



Checking Ohio's educational vital signs

An analysis of the state's 2017–18 report cards

Aaron Churchill

November 2018



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Glossary and acronyms

The following list provides a reference of common terms and acronyms used in this analysis.

Achievement is a report-card component that indicates student performance on state exams; the term can also be used more broadly to describe student performance 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.

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

Components refer to the six main dimensions of the school report card; **subcomponents** refer to indicators within a larger component.

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). The percent of ED students in a school or district is an approximation of student poverty; some schools report 100 percent ED on the basis of the federal Community Eligibility Program, which allows them to designate all students as ED (including pupils from families above 185 percent poverty) in order to provide meals at no cost to all students.

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 and graduation rates.

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

Indicators met is a subcomponent within the Achievement component that considers schools' proficiency rates on up to twenty-three possible state exams; three additional indicators are also included that are based on gifted data, chronic-absenteeism rates, and year-to-year improvements on retaken EOC exams.

ODE is an acronym for the Ohio Department of Education.

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

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. Proficiency does not necessarily indicate being on track for success in college and career; the 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." A **proficiency rate** refers to the percentage of students reaching an achievement level of proficient or above.

Progress is a report-card component that indicates student growth on state exams, as measured by value-added scores.

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 other subgroups in its accountability system: low-achieving students and students identified as gifted.

Value-added is a statistical model that estimates a school's contribution to student growth based on pupils' prior achievement; it also refers to a subcomponent of Ohio's school report card.

Introduction and summary

For the past two decades, accountability for academic outcomes has been a centerpiece of Ohio's school-reform efforts. Policymakers, understanding that the state's future prosperity hinges on the knowledge and skills of today's young people, have sought to lift achievement by adopting academic standards that articulate what students must know and be able to do at each grade level—and then holding schools and students accountable for meeting these goals. Like an annual medical examination, state assessments offer regular checkups on the academic health of students. Though not always pleasant, assessments and transparent report-card systems allow parents, communities, and educators to better discern when young people are keeping pace and when they need more help.

The earliest iterations of Ohio's accountability policies generally asked students to meet basic levels of competency. This was a reasonable starting point, but as evidence began to mount that too many high school graduates were ill-equipped to succeed in college or career, Ohio's leaders—and those in many other states—began to pursue initiatives aimed at ensuring that more young people would exit high school prepared for the next step. Starting in 2010, Ohio has undertaken three key reforms that strengthen its standards and accountability systems.

First, Ohio implemented more rigorous academic standards. In 2010, the state adopted strong math and ELA standards. Though these standards would be hotly debated in subsequent years, they challenge students to reach academic targets that, if met, would put them on a solid track for success after high school. After thorough review and some important changes by local educators, these standards are now referred to as Ohio's Learning Standards.

Second, Ohio implemented more challenging state exams that match the rigor of the new learning standards. Gone, for instance, are the days of Ohio Graduation Tests (OGTs) that were set at the eighth-grade level and that most high school students passed without a sweat. In their place, the state now administers EOCs that gauge achievement on high school level material. Ohio's current exams—first administered in 2015–16—also have tougher proficiency standards. Under the old state tests, roughly four in five Ohio students were deemed proficient. But with more stringent standards in place, the state now provides a more honest picture of how many students are on a solid track for success after high school—which, sadly, turns out to be far fewer.

Third, Ohio transitioned to more robust and user-friendly school report cards. Last used in 2011–12, the state's old report cards deployed opaque ratings for schools, such as “effective” or “continuous improvement.” Beginning in 2012–13, Ohio shifted to next-generation report cards that use intuitive A–F ratings and include additional measures of success, including ACT/SAT scores and industry credentials earned. After several delays, the state now assigns an overall letter grade that combines the various report card components into a “bottom-line” summary about the academic quality of districts and schools. In its first use in 2017–18, the most common overall rating for Ohio districts was a C and for schools a B.

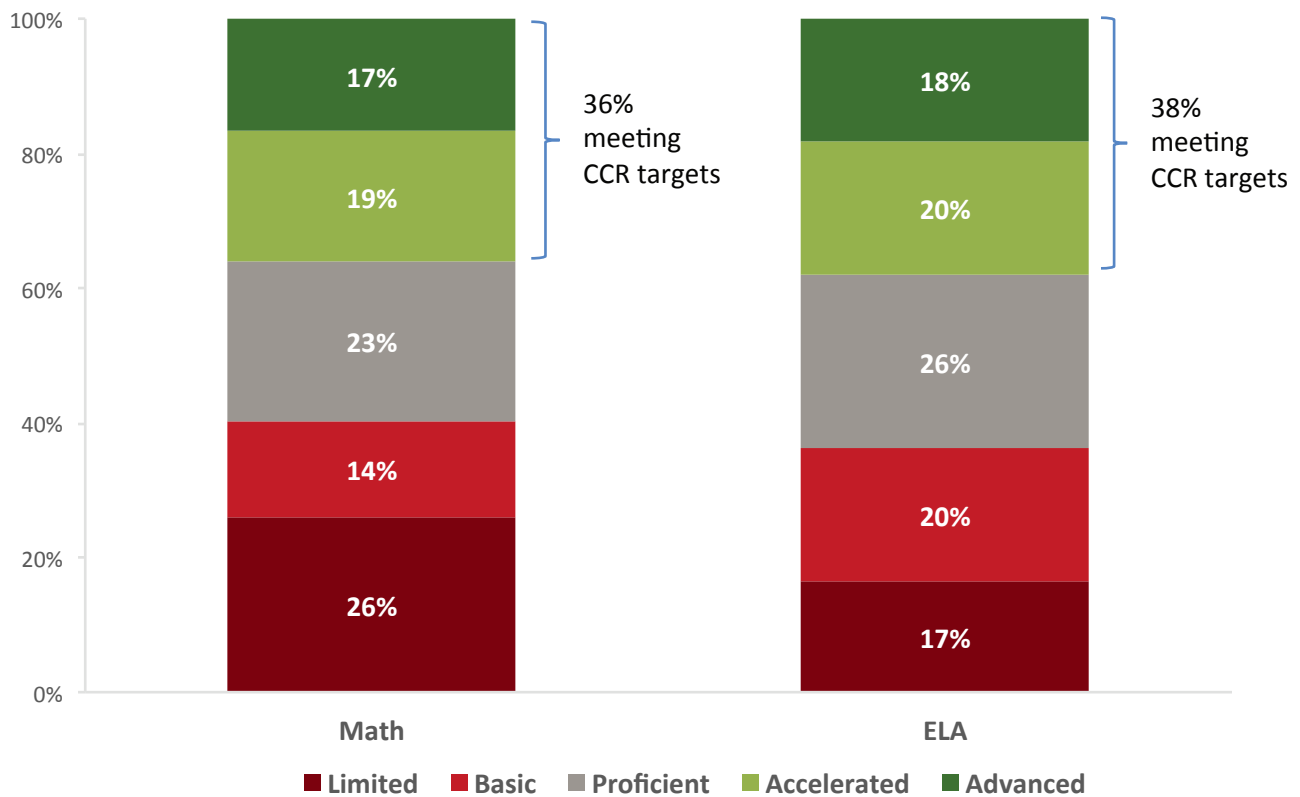
Taken together, these reforms lay the policy foundation for greater pupil success. Standards provide educators with clear expectations about what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. Aligned assessments provide information about whether pupils are reaching high academic goals (and identify children falling behind and needing help). Lastly, transparent report cards empower families, communities, and policymakers to take actions that can boost student achievement.

Yet policy reforms of this magnitude are unlikely to go without a hitch. At one point, Ohio administered three different state exams in three years. State accountability systems have been in flux, with new measures phasing in and higher standards shrinking the number of students considered proficient (and school ratings premised on them). To ease the impact of these changes, lawmakers decided to temporarily shield schools from formal consequences based on report card results. These “safe harbor” provisions went into effect starting in 2014–15 and expired after the 2016–17 school year. As this report goes to press, policymakers continue to grapple with high school graduation requirements in an era of heightened expectations. Lastly, Ohio has had to navigate recent changes in federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act; commendably, state leaders did so without uprooting accountability systems and putting them into further flux.

The debates around standards and assessments are hardly over—and as political matters, they may never vanish. Yet Ohio’s standards and accountability framework is finally settling into place. Educators have been using the same math and ELA learning standards for the better part of this decade, and the past year marks the third for the new state exams. This fall’s report card release represents the culmination of a six-year implementation, capped by the overall A–F rating. On the whole, state leaders deserve praise for seeing through tough policy transitions. Moving forward, Ohio should remain committed to these important bread-and-butter accountability policies.

Although policymakers have instated better instruments to take the pulse of education in Ohio, analyses of report-card data uncover ailing achievement across much of the state. Quite simply, more treatment is needed. Figure 1 shows the statewide breakdown of achievement on state exams, combined across grades 3–8 and the high school EOCs. About three in five Ohio students reach proficiency in these subjects, and a more meager 36 and 38 percent reach the accelerated or advanced levels on math and ELA exams, respectively. Meeting these higher benchmarks is important as the state indicates that doing so indicates that pupils are on track for becoming college and career ready (CCR).¹

Figure 1: Statewide achievement on math and ELA exams, 2017–18

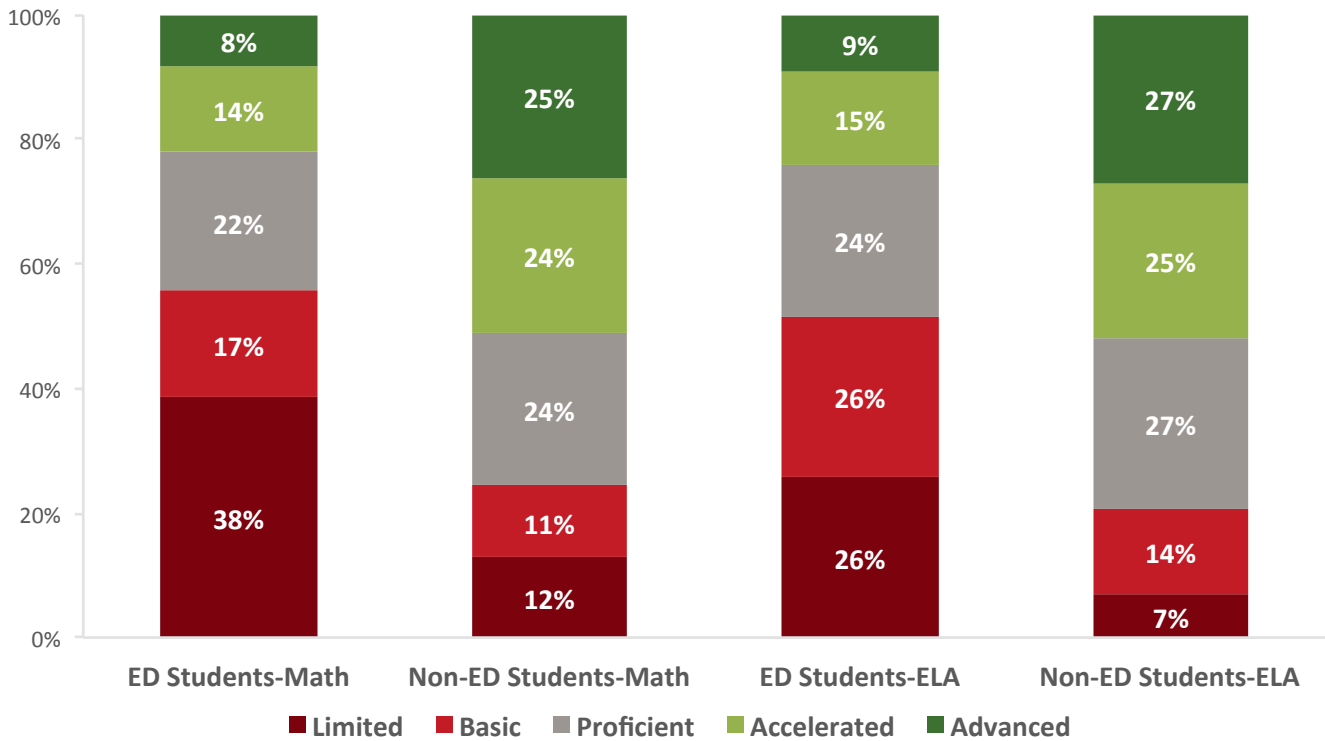


Note: Numbers may not add to 100 percent due to rounding and because a small fraction of students reach the “advanced-plus” level that is used for students taking above-grade-level exams. The same note applies for figure 2 below.

Similar to years past, large disparities in achievement surface between low-income students and their peers. Figure 2 reveals that about one in four ED students—who reside in big and small cities, rural areas, and suburbs, as well—reach the CCR benchmarks of accelerated or advanced. These rates are about half that of their higher-income peers. When looking at proficiency rates or students scoring at proficient or above, low-income students also trail behind: In math, for example, 44 percent of ED students reach proficiency or above, compared to 73 percent of their

counterparts. While pinpointing the causes of these disparities remains an important research topic—the roles of in-school and out-of-school factors are much debated—these gaps should not go unnoticed, as research tells us that consequences follow when students fail to achieve at high levels.²

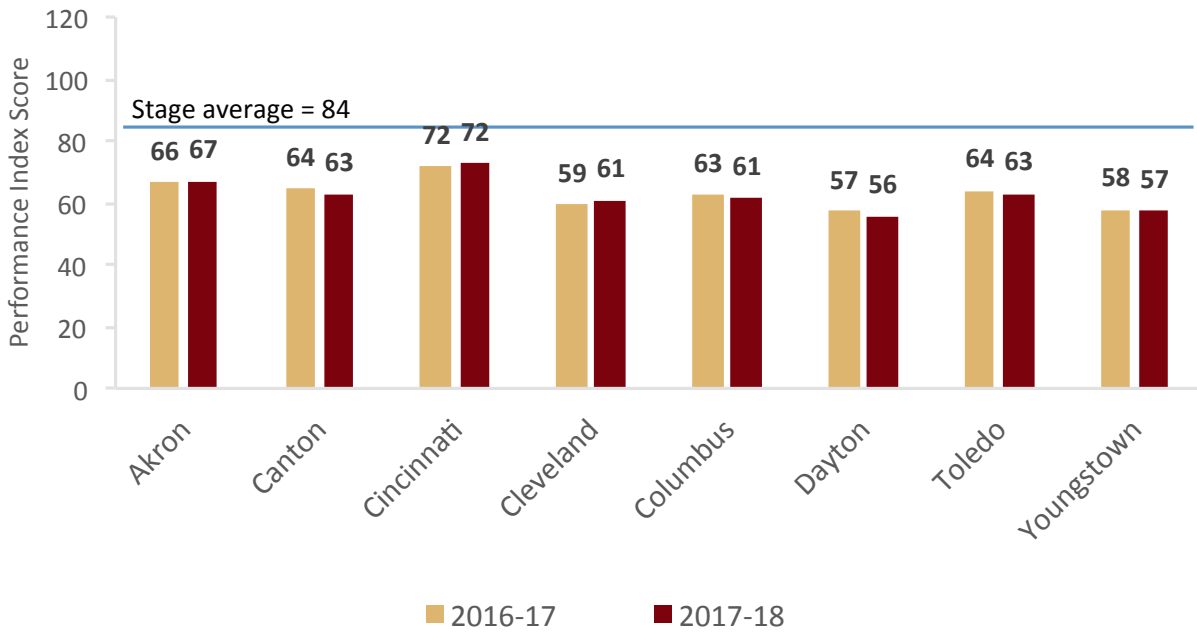
Figure 2: Statewide achievement by economically disadvantaged status, 2017–18



In our annual reviews of Ohio’s educational data—this report being the seventh by the present author—we focus on the state’s “Big Eight” cities of Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown. Schools in these cities serve about two in five of Ohio’s students of color (black or Hispanic) and educate primarily low-income pupils. They are also home to most of the state’s public charter schools, which aim to provide quality options for children in these communities. Overall, this year’s report-card data reveal few signs of significant progress, though pockets of success also appear. Consider the three main takeaways from this analysis of the Big Eight.

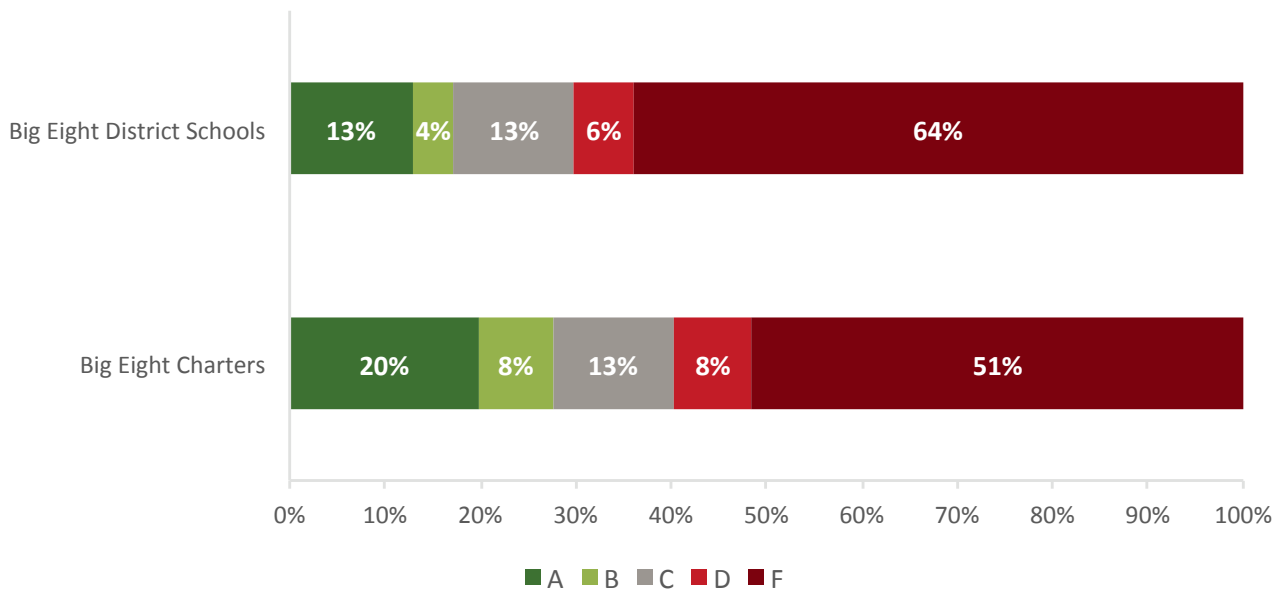
First, we continue to find large disparities between the achievement of Big Eight students and their peers statewide. Figure 3 displays the Big Eight districts’ performance-index scores, a composite measure of achievement across state exams. It reveals that students in these districts achieve at levels well below the statewide average—anywhere from twelve points below in Cincinnati to twenty-eight points below in Dayton, the lowest achieving of the eight. Though not displayed in the figure below, proficiency-rate data also reveal large gaps in achievement between Big Eight students and their peers statewide.

