

What Accountability and Assessments Look Like

Student learning can be one indicator of school effectiveness, but it should not be measured solely by student performance on one or two standardized tests. Instead, multiple, valid, and reliable measures of student learning should be considered, beginning with professional assessment by the classroom teacher. Such measures of student learning might include district- and school-level assessments; classroom-level written, oral, performance-based, or portfolio assessments; and written evaluations. Valid measures of student learning should be developed with the agreement of teachers and other stakeholders, should take into account the multiple factors influencing a student's learning, and must be considered as one, but not the only, important indicator of overall school effectiveness.

Other indicators of school effectiveness—which also should be identified in cooperation with education stakeholders—could include, but are not limited to, graduation rates; attendance rates; the number and percentage of students participating in rigorous coursework (including honors, AP, IB, dual enrollment, early college); the number and percentage of students with access to courses infused with 21st century skills (communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity); and the number and percentage of students participating in STEM, humanities, foreign languages, creative and fine arts, health, and physical education programs.

For more information on what makes a great public school, please visit:
www.nea.org/gpsindicators

Is Your School a Great Public School?

Accountability and Assessments

Series 6 of 7



A Great Education

As students progress during the school year, it is essential that they are provided all the resources and supports they need to succeed.



A quality education begins with access to an exemplary early childhood education and continues with development of students socially, emotionally, and cognitively, preparing them for college and 21st-century careers. The bridge from early childhood education to graduation is only made possible with:

- High standards and a rigorous curriculum;
- Teaching and learning conditions conducive to engagement and enrichment;
- Educators of the highest quality;
- Valid assessments;
- Engaged families and community; and,
- Sufficient funding for advanced courses, modern materials and facilities, and educator professional development.

Great Public Schools Indicators Framework

The National Education Association's Great Public Schools (GPS) Indicators Framework elaborates on the seven criteria fundamental to a quality education and calls on all educators, families, community leaders, and policy makers to join the effort to ensure that every student has access to a great public school. Together, we can achieve greatness. Here we focus on one of the seven criteria required for student success—Accountability and Assessments.

Accountability and Assessments

NEA believes in a more complete picture of the performance of schools in districts and states, instead of the current system that holds them accountable based solely on how many students reach an arbitrary cut score on a standardized test in reading, math, and science on a particular day.

States should learn from the mistakes of No Child Left Behind by measuring school effectiveness through a broad range of indicators and by using the results to provide support for struggling schools and students instead of to punish them. Also, results should be used for self-evaluation at the classroom, school, district, and state level, for decisions about the need for resources, and to allow for transparency concerning school performance.



How You Can Advocate for a Great Public School—Accountability and Assessments

Essential Pieces

Appropriate Student Assessments

Positive Achievement Outcomes

Adequate School Capacity

School Effectiveness

Action Steps

Ask your principal how student growth is measured and request that multiple measures be used.

Ask your principal for his or her plan to reduce learning gaps.

Ask your principal to provide information on how many students have taken the SAT and ACT.

Ask your principal if he or she monitors student graduation rates by race, income, and native language.

Lobby your principal for programs with 21st century interdisciplinary themes like global and financial literacy.

Lobby your principal for coursework aligned with college- and career-ready standards like dual enrollment, advanced courses, and career and technical education (CTE) certification.

Ask your principal to provide educators training on using data to inform and improve instruction.

Request that your school board publish comprehensive school performance data.