how we're preparing our students for success, these measures are based on data from a single assessment. In the Cedar Rapids Community School District we use multiple assessments with students on an ongoing basis. As we know from other accountability initiatives such as the federal No Child Left Behind Act, schools are so much more than labels. Labels and ratings do not tell the whole story.

While I encourage you to explore the information provided in the Iowa School Report Card, I also urge you to get to know the school behind the label. Our targeted small group instruction, and frequent use of student data to guide instruction provides our staff the opportunity to support all of your children academically, regardless of how they are performing. We continue to explore new instructional strategies to support all of your children, from new research based intervention strategies to the use of technology to target instruction for independent practice where our students need the most support. As our new Coding Club and Imagination Foundation opportunities demonstrated, we are also looking for additional ways to support our students with extracurricular opportunities here at Hoover as well. I encourage you to ask questions about our improvement efforts, and ask what you can do to support our teachers and students.

You can locate our school's results, as well as more information about the Iowa School Report Card, on the District website at [www.cr.k12.ia.us](http://www.cr.k12.ia.us). Several support materials have been posted with the report to help you navigate and understand the information. You can also find the report at [www.educateiowa.gov/schoolreportcard](http://www.educateiowa.gov/schoolreportcard)

Thanks for all you do for our school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clint Stone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Clint" and last name "Stone" clearly distinguishable.

Clint Stone - Principal



**Cedar Rapids  
Community School District**

## Guide to the Iowa School Report Card

### What is the Iowa School Report Card?

- The Iowa School Report Card is a new system to show how each public school is performing on certain educational measures. Schools receive a score for each measure, and then the scores are combined into an overall score. Based on the overall score, one of the following ratings is assigned to each school: Exceptional, High-Performing, Commendable, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, and Priority. The Iowa School Report Card can help Iowans stay informed and can enhance conversations about their schools' strengths and challenges. The Iowa Department of Education developed the rating system in response to a 2013 legislative requirement (House File 215).

### What are the categories my school is graded on, and how were they chosen?

The legislation required a set of measures that are represented in the Iowa School Report Card as follows:

- **Proficiency:** The percentage of students scoring proficient or better on reading and mathematics assessments.
- **College and Career-Ready Growth:** The percentage of students who are making the year-to-year growth necessary to be ready for college and career training by the end of high school.
- **Annual Expected Growth:** The percentage of students making a year of academic growth in a year's time on reading and mathematics assessments.
- **Closing Achievement Gap:** A measure that reflects a statewide goal of narrowing the gap in achievement for students with disabilities, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and English Language Learners.
- **College and Career Readiness:** The percentage of students who score at or above a level of performance on reading and mathematics assessments that predicts a higher probability of postsecondary success. (Middle/high schools only.)
- **Graduation Rate:** The percentage of ninth-grade students who finished high school within five years. (High schools only.)
- **Attendance:** The average daily attendance of students, which is the total number of days students were enrolled and present divided by the total number of possible attendance days.
- **Staff Retention:** The percentage of teachers, school administrators and other licensed staff members who remained employed in a school over consecutive school years.

\*Two other required measures, parent involvement and community activities/involvement, will be defined and included in the Iowa School Report Card at a later date.



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## **Key Messages About The Iowa School Report Card**

- Student achievement data are essential to our school's efforts to improve.
- The Iowa School Report Card is a new system to show how each public school is performing on certain educational measures, such as student proficiency rates and staff retention. Each school's scores are then combined into an overall rating.
- Much of this information exists already, but the data are presented in a new way that makes it easier for the public to find and understand.
- This system was developed by the Iowa Department of Education in response to a 2013 legislative requirement that called for development of a web-based "Attendance Center Rankings" system for evaluating and ranking Iowa schools.
- While every school has a local context that cannot be captured in a set of charts, the Iowa School Report Card is one tool that can help Iowans better understand how their schools are doing.
- Parents and community members can use the Iowa School Report Card to celebrate areas of growth and to ask questions, such as how a school is addressing a particular challenge and what they can do to help.
- School report cards and rankings are common nationally. Iowa has learned from other states that the best approach to building this type of system is to be inclusive, fair and to use data in a positive way – to improve and support schools.
- Rather than a top-to-bottom ranking of schools, the Iowa School Report Card groups schools into one of six overall ratings: Exceptional, High-Performing, Commendable, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, and Priority. Schools are grouped by comparable grade configurations (e.g., elementary schools, middle schools, high schools).
- The overall ratings are based on each school's performance over a two-year span on up to eight required measures: Student proficiency rates, student growth toward college and career readiness, annual expected growth, closing the achievement gap, college and career readiness, graduation rate, attendance, and staff retention.
- We encourage parents and community members to look beyond our school's label and focus on the opportunities for learning and growth.
- We encourage our stakeholders to connect with us to truly understand our local context. Every school has its own story, and we all have a shared responsibility to improve our schools and to prepare students for success.
- The Iowa School Report Card represents limited data and a snapshot in time. It is not the whole story. An overall school rating does not reflect the quality of our staff or ongoing work to raise student achievement.