Figure 3: Performance-index scores of Ohio’s Big Eight districts, 2016–17 and 2017–18



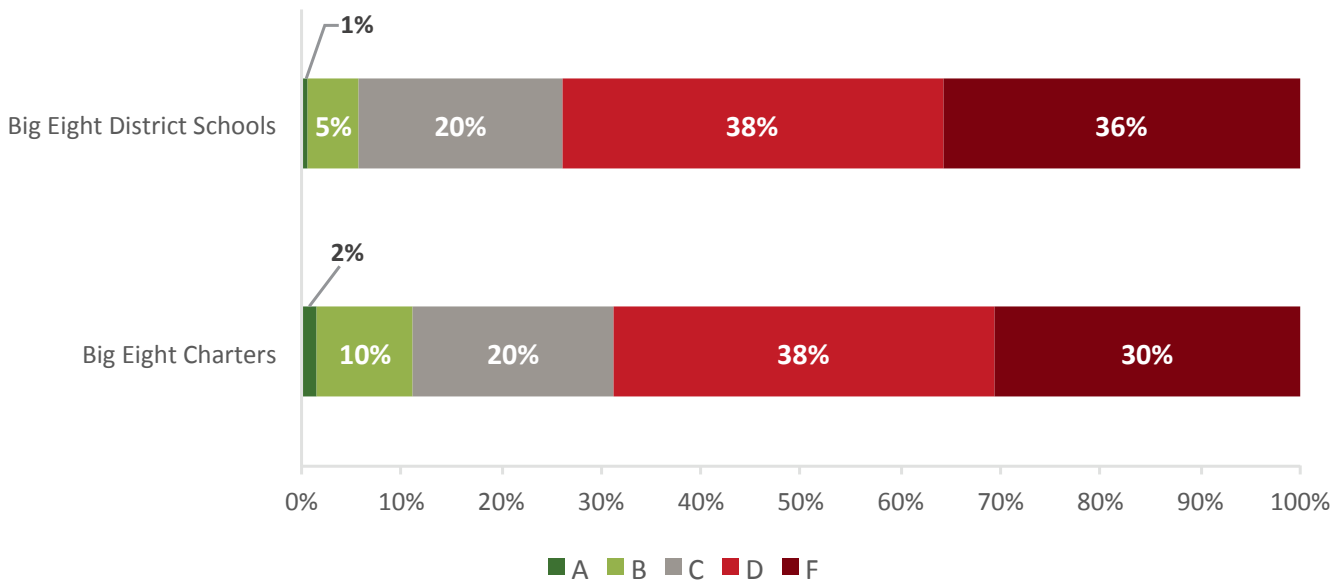
Second, though achievement lags behind in the Big Eight, there are schools making a difference in students’ academic growth. When examining results from Ohio’s value-added growth measure—a more poverty-neutral school rating that tracks achievement over time—we see glimmers of quality amid the gloom. On this measure, which better captures schools’ educational effectiveness, 20 percent of Big Eight public charter schools receive A’s, while 13 percent of district schools achieve this top mark. At the same time, however, we see that most Big Eight schools receive F’s on value-added, evidence that far too many schools are struggling to help students make the growth needed to meet rigorous academic targets.

Figure 4: Value-added ratings for Big Eight charter and district schools, 2017–18



Third, with an overall rating now in view, high-quality Big Eight schools stand out more prominently than in previous years. Conversely, this final rating more clearly flags schools where students are struggling academically *and* growth is stagnant. During the transition to new report cards, Ohio suspended overall ratings, and various ad-hoc methods were employed to identify “high-quality” schools.³ Figure 5 displays the overall ratings for Big Eight charters and districts, showing that just over one in four receive a respectable C or above. Another 38 percent of Big Eight schools receive a D rating—what should be viewed as mid-quality urban schools. Finally, about a third of schools receive F’s, red flags that something is amiss. For most schools outside of the Big Eight, which generally receive higher ratings, an overall B or above is more closely aligned with a high-quality designation.

Figure 5: Overall ratings for Ohio Big Eight charter and district schools, 2017–18



In closing this introduction and summary, we offer two thoughts for Ohio policymakers.

First, quit trying to upend or soften Ohio’s emergent accountability framework. Stop trying to shoot the messenger. This suggestion—or plea, as it might be—is directed toward policymakers of both parties who have proposed everything from scrapping Ohio’s learning standards, dumping district and school ratings, and dropping rigorous graduation requirements. You may not like the results of the annual checkup, but it’s not the doctor’s fault. The state has undertaken critical and long-promised reforms that raise the bar for Ohio students and schools. Careful policy refinements should certainly be considered—a few report-card improvements are discussed on page 15—but on the whole, policymakers need to learn from the data that report cards provide and have the discipline to see through these reforms.

Second, invest in high-quality schools in the Big Eight cities. There is no shortage of well-intended ideas on how to lift achievement in Ohio’s impoverished urban areas—anything from school turnaround plans, better teacher development, and more holistic support services. All are worthwhile endeavors, but perhaps the most straightforward approach is to drive more resources to the handful of Big Eight schools that are getting the job done so that they can replicate their models and serve more students in need of an excellent education. We suggest identifying such high-performing urban schools—charter and district alike—as those receiving C’s or above overall ratings or those earning A’s on value-added for two consecutive years. Our analysis indicates that these criteria would capture the top 30 percent of Big Eight schools, a reasonably select group of schools that are meeting high but attainable performance targets; a listing of these schools can be found starting on page 46.

Ohio has made great strides in strengthening its standards and accountability policies, and cementing them into place is the right path forward. Evidence from top-performing states, such as Massachusetts and Florida, indicates that setting a high bar and sticking to it is key to improving academic performance for all students. But with this year’s checkup indicating that tens of thousands of Ohio students are off track—and many of them falling even further behind—none of us can take a breather in improving education for all. Our state’s future health depends upon it.

Acknowledgments

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Ohio's accountability framework

State assessments

Since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001, federal education law has required states to annually assess students in various grades and subjects. At a minimum, Ohio must administer exams in math and ELA in grades 3–8 and once during high school, along with science exams once during grades 3–5, 6–8, and once in high school. As the table below indicates, Ohio follows these guidelines and administers five more state exams (a statewide Kindergarten exam and four EOC exams). These state exams are designed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in partnership with the ODE; the AIR/ODE exams were first administered in 2015–16, so the data reported here come from the third round.

Table 1: Ohio's state exams

| | Grade assessed | Federally required |
|---|----------------|--------------------|
| Elementary and middle school exams | | |
| Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) | K | No |
| Math | Grades 3–8 | Yes |
| English language arts | Grades 3–8 | Yes |
| Science | Grades 5 and 8 | Yes |
| End-of-course exams | | |
| Algebra I (or Integrated Math I) | High school | Yes |
| Geometry (or Integrated Math II) | High school | No ⁴ |
| 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 important to parents, Ohio provides families with reports on their own child's state exam results that they can use in conjunction with teacher grades. Educators can also use exam results to evaluate what worked and what didn't instructionally, 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 on their ELA exams to be promoted to fourth grade (with some exceptions). Second, under the state's graduation requirements, high school students must reach a specified performance threshold on their EOCs—again with various exceptions. Finally, the results from state exams form the backbone of district and school report cards, discussed in more detail in the next section.

District and school report cards

Ohio's report card system has been a work in progress since 2011–12, the last year that the state used its old format. The most significant shift, beginning in 2012–13, was the move to A–F school grades, a rating system pioneered by Florida and today used in fourteen states. As a commonplace, widely understood way of communicating pupil achievement, these letter grades are designed to maximize public understanding about school performance. Since 2012–13, Ohio has also introduced new indicators of performance, as well. With the release of the 2017–18 report cards, the transition to Ohio's new report cards is now complete; all of the components are fully operational, and the overall school ratings were issued for the first time since 2011–12.

The table below outlines the dimensions 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 are subcomponents that are used to generate the larger component ratings. Ohio assigns A–F ratings on all the elements shown below, yielding fifteen possible letter grades. Districts typically receive ratings in all fifteen categories, while individual schools receive fewer, depending on the relevant components. The report-card structure shown in table 2 applies to the majority of Ohio districts and schools, although a handful of career and technical planning districts (CTPDs) and dropout-recovery charter schools receive alternative report cards with different measures. Data on CTPDs are not included in the analyses below, and the ratings for dropout-recovery charters appear in the appendix (table A1).

Table 2: Dimensions of Ohio’s school report card

| Report-card element | Brief description |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Overall rating | Summary rating that combines the six report-card components. For more on the calculations, see table 3 below. |
| Achievement | Composite of the performance-index (75 percent of the weight) and indicators-met (25 percent) ratings. |
| Performance index | Weighted measure of student achievement, with greater weight given to pupils who achieve at higher levels (see table 4). |
| 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. |
| Progress | Composite of the overall and subgroup value-added measures (55 percent weight on overall and 15 percent each on the subgroup value-added categories listed below). |
| Value-added: Overall | Based on the growth over time of all tested students. |
| 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 students identified as gifted in math (on math exams), reading (on ELA exams), science (on science exams), or superior cognitive (on math, science, and ELA exams). |
| Value-added: SWD | Based on the growth over time of students with disabilities. |
| Gap closing | Indicator of the achievement and growth across various student subgroups (for example, ED and race/ethnicity). |
| Graduation rate | Composite of four- and five-year high school graduation rates (60 percent on the four-year rate and 40 percent 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. |
| Improving at-risk K–3 readers | Generally, based on the percentage of K–3 students that a school moves from “not on track” to “on track” in reading proficiency; this component was previously known as “K–3 literacy.” |
| Prepared for success | Indicator of post-secondary readiness based on various high school measures such as ACT/SAT scores, AP/IB scores, honors diplomas earned, and industry credentials earned. |

Overall rating

Under Ohio's former accountability system, the state assigned schools overall ratings such as effective or continuous improvement. This system was discontinued in 2011–12, and the state suspended the use of overall ratings as it phased in a new report card. After a five-year hiatus, Ohio again assigned overall district and school ratings in 2017–18. 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 that educate students in all grades, places equal weight on achievement and progress (20 percent each) and lesser weights (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.⁵ 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, which is then translated into an overall grade.

Table 3: Weighting system used to determine 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) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Achievement | 20% | 27.5% | 35% | 23% |
| Progress | 20% | 27.5% | 35% | 23% |
| Gap closing | 15% | 22.5% | 30% | 18% |
| Graduation rate | 15% | | | 18% |
| Improving at-risk K–3 readers | 15% | 22.5% | | |
| Prepared for success | 15% | | | 18% |

Component ratings

The framework used to determine component ratings in 2017–18 is largely consistent with the previous version. Readers can find a more detailed review of each component in Fordham's 2017 publication *Back to the Basics*.⁶ However, since the present paper focuses heavily on the performance index and overall value-added ratings, we provide an overview of these key components. Meanwhile, Ohio undertook revisions to its indicators-met and gap-closing components, and those changes are also reviewed below.

Performance index

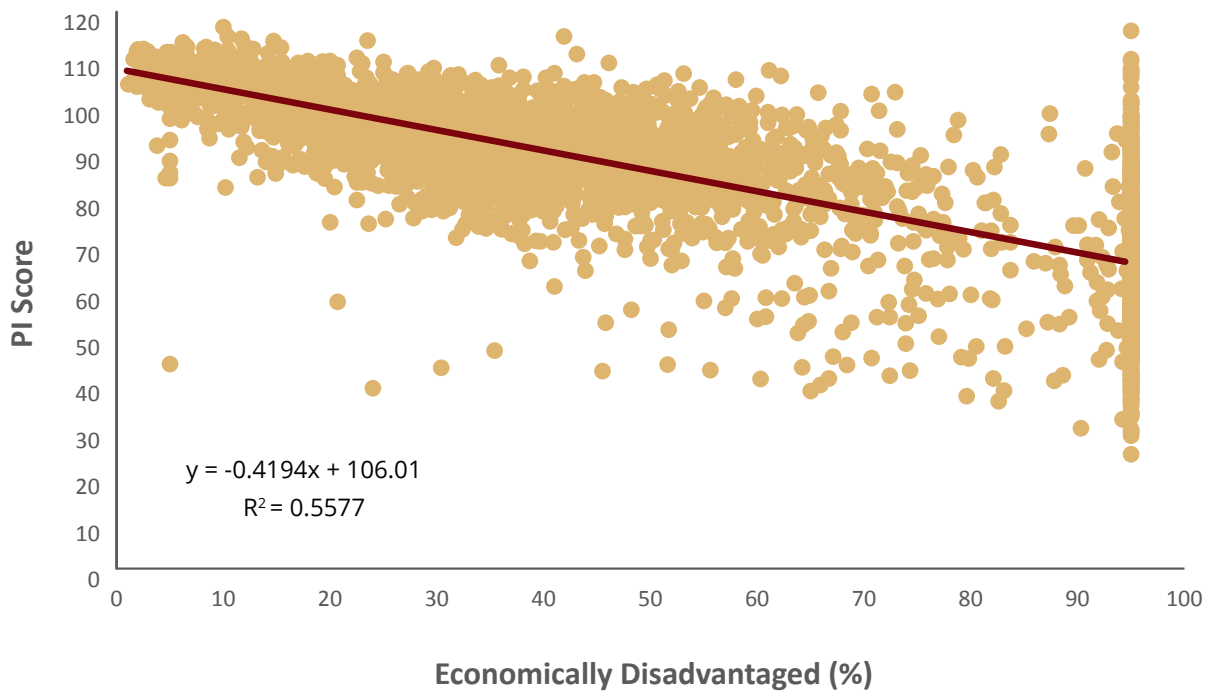
The performance index is a composite measure that looks at state exam results and provides a point-in-time snapshot of student achievement in a district or school. To calculate scores, the state uses a weighting system that provides more credit as students achieve at higher levels. The table below shows the five achievement levels that students may reach and their respective weights.⁷

Table 4: 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 |

The performance index is an important gauge of achievement that allows communities to better comprehend whether students are on a strong academic pathway. Yet the ratings should also be viewed in context, as the performance index captures out-of-school factors that can influence student achievement, most notably household income. Figure 6 shows the correlation between schools’ performance-index scores and their percentage of ED pupils—a widely used proxy for student poverty. The downward trend line shown in red indicates that as schools’ ED percentages rise, performance-index scores tend to fall. There are, of course, outliers—schools with relatively high ED rates that also have strong performance-index scores.⁸

Figure 6: Relationship between percent economically disadvantaged (horizontal axis) and performance-index scores (vertical axis), all Ohio schools, 2017–18



The table below displays the breakdown of A–F performance-index ratings along three poverty tiers based on schools’ percentage of ED students. A solid majority of low-poverty schools receive A’s or B’s on the performance index (60 percent), while few high-poverty schools (less than 5 percent of them) receive such marks. Conversely, almost no low-poverty schools receive D’s or F’s, while 84 percent of high-poverty schools receive these letter grades. This pattern of performance-index ratings is almost identical to that observed in the year prior.⁹

Table 5: Distribution of performance-index ratings by student poverty levels, all Ohio schools, 2017–18

| Performance-index rating | Low poverty | Mid poverty | High poverty |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| A | 8% | <1% | <1% |
| B | 52% | 18% | 3% |
| C | 34% | 50% | 13% |
| D | 6% | 30% | 50% |
| F | <1% | 2% | 34% |
| Number of schools | 985 | 1,144 | 1,118 |

Note: A low-poverty school is defined as one reporting 0–32.9 percent ED students; a mid-poverty school is defined as reporting 33.0–65.9 percent; and a high-poverty school is defined as reporting 66.0–100 percent. Some high-poverty schools may be misclassified due to participation in the Community Eligibility Program.

