

# Don't Make Decisions in the Dark

## You Need Good Information about the Schools in Your Community



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As a parent, you want information about your child's school, such as how students are doing academically and what extracurriculars are available. Did you know that your state provides information about the schools in your district? Can you find information about your child's school easily? Is that information easy to understand? It should be.

### The Power of Good Information

Usually, information about your child's school can be found by searching for your state education report card. For example, search for *Illinois state report card* online. Some states make information easier for parents to use than others.

When information is provided in a way that is easy to understand and use, you can take the following actions:

#### Make good decisions about which school is best for your child.

If you live somewhere where you have choices about where to send your child to school, information about academics, culture, special programs, and more help you better compare your options. Having lots of information about a school helps you decide which one is best for your child.

Questions you can answer include the following:

- Are the students in this school doing as well academically as students in other schools nearby?
- Do the students in this school go on to college after high school?

#### Talk with local leaders, like your superintendent or school board, about what could be better about your child's school.

When you have information about your child's school, such as the number of teachers, financial resources, and programs for students, you can talk to local leaders about what improvements or changes your school needs.

Questions you can answer include the following:

- Are the resources that I want my child to have access to, like counselors and advanced classes, available at this school?
- Are the students in this school learning more—or growing academically—every year?

**"Quality school [information] affords parents and families the opportunity to select the ideal learning environment for their children. Complete and factual information empowers parents to become true advocates for their children. Quality school data can renew parents' and families' trust and faith in school systems."**

—Shaton Berry, Michigan PTA

### What You Can Do

If your state does not provide easy-to-use information about your child's school, **think about who you could talk to**—your principal, the PTA/PTO, your school board, your state legislator, someone else—about how to make it better. Information that is useful and easy to find empowers you to make the best decisions for your child.

To see the Data Quality Campaign's full suite of public reporting materials, including the full primer, the infographic summary, the federal spotlight, and resources for administrators and local school board members, go to [www.dataqualitycampaign.org/PublicReporting](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/PublicReporting).