Overall value-added

In contrast to the performance index, value-added measures examine individual students’ growth—a longitudinal rather than snapshot view of educational performance. Value-added measures rely on student-level data collected over time and statistical techniques that attempt to isolate district or schools’ contributions to changes in student achievement (that is, growth). 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 upward move would be interpreted as a positive gain, and vice-versa.¹⁰ Because value-added models start with students’ prior achievement, the results can be understood as estimates of schools’ effectiveness.¹¹

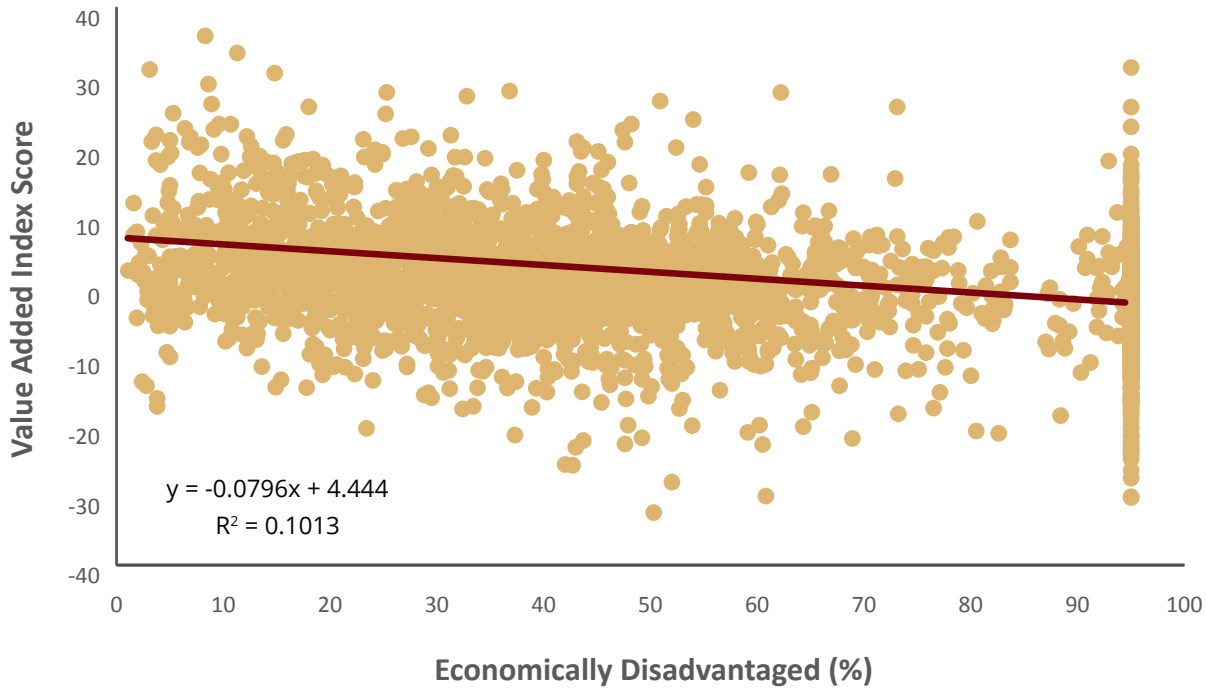
Ohio reports value-added results as index scores, which take into account both the size of the estimated value-added gain (or loss) as well as the margin of error in the statistical estimate.¹² The value-added results are averaged across the three most recent years; thus, the 2017–18 results are a composite of scores from 2015–16, 2016–17, and 2017–18. The use of multiyear averages helps to smooth any year-to-year fluctuations; the tradeoff is that the results are not fully reflective of the current school performance.¹³ The index scores are translated into A–F ratings using the scale shown in the table below.

Table 6: Scale used to determine value-added ratings

| Value-added rating | Index score | Interpretation ¹⁴ |
|--------------------|---------------|--|
| A | +2.0 or above | Significant evidence that students made more than expected growth |
| B | +1.0 to 1.99 | Moderate 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 | Moderate evidence that students made less than expected growth |
| F | –2.0 or below | Significant evidence that students made less than expected growth |

The value-added index scores are weakly correlated with schools' percentage of ED students, as indicated by the largely flat trend line displayed in figure 7. The line isn't entirely flat—a slight downward trend exists—but the measure is less tied to schools' poverty levels than the performance index and other achievement-based measures.

Figure 7: Relationship between percent economically disadvantaged (horizontal axis) and value-added index scores (vertical axis), all Ohio schools, 2017–18



When the index scores are translated into letter grades, we see that about one in four high-poverty schools receives a solid value-added rating. As table 7 below indicates, 26 percent of high-poverty schools receive A's and B's on value-added—a much higher percentage of these letter grades than on the performance index. At the same time, a majority of high-poverty schools still receive F's (58 percent), a troubling result indicating that students in most high-poverty schools are making little growth in addition to registering low achievement. We also notice an atypical distribution of ratings whereby a large proportion of schools—regardless of poverty level—are rated in the top and bottom categories (A or F). The table below, for example, shows that among low-poverty schools, 76 percent received A's or F's in 2017–18—and a similar pattern surfaces across mid- and high-poverty schools, as well.

Table 7: Distribution of value-added ratings by student poverty levels, all Ohio schools, 2017–18

| Value-added rating | Low poverty | Mid poverty | High poverty |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| A | 52% | 41% | 21% |
| B | 6% | 6% | 5% |
| C | 14% | 13% | 13% |
| D | 4% | 4% | 7% |
| F | 24% | 36% | 58% |
| Number of schools | 940 | 1,105 | 1,087 |

Note: For more on how the poverty levels are defined, see notes under table 5.

Indicators met

Indicators met looks at whether schools are meeting proficiency goals set by the state. In total, there are twenty-three possible indicators based on state exams, as well as a specific gifted indicator. Ohio added two new indicators starting in 2017–18: One is based on chronic-absenteeism rates, which serve as Ohio’s “student-success” indicator required under federal law.¹⁵ The second is an improvement indicator based on students retaking EOCs to meet graduation requirements. This indicator was added to ensure that the other EOC-based indicators reflect the results of first-time test takers and to recognize the success of schools that generate improvements among students who struggled in their first attempts.¹⁶

Even with the new indicators factored in, the results remain largely similar to 2016–17, though slight improvements are also noticeable. The table below shows that a large majority of schools still receive F’s on indicators met (69 percent in 2017–18), with just 14 percent of schools earning A’s or B’s. There is a modest bump in the percentage of schools earning A’s, from 3 to 8 percent over the past two years.

Table 8: Distribution of indicators-met ratings, all Ohio schools, 2016–17 and 2017–18

| Indicators-met rating | % of schools (2016–17) | % of schools (2017–18) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| A | 3% | 8% |
| B | 6% | 6% |
| C | 3% | 5% |
| D | 11% | 13% |
| F | 77% | 69% |

A State Board of Education committee recommended earlier this year that the legislature eliminate the indicators-met subcomponent. This is a worthwhile idea and one suggested in Fordham’s report *Back to the Basics*. Indicators met is similar to the performance index—both consider pupil achievement but from different angles—the performance index is preferable, however, as it takes into account a wider spectrum of achievement. Indicators met, meanwhile, doesn’t provide an extra incentive for schools to boost the achievement of students who easily clear the proficiency bar or have little chance of reaching it. If legislators scrapped indicators met, most schools would likely see a slight boost in their overall ratings, as 570 out of 608 districts received lower indicators ratings than performance index¹⁷ (the performance index would become the achievement rating).

Gap closing

This component aims to hold schools accountable for the performance of subgroups specified in federal and state law. These include six racial/ethnic groups, ED students, English-language learners, and students with disabilities; a final “all-students” group is also added (gifted students are not included as a subgroup in gap closing). The concept behind subgroup accountability is that school-wide ratings could mask underperformance among smaller groups. ODE made three important revisions that went into effect in 2017–18:

1. Discontinued the use of proficiency rates to gauge subgroup achievement. Instead, Ohio now uses subgroup performance-index scores—a broader-based view of achievement.
2. Moved to differentiated achievement goals for each subgroup. Under the previous gap-closing design, Ohio compared subgroup proficiency rates to a single, statewide goal that applied to all subgroups. Although this maintained a uniform standard, it also led to unachievable goals and widespread F’s. Ohio now evaluates subgroup performance-index scores in relation to more realistic but escalating annual targets; the tradeoff is that it sets lower achievement targets for certain subgroups.¹⁸

- Incorporated subgroup growth results into the computations. Should schools miss a performance-index target, they can still receive full credit if a subgroup's value-added index score is +1.0 or above. Furthermore, schools can also receive full credit when a subgroup's performance-index score rises by at least 10 percent compared to the prior year.

The changes described above affected the rating distribution. Table 9 shows that less than 10 percent of Ohio schools received an A on gap closing last year, but in 2017–18, 38 percent received this rating. Meanwhile, 58 percent of schools received F's last year, but only 22 percent did so in 2017–18. Table 10 focuses on Big Eight schools: they were blanketed with F's on this measure last year (90 percent), but with a restructured component, about half of them received such a rating. Whether school ratings decline as subgroup performance-index targets increase in the coming years remains to be seen.

Table 9: Distribution of gap-closing ratings, all Ohio schools, 2016–17 and 2017–18

| Gap-closing rating | % of schools (2016–17) | % of schools (2017–18) |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| A | 9% | 38% |
| B | 14% | 24% |
| C | 9% | 9% |
| D | 11% | 8% |
| F | 58% | 22% |

Table 10: Distribution of gap-closing ratings, Big Eight schools (district and charter combined), 2016–17 and 2017–18

| Gap closing rating | % of schools (2016–17) | % of schools (2017–18) |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| A | 2% | 11% |
| B | 3% | 16% |
| C | 1% | 10% |
| D | 3% | 11% |
| F | 90% | 53% |

Though room for improvement remains, Ohio's school report cards are as solid as they have ever been. The overall rating and the A–F reporting system provides Ohioans with clear, transparent information about school performance. State leaders would err if they decided to scrap report cards, as some have recently proposed.¹⁹ Nevertheless, policymakers could—and should—continue to fine tune Ohio's report cards; to this end, we suggest concentrating on two refinements:

- *Eliminate indicators met.* Ohio should fully phase out the use of proficiency rates for district- and school-accountability purposes and instead use the performance index to hold schools accountable for student achievement.
- *Rework the grading system for value-added.* A large majority of schools receive either A's or F's on this measure, with relatively few schools receiving ratings in the middle categories. To create a system that better portrays the wide range of performance on this measure, state policymakers should consider revising the grading scale that translates index scores into ratings or explore other methods of converting value-added data into ratings.

These recommendations, along with a few others that remain relevant, are covered in Fordham's report-card analysis, published last December.²⁰

Analysis of statewide data

Turning now to further analysis of the results from the 2017–18 report cards, this section of the report provides an overview of statewide achievement trends for the past three years, along with analyses of Ohio districts’ and schools’ overall, value-added, and performance-index ratings. In general, we find that proficiency rates are improving statewide but achievement gaps between less-advantaged students and their peers persist. District and school ratings show variation in performance across the state, with suburban schools faring best on both measures of pupil achievement and growth, while urban schools tend to lag.

Student achievement

With the same assessments in place for three straight years, it’s now possible to track student achievement trends over time. Figures 8 and 9 display statewide proficiency data in two selected grades—fourth grade to show elementary school achievement and seventh grade for middle school.²¹ In fourth grade, proficiency rates have risen by eight percentage points in ELA and four points in math since 2015–16. A similar trend emerges in seventh grade: ELA proficiency has increased by nine percentage points relative to 2015–16 and five in math. Figure 10 displays an uptick on the statewide performance-index score, a metric that combines results from various state exams. The positive trends on these tests are indeed promising, though it remains to be seen whether they will correspond to trends on other exams, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Figure 8: Statewide proficiency rates in fourth grade, 2015–16 to 2017–18

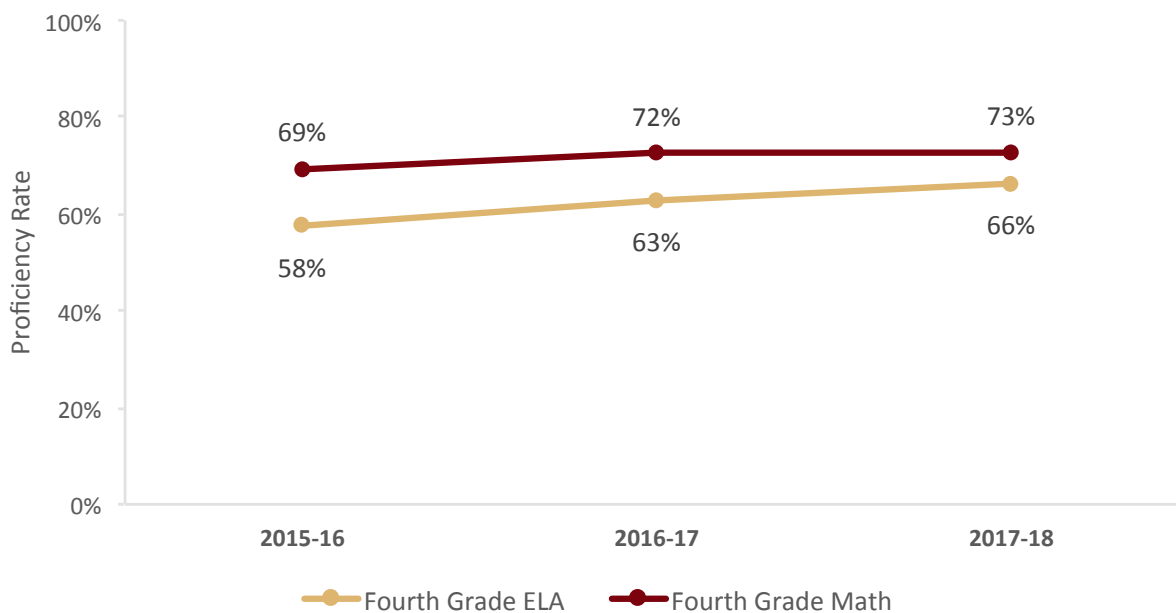


Figure 9: Statewide proficiency rates in seventh grade, 2015–16 to 2017–18

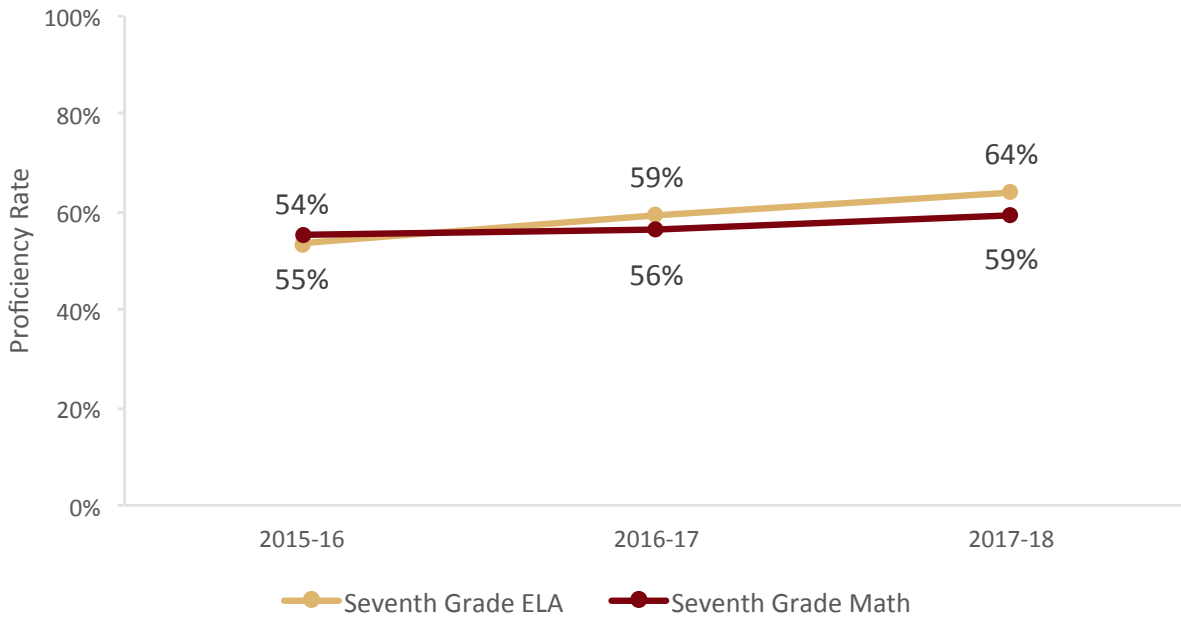
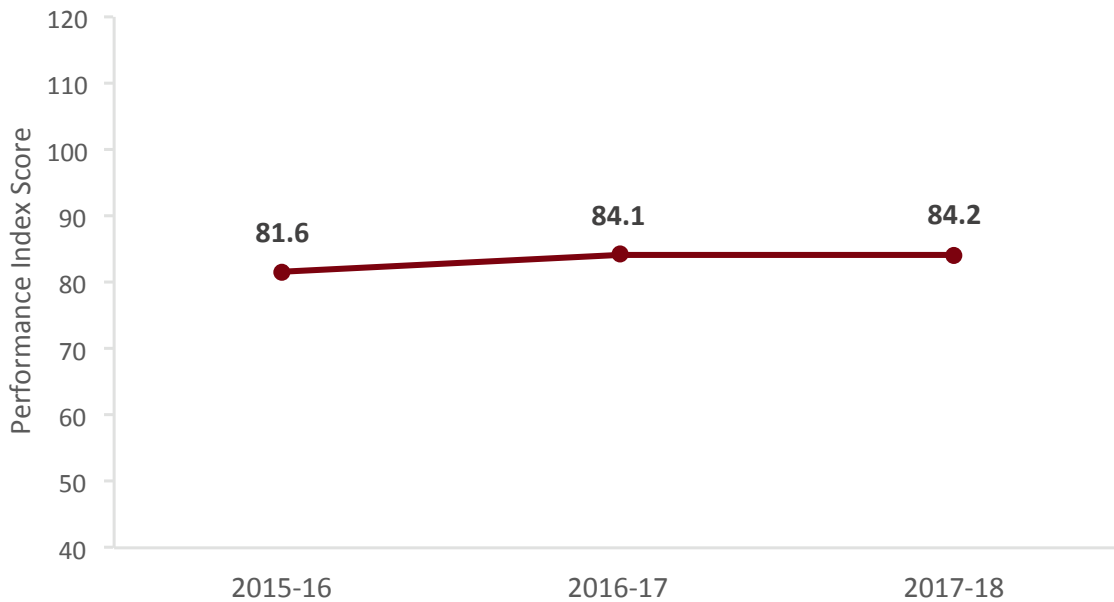


Figure 10: Statewide performance-index scores, 2015–16 to 2017–18



Ohio, like the rest of the nation, has large achievement gaps between less-advantaged students and their peers. As the next two figures show, gaps are visible both in relation to pupils’ race/ethnicity and by ED status. Statewide proficiency rates on ELA exams for Ohio’s black students fall thirty-eight percentage points below those of Asian or Pacific Islander students—the top-performing subgroup—and forty-six points below in math. Somewhat smaller, though still substantial, gaps exist for Hispanic and multiracial students. Figure 12 focuses on the differences between ED students and their peers, showing a proficiency gap of thirty-one percentage points in ELA and twenty-eight points in math. Narrowing these gaps by improving the outcomes of less-advantaged pupils (not by lowering the ceiling, of course) should remain central to reform efforts; they should also be kept in mind as we consider the ratings of Ohio districts and schools.

Figure 11: Statewide proficiency rates by race/ethnicity, 2017-18

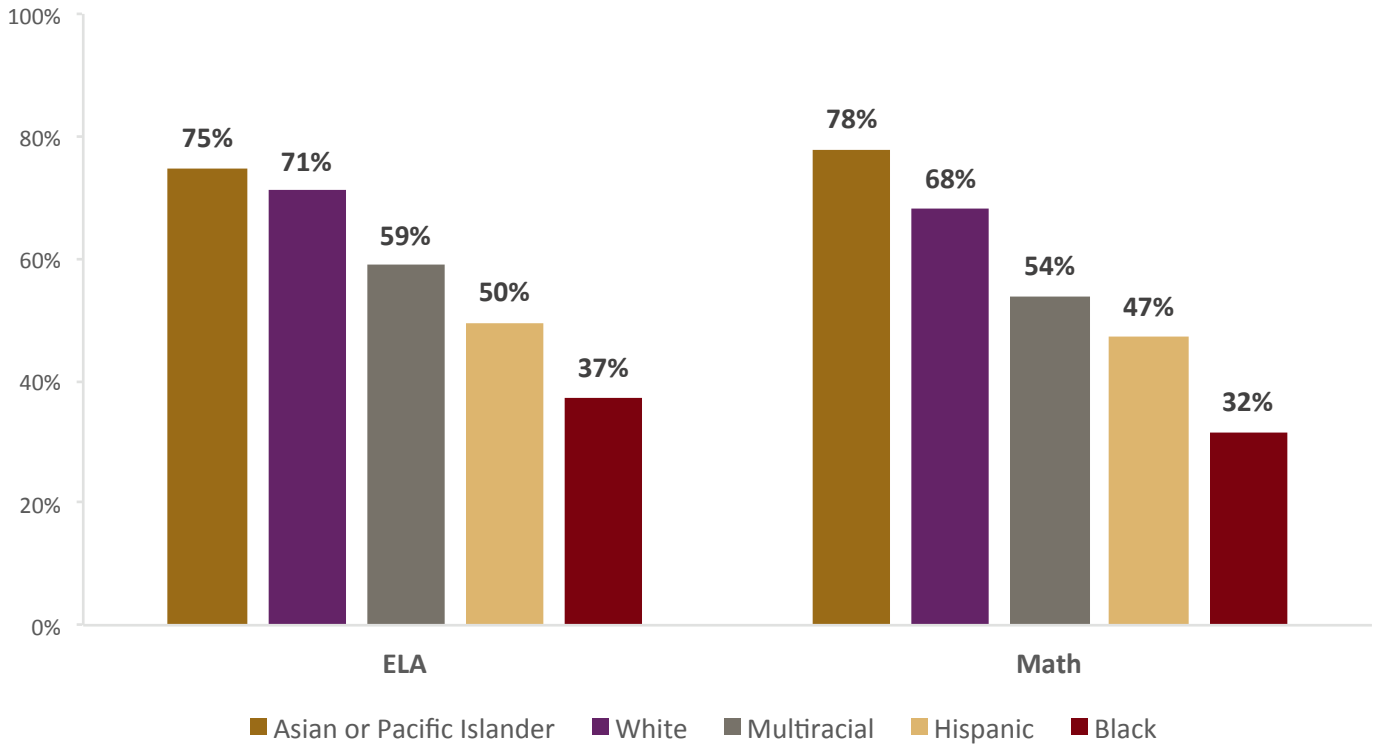
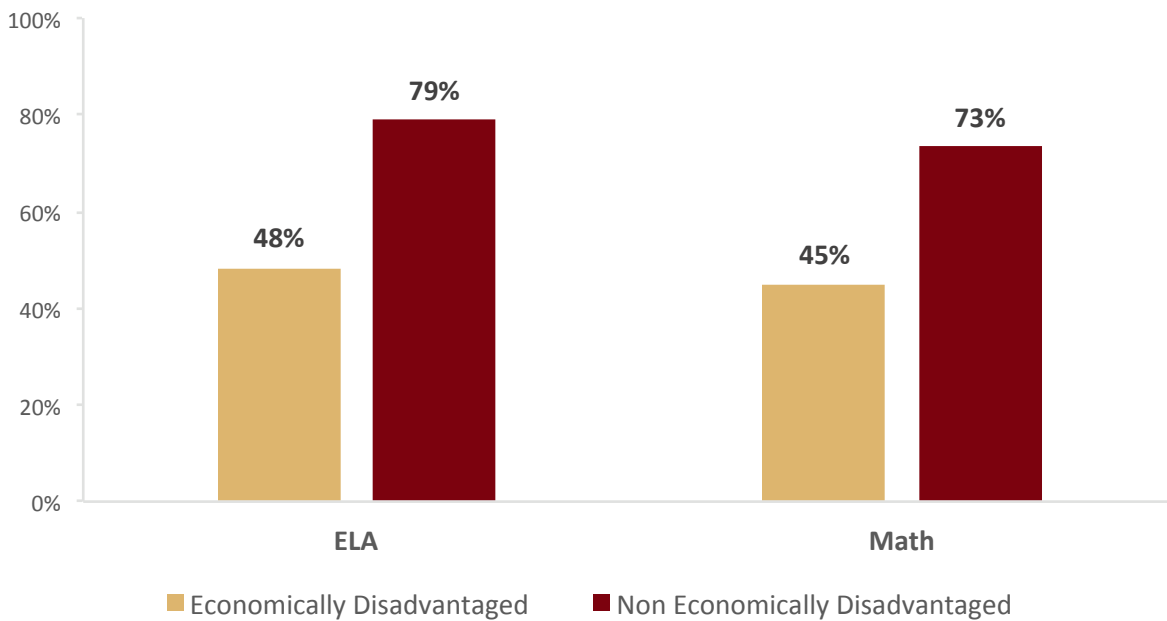


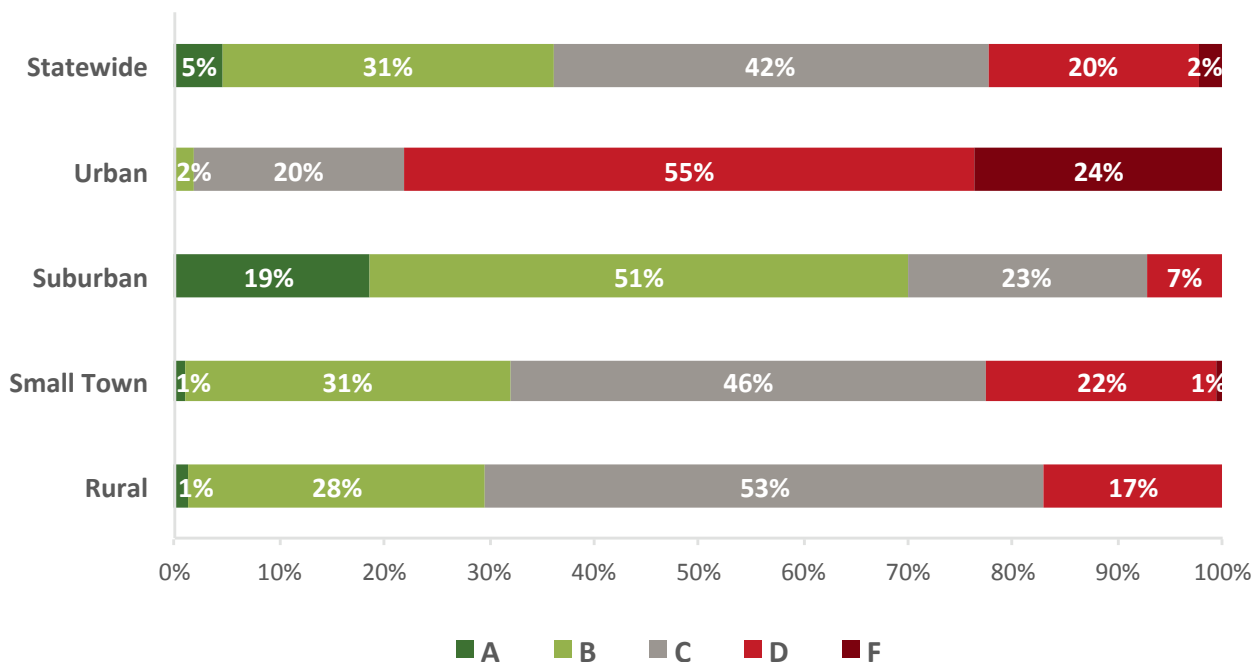
Figure 12: Statewide proficiency rates by economically disadvantaged status, 2017-18



District ratings

District ratings offer local communities a sense of how their schools and students perform. In terms of overall ratings, more than 90 percent of Ohio districts receive middling ratings, with a C being most common. Only a few districts receive the top mark—5 percent earn an A—while 2 percent receive overall F's. To examine how ratings vary across districts, we use the ODE's typology system that classifies districts as urban, suburban, small town, and rural based on various school-enrollment and other socioeconomic data.²² On the overall rating, suburban districts fare best: 70 percent receive solid A's and B's, while urban districts, which face higher levels of poverty, receive mainly D's and F's (79 percent). Small-town and rural districts receive similar overall ratings, mostly B's and C's. The higher overall ratings for more affluent suburbs can be partly explained by a rating system that places an emphasis on achievement-based measures such as the performance index, graduation rates, and markers of postsecondary success. But as we'll see in the next figure, suburban districts also outperform urbans on a measure that is less tied to district demographics.

Figure 13: Distribution of overall ratings, all Ohio districts and by their typology, 2017–18



Note: Districts are defined as urban, suburban, small town, and rural based on ODE's district typologies; this also applies for figures 14 through 19. Note that forty-seven districts, including small cities and inner-ring high-poverty districts, are included in the urban typology, along with the Big Eight districts. Numbers on this figure and the other horizontally stacked charts that follow may not add to 100 percent, due to rounding.

The next chart displays the overall value-added ratings for all Ohio districts. As noted earlier in the discussion on the value-added component, the measure yields mostly A's or F's, and this is especially visible in the district-level data. The figure also shows higher value-added ratings among suburban districts (62 percent A's) compared to their urban counterparts (just 15 percent); meanwhile, almost half of the state's small-town and rural districts receive A's on the value-added measure.

Figure 14: Distribution of value-added ratings, all Ohio districts and by their typology, 2017-18

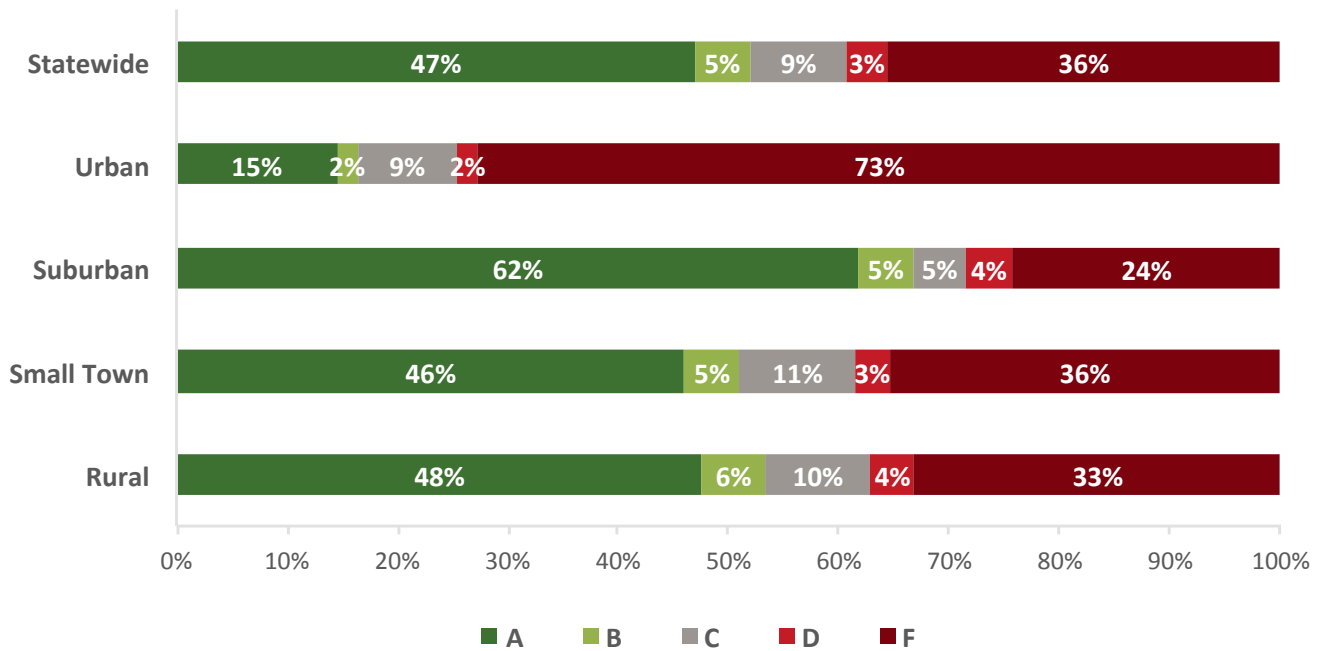
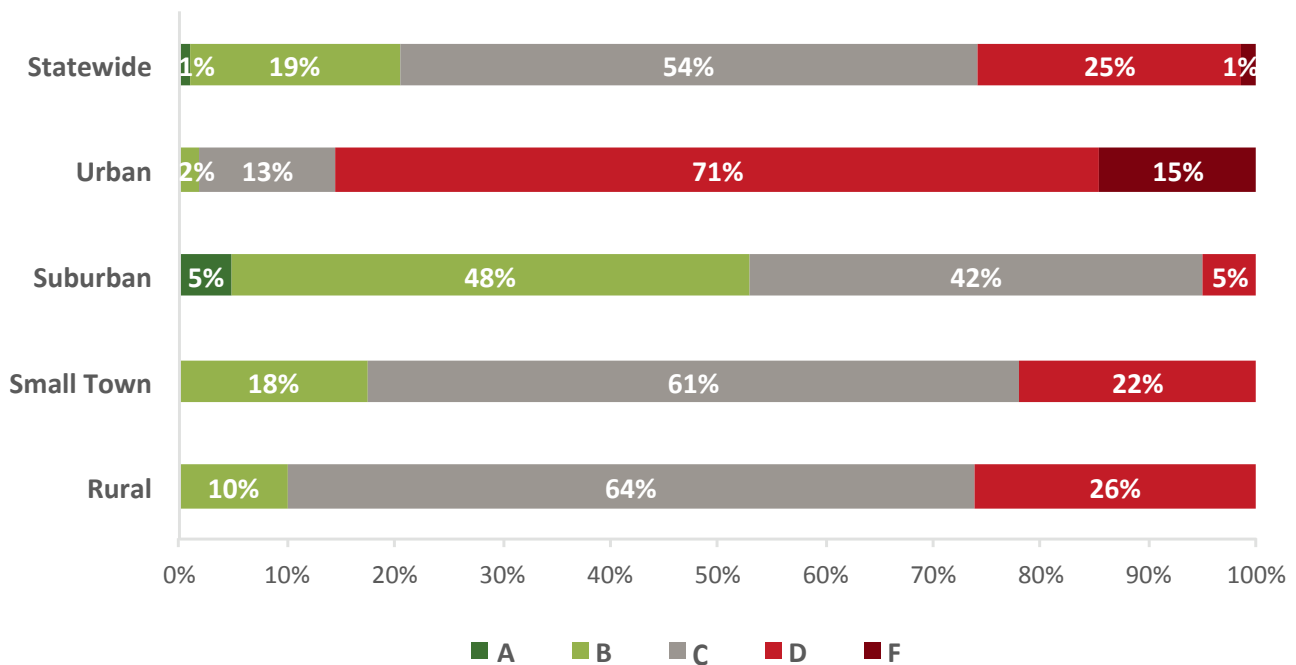


Figure 15 shows districts' performance-index ratings, a measure of achievement on state exams. Unlike value-added, A's and F's are far less common on the performance index. Statewide, a slight majority of districts receive C's on this component, with 20 percent earning an A or B and another 26 percent receiving a D or F. When broken down by typology, suburban districts stand out on this metric—53 percent are rated A or B (most of which are B's)—while urban districts perform poorly as a group, reflecting the achievement gaps noted above and perhaps less-effective schools, as well.

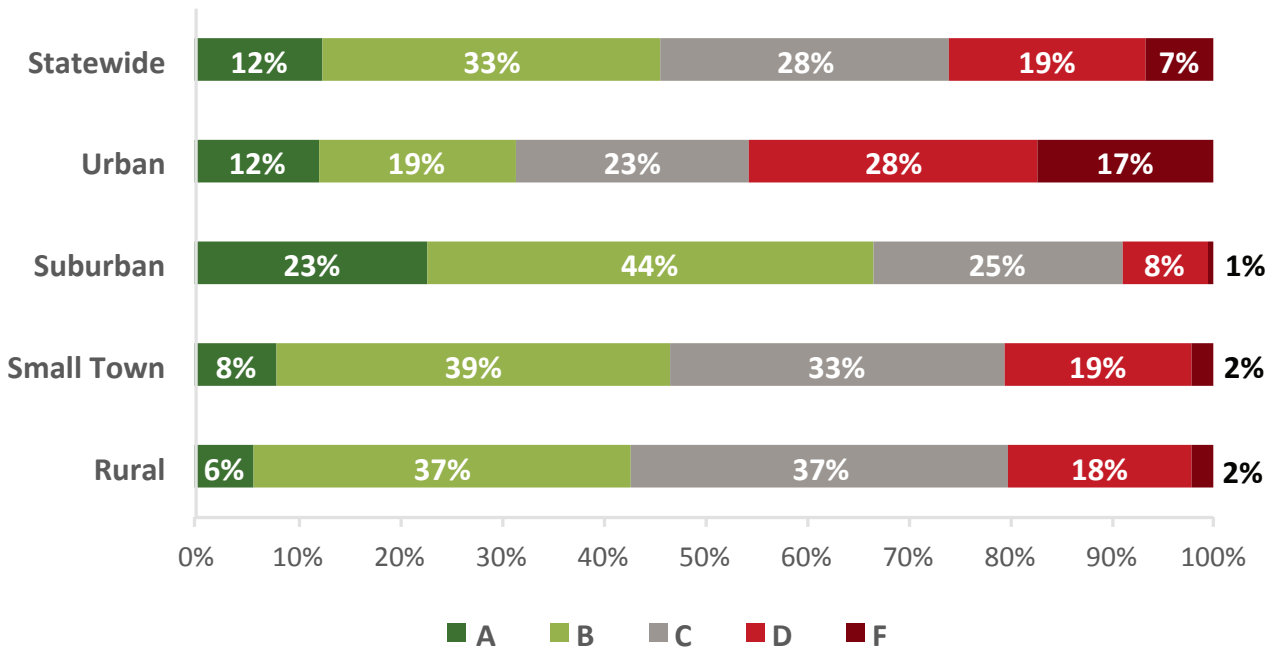
Figure 15: Distribution of performance-index ratings, all Ohio districts and by their typology, 2017-18



School ratings

For many parents, school-level ratings are more relevant than those of their local district. Families often want to know how students in their own child’s school are progressing—and some wish to use these ratings to inform their decisions about where to enroll their children. Figure 16 considers Ohio schools’ overall ratings (public charters are not included in these figures; their results are discussed in the following section). Interestingly, the school-level results are slightly higher than those at a district level; for example, the most common overall school rating is a B (33 percent), rather than a C for districts. Moreover, the school-level data pick up more bright spots among urban schools—31 percent earn overall A’s or B’s—while just 2 percent of urban districts receive those high marks. Akin to the district data, suburban public schools have the highest percentage of top-rated schools (23 percent A’s), while urban schools lag behind (12 percent). Small-town and rural schools’ overall ratings are mostly B’s and C’s.

Figure 16: Distribution of overall ratings, all Ohio schools and by their typology, 2017-18



The next figure focuses on the value-added ratings for schools in Ohio. The results show that schools in all quarters of the state can and do perform well on this measure: 50 percent of suburban schools and 29 percent of urban schools receive A’s. On the other hand, 46 percent of urban schools receive F’s, as do 26 percent of suburban schools. The large proportions of A’s and F’s again mirror the district-level data, though the rating distribution isn’t quite as compressed at the school level, with more B–D ratings for schools than districts.

Figure 17: Distribution of value-added ratings, all Ohio schools and by typology, 2017-18

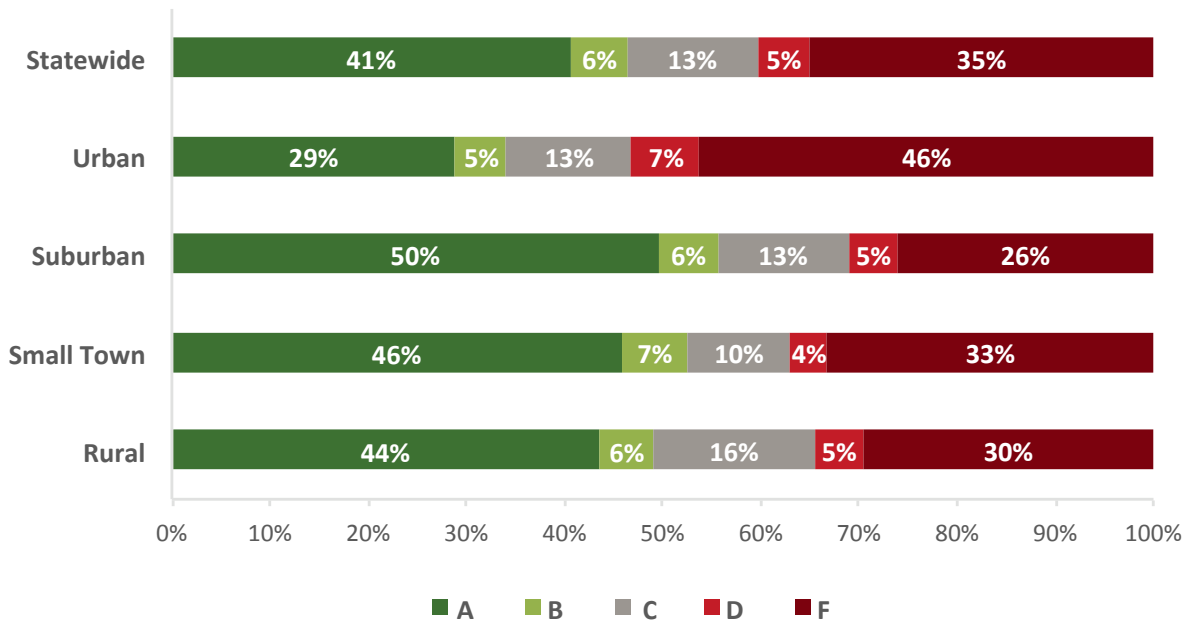
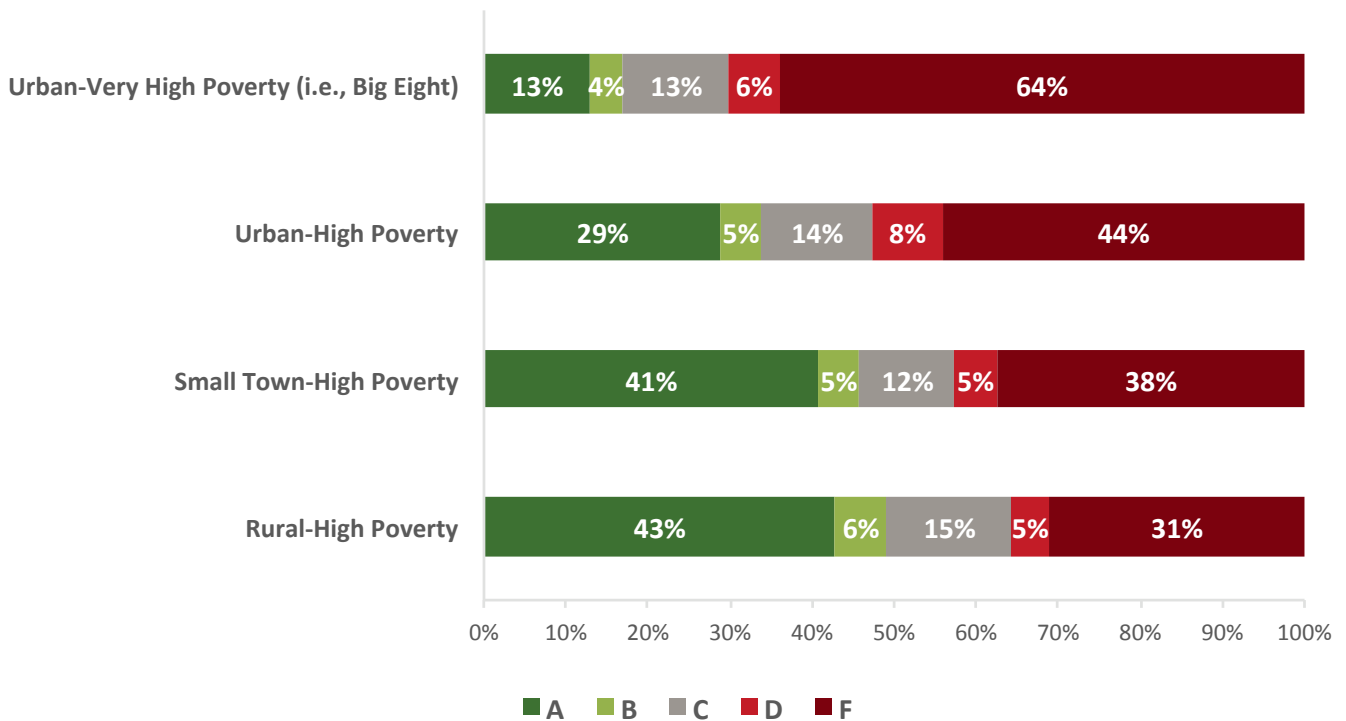


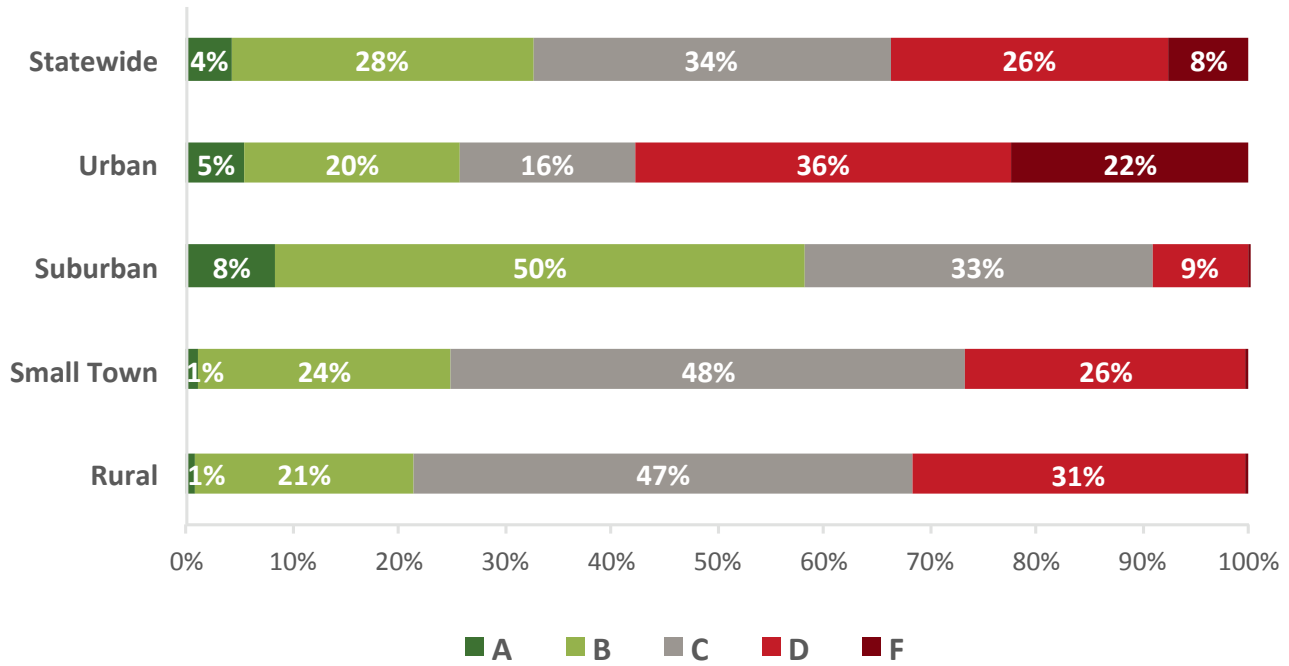
Figure 18 offers a more detailed look at the value-added ratings across Ohio, this time concentrating on the schools in high-poverty districts, as defined by ODE's typology system that splits urban, suburban, small-town, and rural districts into two poverty tiers (figure 17 and others show combined results). The reason for exploring these data is to see whether there is a divergence in the performance of schools with somewhat comparable poverty levels. Here, we see that high-poverty rural and small-town schools outperform those in Ohio's high-poverty urban communities, which include schools in small cities such as Zanesville or Mansfield and inner-ring suburbs such as Huber Heights near Dayton. High-poverty rural and small-town schools also fare better than schools located in the very high-poverty Big Eight districts (just 13 percent A's and 64 percent F's).

Figure 18: Distribution of value-added ratings among Ohio high-poverty schools, by typology, 2017-18



Lastly, Figure 19 displays the school-level performance-index ratings, which again show that suburban schools outperform their counterparts across the state.

Figure 19: Distribution of performance-index ratings, all Ohio schools and by typology, 2017–18



Analysis of “Big Eight” data

The Big Eight districts—Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown—have historically served significant numbers of Ohio’s lowest-income and minority students. In 2017–18, these eight districts enrolled 25 percent of the state’s ED pupils and 41 percent of its black and Hispanic students. Since the inception of Ohio’s charter school program in 1998, these districts have also been the locale for most of the state’s charter schools. Over the years, we, like other analysts, have documented large and troubling achievement gaps between Big Eight students and their peers statewide. As we’ll see below, that pattern continues to this day. We have also tracked the performance of Big Eight charter schools as they’ve grown to serve more students in these communities. Generally, we’ve found that these charters perform much like nearby district schools, though in recent years, 2017–18 included, there are signs that Big Eight charters may be improving student learning at a slightly faster pace than their district school counterparts.

The following analyses examine the achievement and growth outcomes within the Big Eight—as a whole and broken down by charter and district schools. The latter analysis is meant to show how Ohio’s urban charters stack up to similarly situated district schools. These comparisons should not, however, be seen as a rigorous evaluation of the charter sector; that type of analysis requires student-level data and statistical methods that compare very similar students.²³

Achievement in the Big Eight districts

As shown in the previous section, student achievement in urban areas lags behind the rest of the state, yet the gaps are largest across the Big Eight.²⁴ Figures 20–23 show district proficiency rates in ELA and math in two selected grades (charter students are not included in these figures, though they achieve at similar levels, as indicated by figure 30). In fourth-grade ELA, all Big Eight districts post proficiency rates below the statewide average of 66 percent, with Cincinnati students performing the best in this group (53 percent). Encouragingly, seven of the eight districts made improvements on fourth-grade ELA relative to the prior year, and some of these improvements are rather substantial, such as Dayton’s and Youngstown’s double-digit gains. Similarly, on fourth-grade math, all Big Eight districts post proficiency rates below the statewide average of 73 percent, with three districts tying for the top rate in this group (Akron, Canton, and Cincinnati). Unlike the fourth-grade ELA results, however, only Canton and Cleveland register modest math improvements compared to the year prior.

Figure 20: Fourth-grade ELA proficiency rates, Big Eight districts, 2016–17 and 2017–18

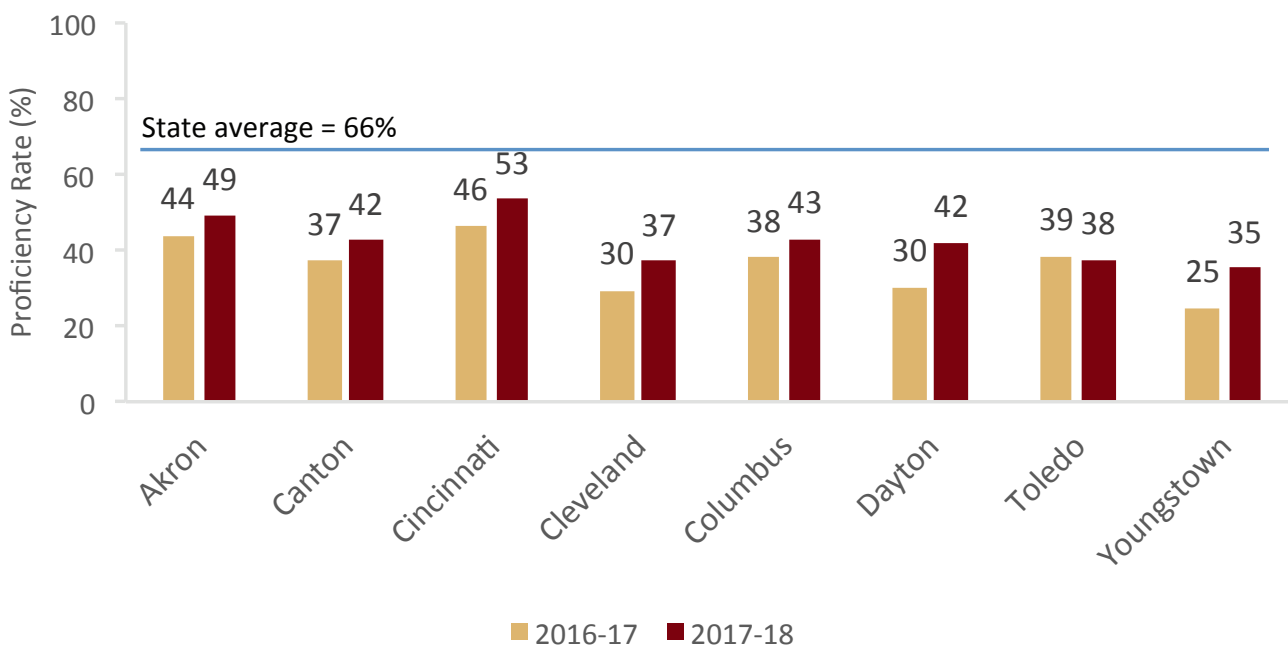
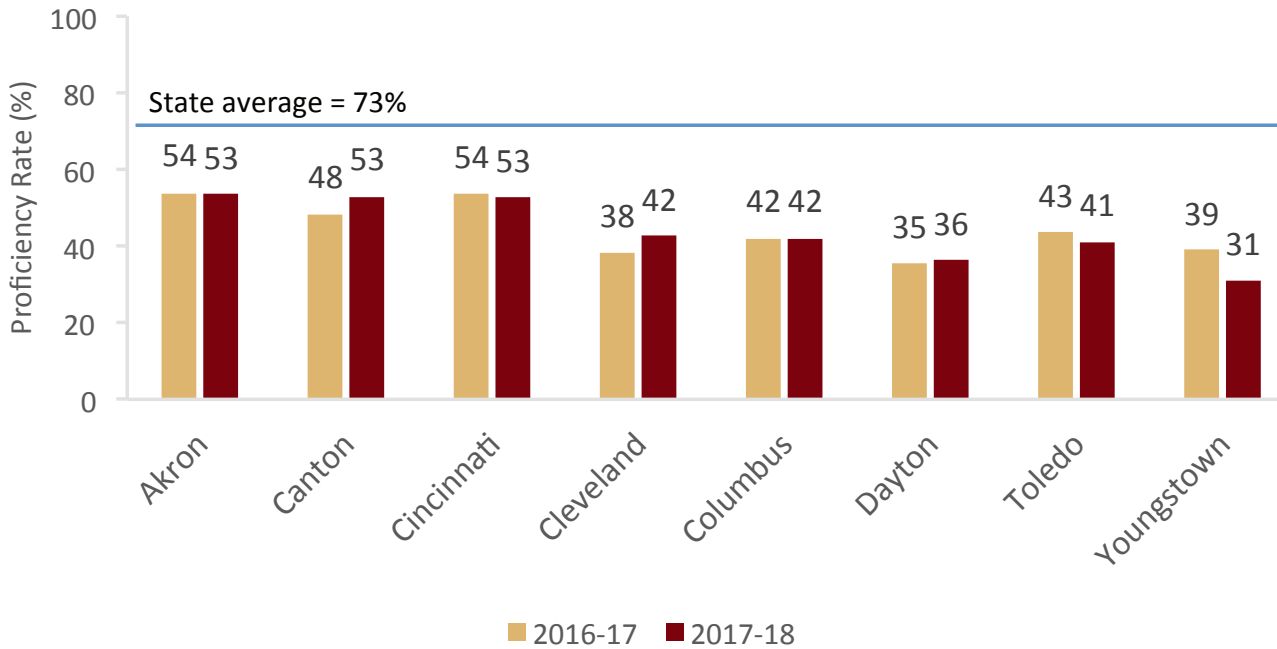


Figure 21: Fourth-grade math proficiency rates, Big Eight districts, 2016-17 and 2017-18



Figures 22-23 display ELA and math proficiency data for seventh grade. In ELA, Big Eight districts record proficiency rates that lag the statewide average by about 20 to 30 percentage points. Cincinnati is again the strongest performer in this group, with 46 percent proficient, while Youngstown falls furthest behind (30 percent). Akin to fourth-grade ELA, there are signs of improvement, with increasing seventh-grade ELA proficiency rates across all Big Eight districts. On the math side, Big Eight districts fall below the statewide average proficiency rate of 59 percent, with Cincinnati once more posting the highest rates among the Big Eight (40 percent). Compared to the year prior, small improvements are observed across these districts in seventh-grade math.

Figure 22: Seventh-grade ELA proficiency rates, Big Eight districts, 2016-17 and 2017-18

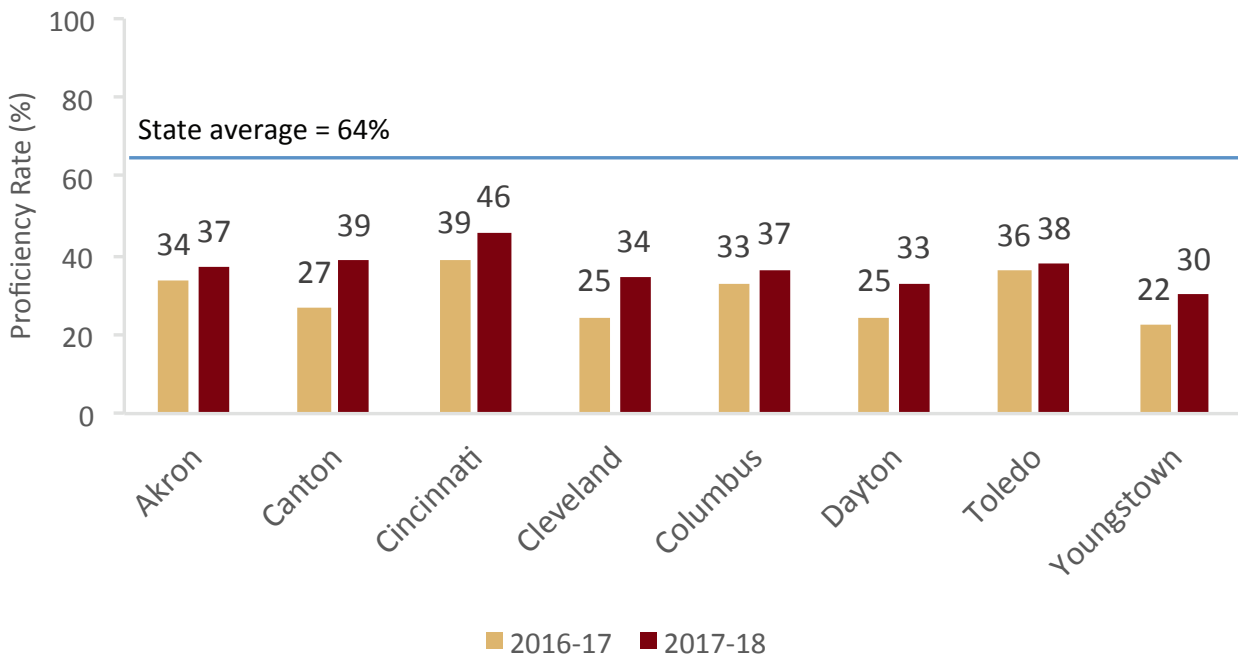
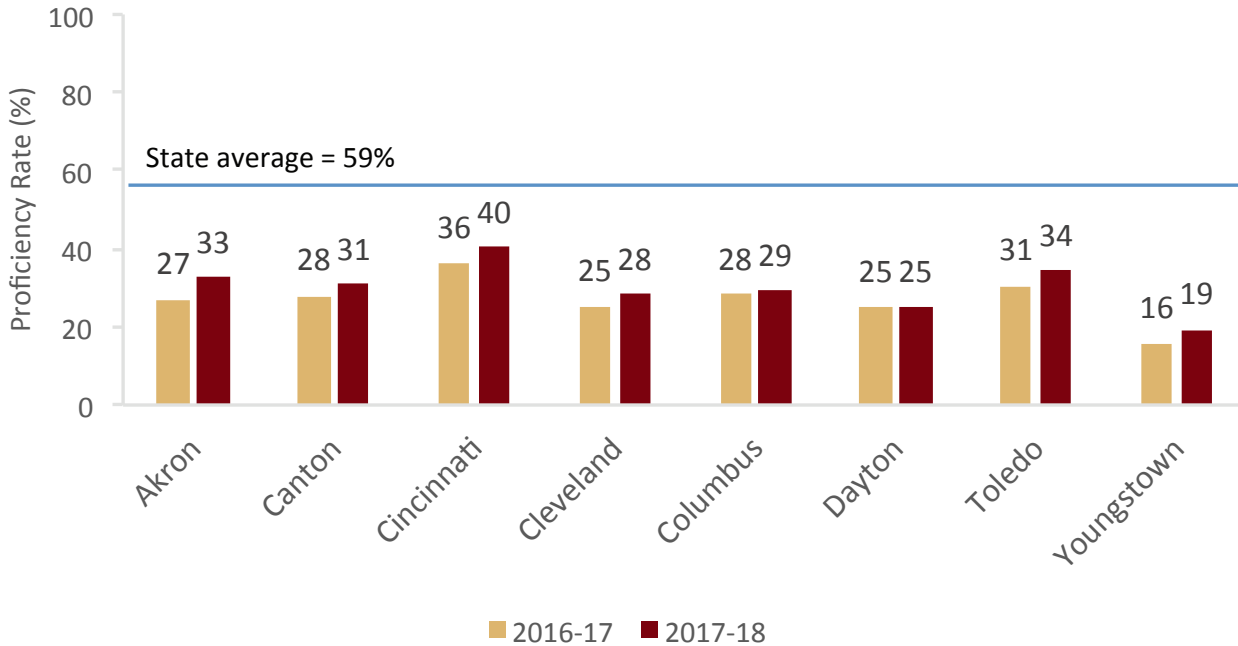
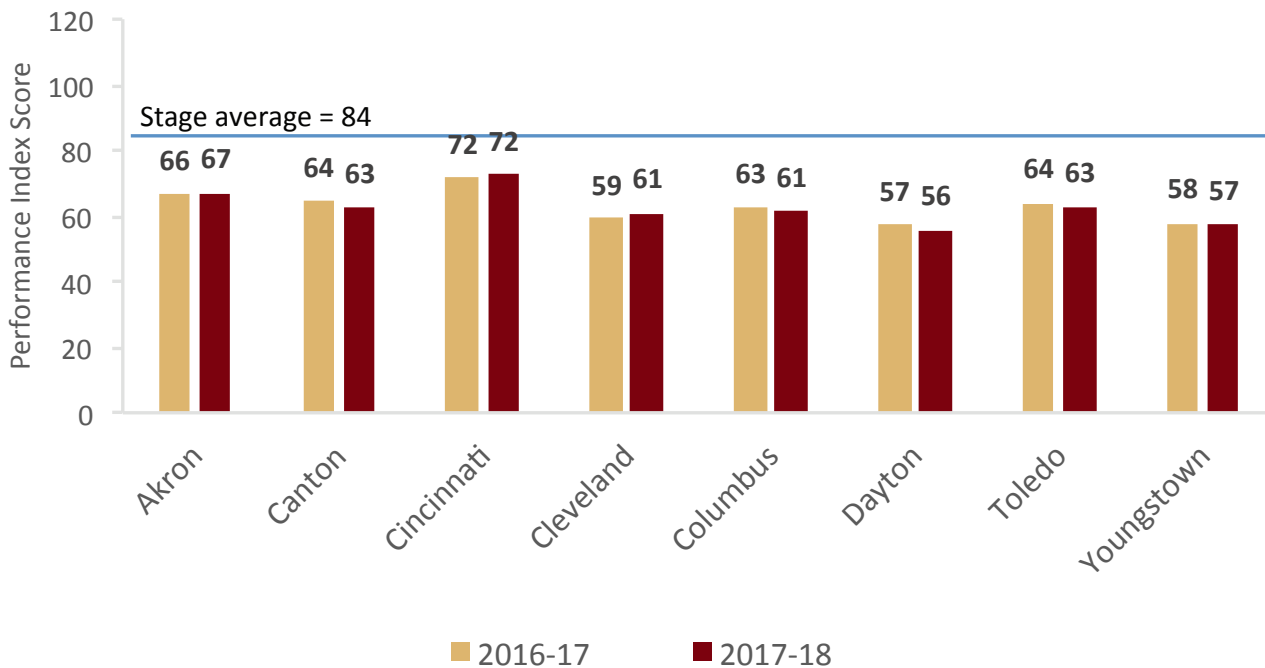


Figure 23: Seventh-grade math proficiency rates, Big Eight districts, 2016-17 and 2017-18



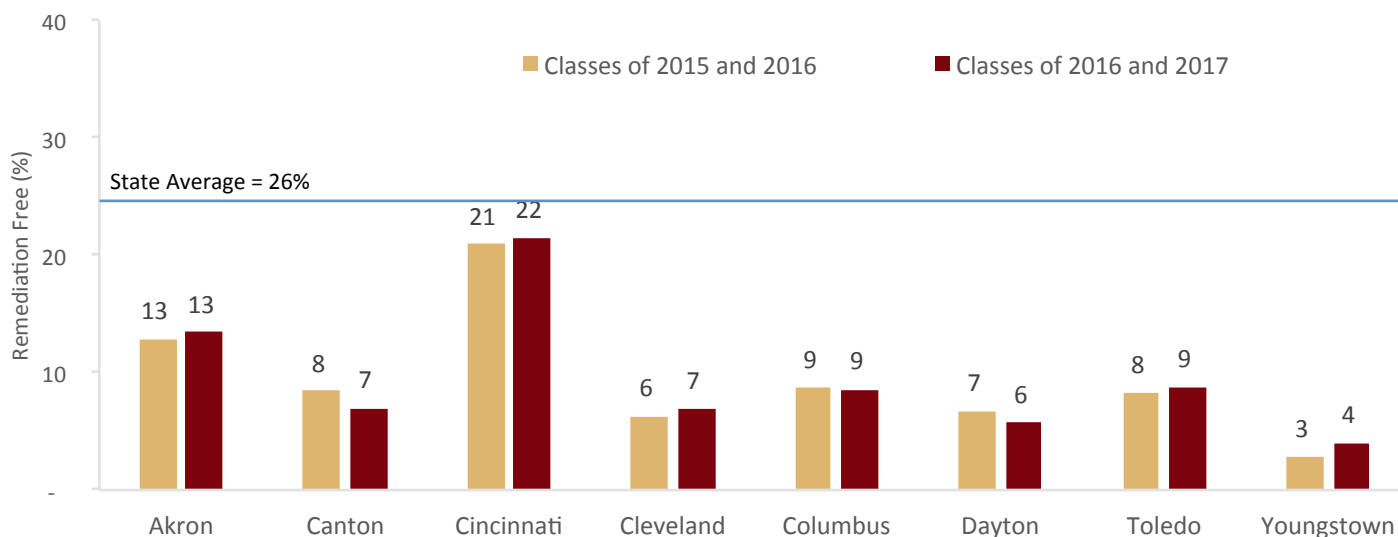
As a widely understood metric, proficiency rates offer a straightforward and vivid picture of how students in the Big Eight fare on state exams. But they're also limited due to the coarseness of the two-category reporting system—either proficient or not—and it can be difficult to capture student performance on a wide range of grades and subjects in an efficient manner. To provide another picture of achievement in the Big Eight, figure 24 displays the performance-index scores. All the Big Eight districts have lower scores than statewide average score of eighty-four, with Cincinnati faring best with a score of seventy-two and Dayton worst (at fifty-six). The year-to-year changes on this measure are small across all the Big Eight, with just one- or two-point increases or decreases. This mirrors the trend in the statewide performance-index score, which inched upwards from 84.1 in 2016-17 to 84.2 in 2017-18.

Figure 24: Performance-index scores, Big Eight districts, 2016-17 and 2017-18



State test scores remain important yardsticks of achievement, yet they remain one dimension in a larger picture about the success of Ohio students. Figures 25–28 show data about the college or career readiness of Big Eight high school students (again showing only students in district-operated schools). Given the lower state exam results, it is unsurprising to see that Big Eight students underperform on the ACT and SAT. To report these college-entrance exam results, Ohio focuses on the percentage of students earning “remediation-free” scores on all portions of ACT or SAT. The Ohio Department of Higher Education sets these benchmarks and, if met, guarantee that college entrants are able to take credit-bearing courses. Figure 25 shows that all eight districts have remediation-free rates below the statewide average of 26 percent, with Cincinnati reporting the highest percentage among the Big Eight (22 percent) and Youngstown the lowest (4 percent). Due to voluntary participation in these exams, the data from these classes do not reflect the proportion of remediation-free students relative to districts’ entire student populations; a clearer view should surface as all Ohio juniors are now required to take the ACT or SAT, starting with the class of 2018.

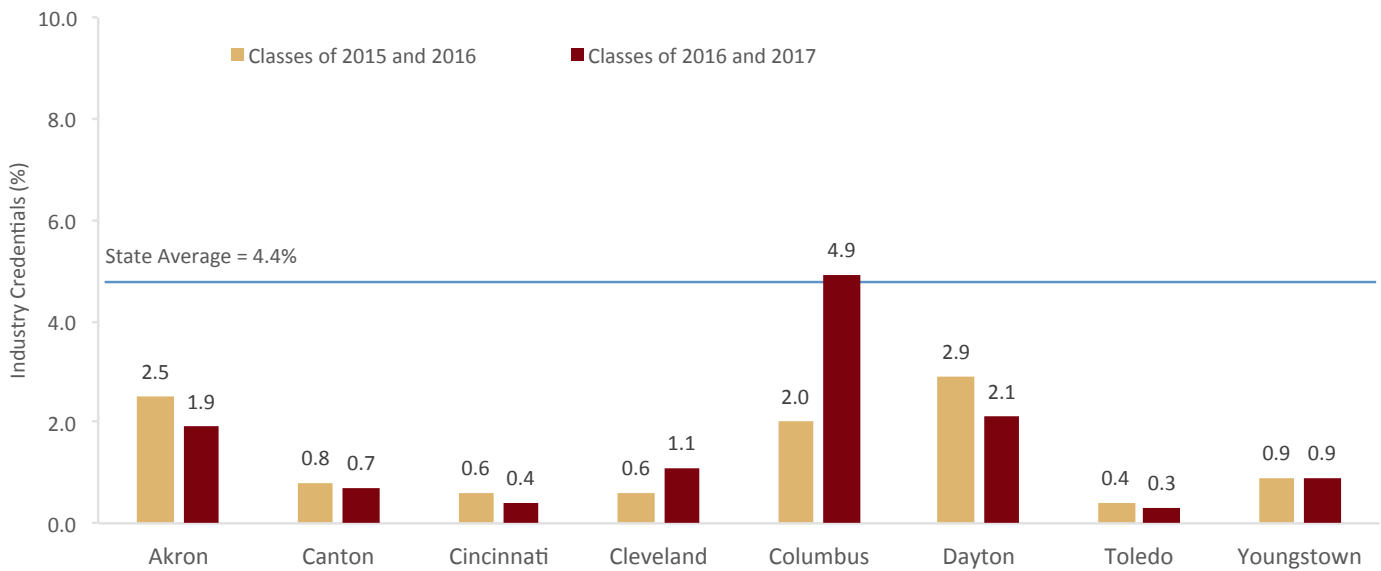
Figure 25: Percentage of students achieving ACT or SAT remediation-free scores, Big Eight districts, classes of 2015–17



Note: Ohio combines remediation-free data across two graduating classes: the 2016–17 report cards reflect results from the classes of 2015 and 2016, and the 2017–18 report cards reflect results from the classes of 2016 and 2017. Not all students from these classes participated in these exams. The remediation-free benchmarks are set by the Ohio Department of Higher Education; for more, see ODE, “[2017-18 Technical Documentation—Prepared for Success](#)” (April 2018). Both high school graduates and nongraduates are included in the statistics above and in figures 26-28 (for example, they’re all included in the denominators).

The next figure displays the percentage of students who graduate having earned industry-recognized credentials—a marker of preparedness for skilled careers after high school. It shows that very small fractions of Big Eight students earn such credentials. Only Columbus has a higher percentage of its students receiving credentials (4.9 percent) than the statewide average of 4.4 percent. Credentialing rates may increase starting with the class of 2018, as students are encouraged to pursue such credentials as a pathway to high school graduation.

Figure 26: Percentage of students earning industry-recognized credentials, Big Eight districts, classes of 2015–17

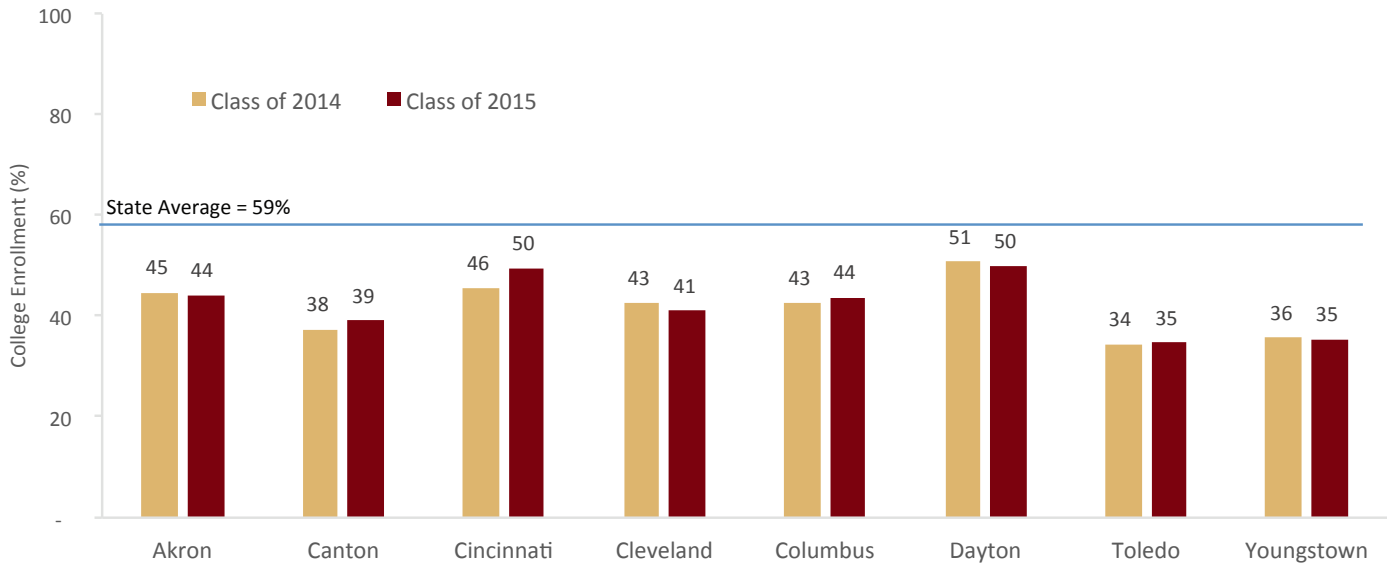


Note: Ohio combines industry-credentialing rates across two graduating classes: the 2016–17 report cards reflect results from the classes of 2015 and 2016, and the 2017–18 report cards reflect results from the classes of 2016 and 2017. For more on industry-credential programs, see ODE, “[Industry Recognized Credentials](#)” (webpage accessed September 2018).

The final set of charts in this section provide data about college enrollment and completion; as in figures 20–26, they reflect only data for pupils enrolled in district-operated schools. Figure 27 shows that college-enrollment rates across the Big Eight are lower than the statewide average of 59 percent. Dayton, which performs poorly on state and college-admission exams, fares somewhat better on this indicator of postsecondary success, with a 50 percent enrollment rate, tying Cincinnati for tops among the Big Eight. Enrollment rates are lowest among students in Canton, Toledo, and Youngstown, ranging from 35 to 40 percent.

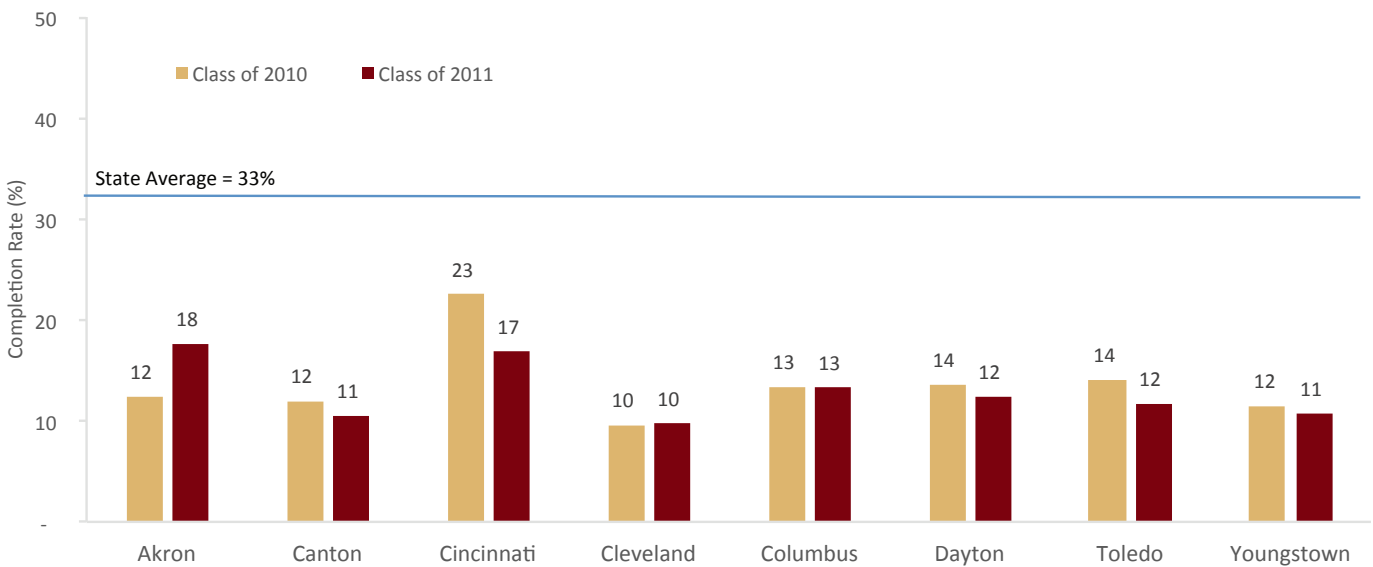
Meanwhile, figure 28 displays college-completion rates, showing that approximately 10 to 20 percent of students from these districts complete a college degree; Akron and Cincinnati have the highest percentage of college completers, at just over 15 percent. Not all students, of course, even enroll in college, as figure 27 indicates—and note that different cohorts of students are being tracked in these figures (an attrition rate cannot be derived). In sum, figure 28 indicates that the likelihood of college completion among young people from Ohio’s Big Eight is perilously low.

Figure 27: College-enrollment rates, Big Eight districts, classes of 2014 and 2015



Note: The college-enrollment rates reflect the percentage of students in the classes of 2014 and 2015 who enrolled in a two- or four-year college or university within two years of high school. For more on these data, see ODE, [“2017-18 Technical Documentation—College Enrollment within 2 Years”](#) (January 2018).

Figure 28: College-completion rates, Big Eight districts, classes of 2010 and 2011



Note: The college-completion rates reflect the percentage of students in the classes of 2010 and 2011 who complete at least an associate’s degree within six years of high school. For more on these data, see ODE, [“2017-18 Technical Documentation—College Graduation within 6 Years”](#) (January 2018).

In terms of overall ratings, six of the Big Eight school districts received overall F’s, while Akron and Cincinnati received D’s. The component ratings, too, are largely bleak across the board—D’s and F’s, with only a few C’s and one B in improving at-risk K-3 readers.

Table 11: Big Eight district ratings, 2017-18

| District | Overall | Achievement | Progress | Gap closing | Graduation rate | Improving at-risk K-3 readers | Prepared for success |
|------------|---------|-------------|----------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Akron | D | D | F | F | F | C | F |
| Canton | F | F | D | F | F | D | F |
| Cincinnati | D | D | F | F | F | C | D |
| Cleveland | F | F | F | F | F | C | F |
| Columbus | F | F | F | F | F | D | F |
| Dayton | F | F | D | F | F | D | F |
| Toledo | F | F | D | F | F | D | F |
| Youngstown | F | F | D | F | F | B | F |

District and charter school ratings

While the district-level data and ratings provide a helpful birds-eye view of performance in the Big Eight, the school-level data provide a closer look at how performance varies from school to school. They also help us understand the quality of public charter schools, which are mostly located in the Big Eight. As table 12 shows, 57 percent of all Ohio charters are located in the Big Eight (a few more are dropout-recovery charters). Taken together, Big Eight charters educate just over half of the state’s charter students—but they educate a much larger fraction of brick-and-mortar, non-dropout-recovery charter students (79 percent).

Table 12: Breakdown of Ohio charter schools in 2017-18

| | Number of schools | Number of students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| General education schools | | |
| Big Eight: brick and mortar | 194 | 53,925 |
| Non-Big Eight: brick and mortar | 61 | 14,414 |
| Statewide online schools | 5 | 20,775 |
| Dropout-recovery schools | 80 | 14,066 |
| TOTAL | 340 | 103,180 |

Note: Big Eight charter schools are identified based on having a school address in these cities.

Charters have a presence in all the Big Eight cities, though the share of public school enrollment varies from city to city. As table 13 indicates, Dayton has the largest charter share (31 percent), while Canton has the smallest (7 percent). The table below excludes dropout-recovery charters, some of which are located in the Big Eight, as well as students from these districts who attend online charter schools. Dropout-recovery charter schools receive alternative report cards and are thus not included in the following analyses (an overview of their results appears in the appendix, table A1). 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; however, virtual charters’ achievement and growth results are reported in table A2.

Table 13: Big Eight district and charter school enrollments, 2017–18

| City | N district schools | N district students | N charter schools | N charter students | Charter share |
|------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Akron | 42 | 20,650 | 15 | 2,145 | 9.4% |
| Canton | 22 | 8,614 | 5 | 676 | 7.3% |
| Cincinnati | 56 | 34,243 | 18 | 6,283 | 15.5% |
| Cleveland | 104 | 38,107 | 48 | 12,512 | 24.7% |
| Columbus | 109 | 49,828 | 54 | 16,341 | 24.7% |
| Dayton | 28 | 13,176 | 20 | 6,022 | 31.4% |
| Toledo | 50 | 22,202 | 26 | 6,861 | 23.6% |
| Youngstown | 14 | 5,188 | 7 | 1,857 | 26.4% |

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 enrollment.

Figures 29–31 summarize data on the three key school ratings for the Big Eight, with district and charter schools shown separately. The first chart shows a modest amount of differentiation in overall ratings, with a handful of A or B rated schools—6 and 12 percent of district and charters, respectively—while another 20 percent in both sectors receive a solid C overall rating. Combining C and above ratings, Big Eight charters hold a slight advantage over their district counterparts (32 to 26 percent). Yet among the Big Eight schools, the most frequent rating is a D for both district and charter schools, and finally, 36 and 30 percent of district and charter schools, respectively, receive overall F's.

Figure 29: Distribution of overall ratings, Big Eight charter and district schools, 2017–18

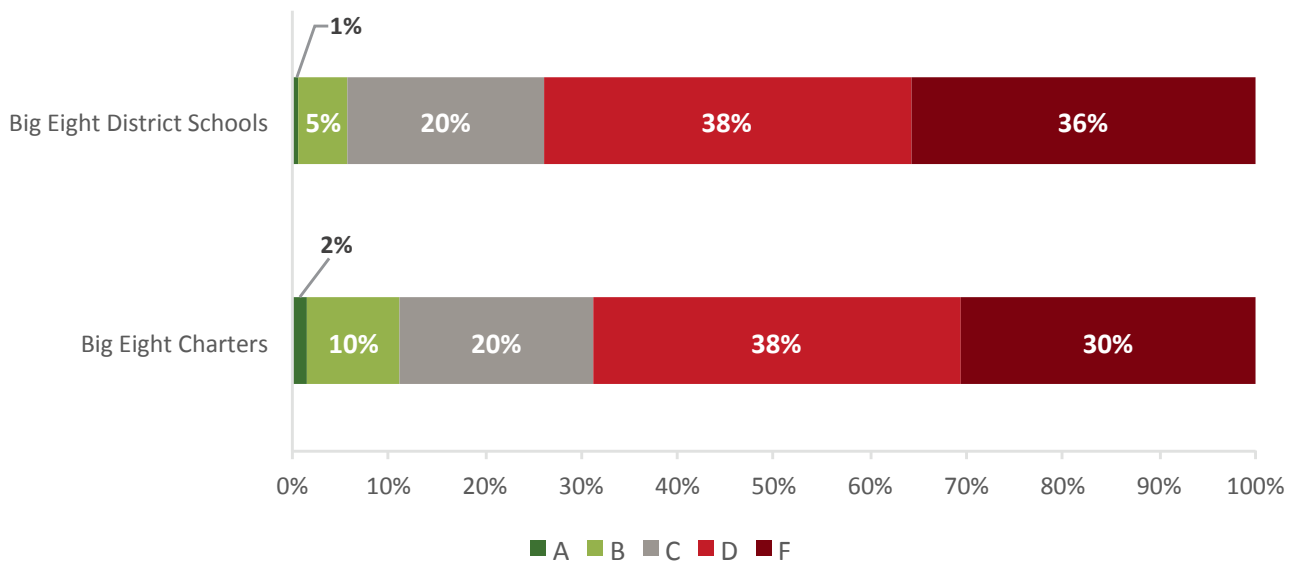
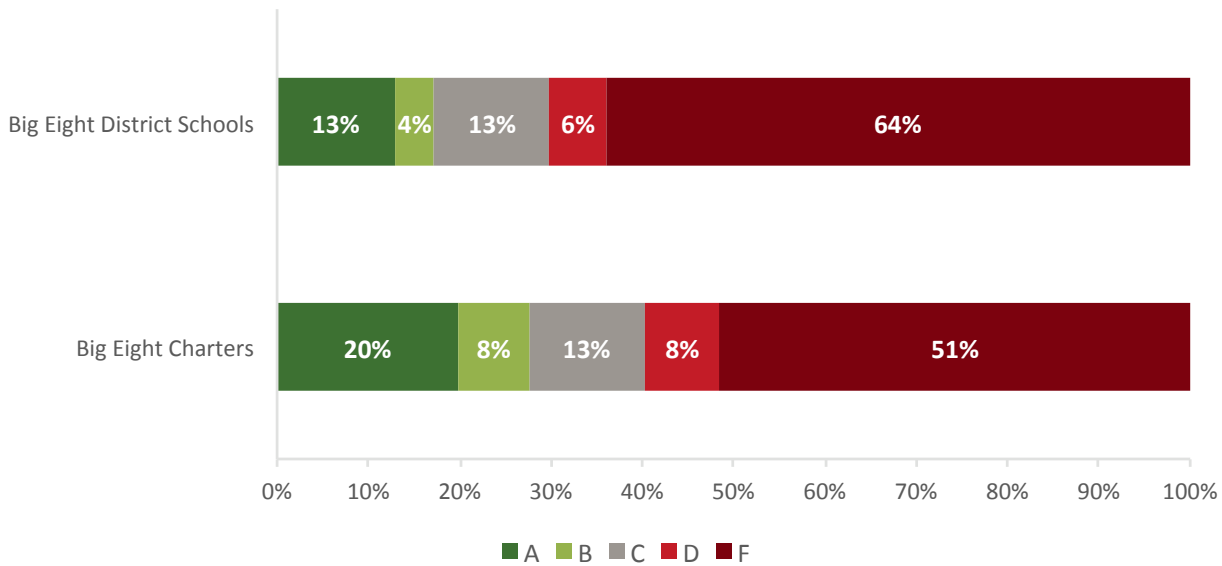


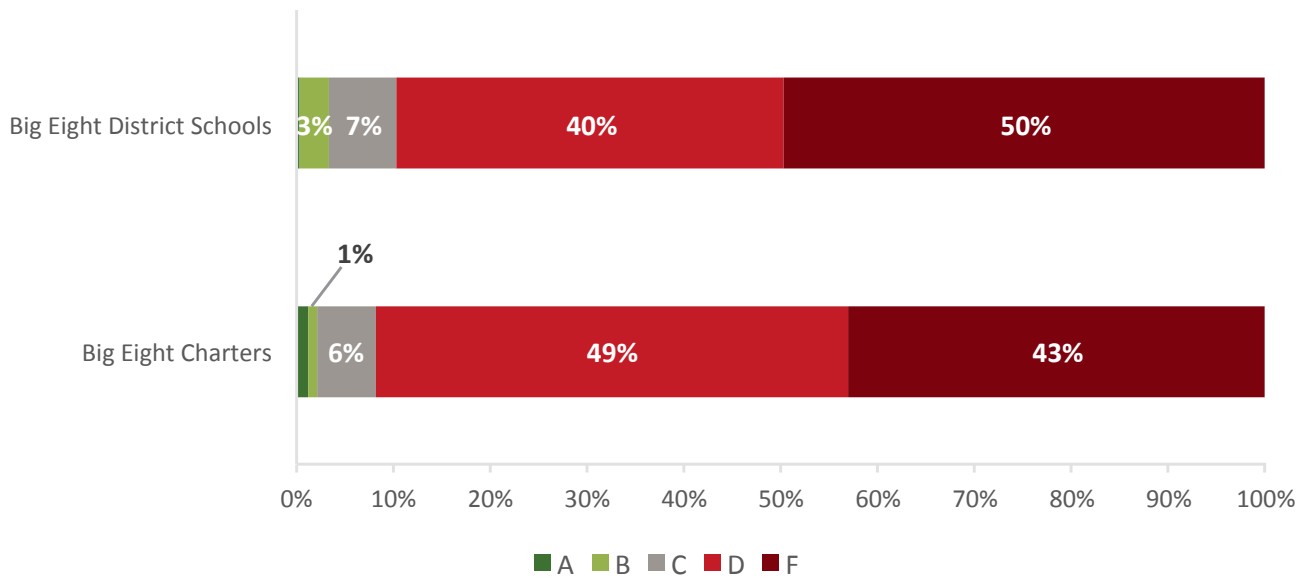
Figure 30 displays the breakdown of value-added ratings for Big Eight schools. Among district schools, 13 percent receive A's on this measure, as do 20 percent of charters. On the other hand, a majority of Big Eight schools receive F's—64 and 51 percent of district and charter schools, respectively. The value-added results slightly favor charters, a pattern also seen in the past two years' worth of data;²⁵ they also help to explain the higher overall charter ratings seen in the figure above.

Figure 30: Distribution of value-added ratings, Big Eight charter and district schools, 2017-18



The performance-index ratings of both Big Eight district and charter schools are systematically low, reflecting in part the achievement gaps discussed throughout this report. On the district side, 10 percent earn a C or above performance-index rating, while a mere 8 percent of charters receive such marks.

Figure 31: Distribution of performance-index ratings, Big Eight charter and district schools, 2017-18



The final set of charts shows a breakdown of ratings in each of the Big Eight cities, this time with district and charter schools combined to provide a general picture about the quality of the public school opportunities available to students in each city. On the overall rating, Cincinnati leads, with the highest percentage of its public schools rated C or above—one-third of them achieve these marks—reflecting the district’s relatively high performance on achievement-based metrics. Youngstown and Canton, on the other hand, have the lowest percentages of schools rated C or above (15 and 18 percent, respectively). The school-quality picture changes when considering the value-added ratings shown in Figure 33. On this measure, Toledo and Dayton have the highest percentages of schools earning A’s (22 and 21 percent, respectively), while Cincinnati lags behind its Big Eight counterparts (just 4 percent earn A’s). Lastly, the performance-index ratings across all these cities are generally low, with large majorities of schools blanketed with D’s and F’s. Akron and Cincinnati lead, with 18 and 14 percent of schools earning a C or

above performance-index rating, while Dayton and Youngstown fall furthest behind on this metric. A more detailed breakdown of charter-district performance by Big Eight city is available in the appendix (table A3).

Table A4 in the appendix contains a listing of Big Eight schools that we believe can fairly be considered high quality—that is, schools that either receive a C or above overall rating in the current year or an A rating on value-added for two consecutive years. Out of 588 Big Eight schools with such ratings, 164 schools receive C or above overall ratings, and another thirteen schools are added via A's on value-added. There are sixty high-quality public charter schools and 117 district schools; taken together, they represent 30 percent of all Big Eight public schools.

Figure 32: Overall ratings by Big Eight city, district and charter schools combined, 2017–18

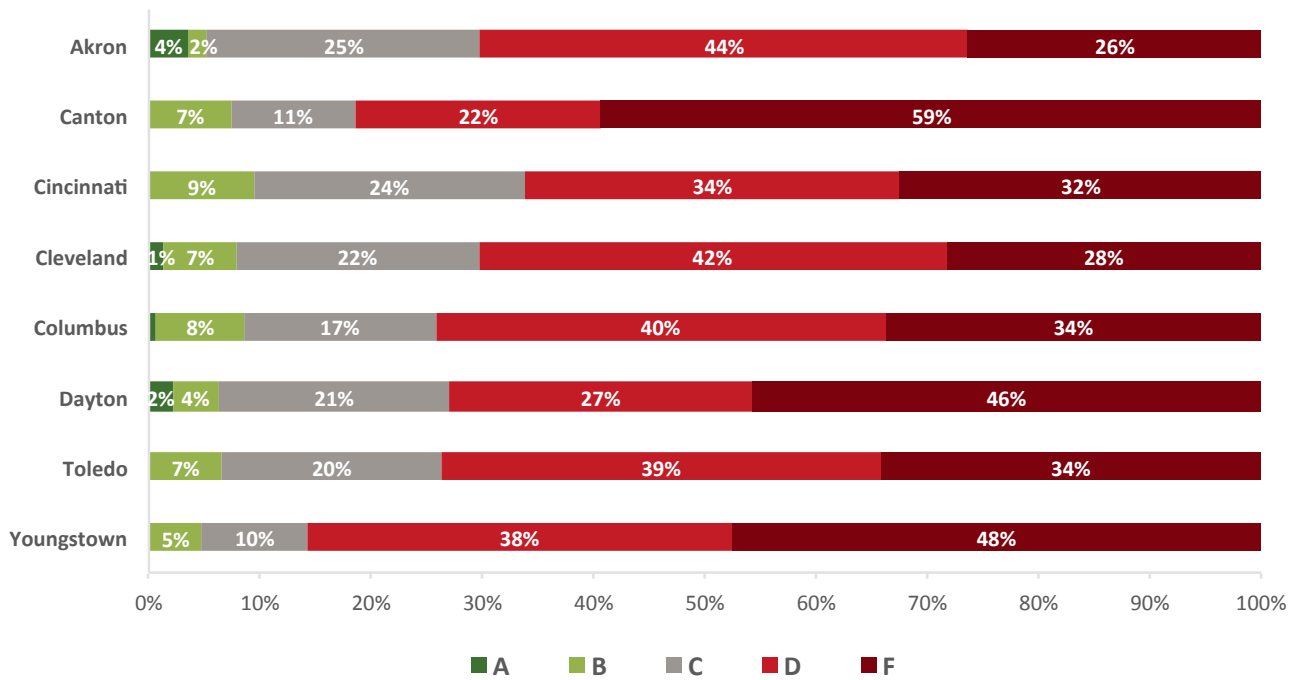


Figure 33: Value-added ratings by Big Eight city, district and charter schools combined, 2017–18

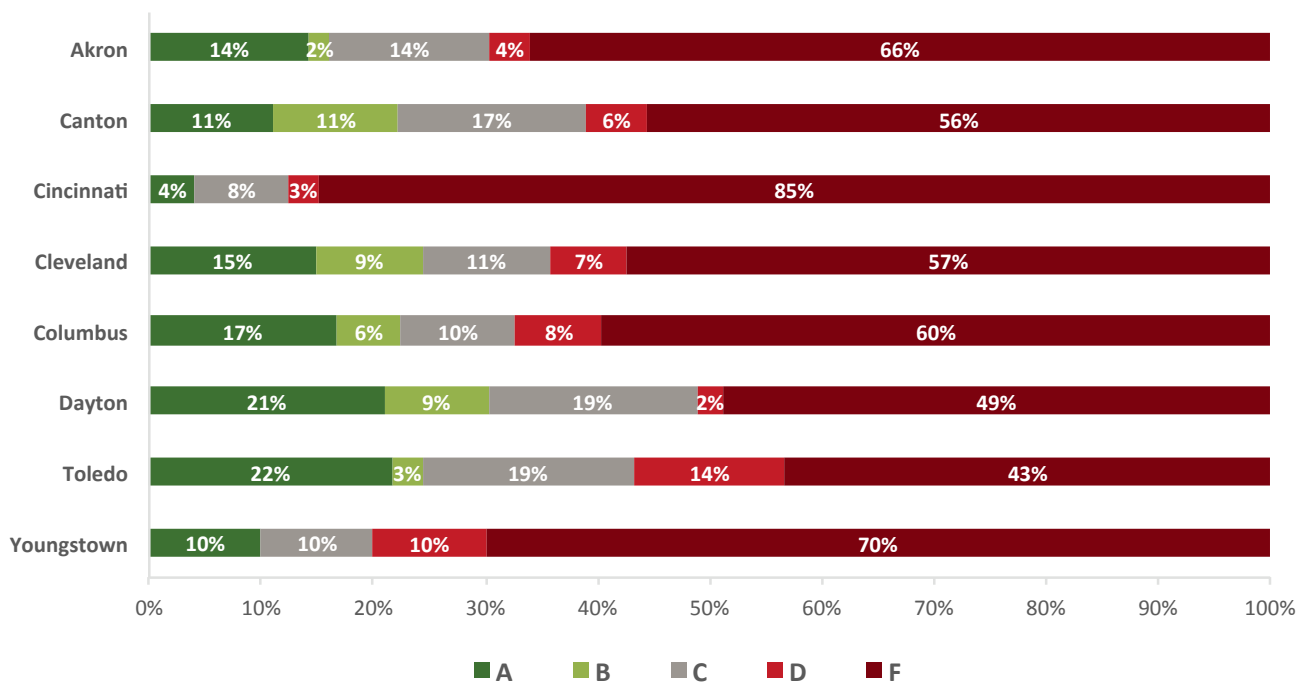
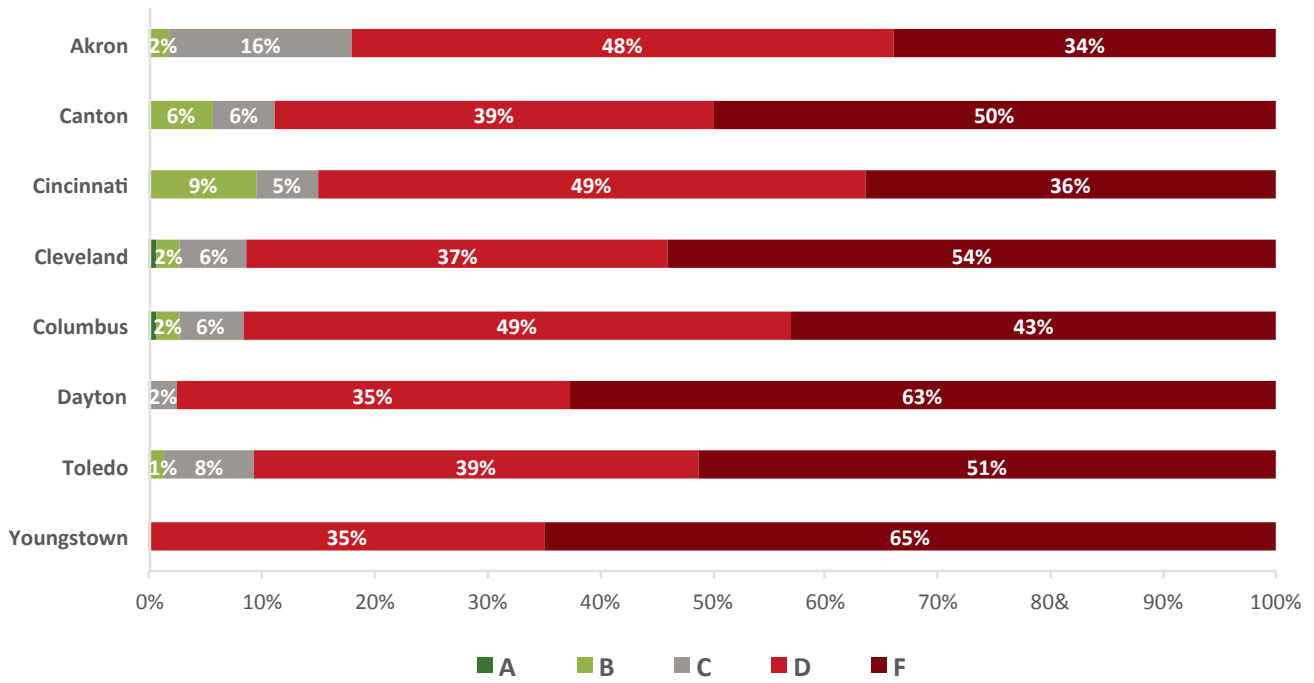


Figure 34: Performance-index ratings by Big Eight city, district and charter schools combined, 2017-18



Conclusion

On the heels of the 2017–18 report-card release, a more common reaction among school officials was to dismiss the results. For example, a Columbus City Schools spokesperson told the *Dispatch*, “There’s far more to measuring a child’s learning and growth than what’s scored on the state’s annual Local Report Card.”²⁶ It’s true that schools and students are more than test scores. And it’s also true that standardized testing—and report cards built on them—won’t win many popularity contests, now or perhaps ever, especially so from educators being held to account. But all of this misses the point. These policies—standards, assessments, and accountability—are designed to provide an unfiltered look at what students know and are able to do in core academic subjects. And when viewed that way, it’s impossible to conclude that the bright spots are sufficient to dispel the gloom.

The results from the 2017–18 iteration of report cards—our annual checkup on the academic health of the state—provide yet another reminder about where Ohio is and how far it needs to go to enable all students excel academically. A few final thoughts are in order.

Achievement gaps: To many education veterans, achievement gaps might feel like yesterday’s news. But the gaps persist, whether we examine the proficiency of students of color, low-income pupils, or students attending Big Eight schools.²⁷ State exam results from the past year indicate that three in five young people, representing tens of thousands of students, in cities like Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Youngstown are falling short of the state’s proficiency goals in English and math. Many more are off track in reaching more rigorous CCR targets. Tragically, their current academic struggles are likely to diminish their prospects down the road.

Quality high-poverty schools: Akin to previous year’s analyses, we have again uncovered high-quality, high-poverty schools where students are achieving at high levels and/or making significant growth over time. Yet Ohio has not done nearly enough to support the growth of more high-quality schools such as these, particularly quality charter schools that face massive funding shortfalls compared to their nearby districts—thousands of dollars less per pupil in funding—a lack of resources that hampers their ability to successfully replicate and serve more children in need of a great education. In the coming years, Ohio leaders must work tirelessly to expand high-quality schools, including opening more excellent district schools (such as the promising one recently opened in Akron through the generosity of LeBron James), public charter schools, and independent STEM-focused public schools.

Failing schools: This analysis also reveals a significant number of woefully underperforming schools in the Big Eight—schools where students both fall short of proficiency and demonstrate no appreciable growth over time. For Ohio families, we hope that the overall F’s will nudge them to work to improve their local schools and, if that fails, to consider a higher-quality alternative, should one exist. State and local authorities should aggressively support the growth of high-performing schools, enabling chronically low-performing schools to go away.

Though not always liked and sometimes disparaged, annual school report cards and the achievement data they produce keep us grounded in reality. They provide an invaluable checkup on how many students are on track for success after high school—and now they also peer into the postsecondary outcomes of Ohio’s high school graduates. They also provide important information about school quality that can guide parents’ enrollment decisions, and they can assist policymakers and community leaders in identifying quality schools, as well as schools in need of help. Given these benefits, Ohio should remain steadfast with rigorous standards, challenging assessments, and transparent report cards.

Appendix tables

Table A1: Overall ratings of Ohio’s dropout-recovery charter schools, 2017–18

| Rating | Number of dropout-recovery schools | Percentage of schools |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Exceeds standards | 5 | 6% |
| Meets standards | 56 | 70% |
| Does not meet standards | 18 | 23% |
| Not rated | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

Note: Dropout-recovery charter schools enroll a majority of students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out; they receive different report cards, with alternative metrics than schools serving the more general population. For more on the dropout-recovery report cards, see ODE, [“Ohio’s Dropout Recovery Community School Report Card”](#) (January 2018).

Table A2: Key ratings of Ohio’s statewide virtual charter schools, 2017–18

| School name | Enrollment | Overall rating | Value-added rating | Performance-index rating |
|------------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow | 4,651 | D | NR | NR |
| Buckeye On-Line School for Success | 587 | F | F | D |
| Alternative Education Academy | 1,498 | F | F | F |
| Ohio Connections Academy | 4,040 | D | F | D |
| Ohio Virtual Academy | 9,999 | D | F | D |

Note: The Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) closed in the middle of the 2017–18 school year. NR = not rated.

Table A3: Detailed charter and district school ratings for the Big Eight

The following tables provide additional data on the ratings of charter and district schools in the Ohio Big Eight. Data are shown separately for both district and charter schools, both by the percentage of schools earning each rating (the approach used in the main body of the paper—for example, figure 28 above) and as a 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.

All Big Eight

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 408 | 914 | 1 | <1 |
| B | 19 | 22 | 10 | 5 | 5,092 | 11,268 | 10 | 6 |
| C | 39 | 84 | 20 | 20 | 13,046 | 36,955 | 25 | 19 |
| D | 74 | 163 | 38 | 38 | 21,558 | 72,211 | 41 | 38 |
| F | 58 | 153 | 30 | 36 | 12,593 | 70,660 | 24 | 37 |
| Total | 193 | 425 | 100 | 100 | 52,697 | 192,008 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 36 | 52 | 20 | 13 | 12,010 | 22,192 | 23 | 12 |
| B | 14 | 18 | 8 | 4 | 4,024 | 6,679 | 8 | 4 |
| C | 23 | 51 | 13 | 13 | 5,262 | 21,934 | 10 | 12 |
| D | 15 | 25 | 8 | 6 | 4,020 | 9,415 | 8 | 5 |
| F | 92 | 262 | 51 | 64 | 26,372 | 12,7545 | 51 | 68 |
| Total | 180 | 408 | 100 | 100 | 51,688 | 187,765 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1,154 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| B | 2 | 14 | 1 | 3 | 368 | 8,971 | 1 | 5 |
| C | 11 | 28 | 6 | 7 | 3,670 | 11,580 | 7 | 6 |
| D | 90 | 165 | 49 | 40 | 29,237 | 72,849 | 57 | 39 |
| F | 78 | 205 | 43 | 50 | 17,311 | 95,690 | 33 | 51 |
| Total | 183 | 412 | 100 | 100 | 51,740 | 189,090 | 100 | 100 |

Akron

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 1 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 47 | 381 | 2 | 2 |
| B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 328 | 0 | 2 |
| C | 1 | 13 | 7 | 31 | 201 | 5,895 | 9 | 29 |
| D | 8 | 17 | 53 | 40 | 1,326 | 8,632 | 62 | 42 |
| F | 5 | 10 | 33 | 24 | 571 | 5,414 | 27 | 26 |
| Total | 15 | 42 | 100 | 100 | 2,145 | 20,650 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 1 | 7 | 7 | 17 | 201 | 3,132 | 10 | 15 |
| B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 343 | 0 | 2 |
| C | 1 | 7 | 7 | 17 | 112 | 3,578 | 5 | 17 |
| D | 1 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 137 | 383 | 7 | 2 |
| F | 11 | 26 | 79 | 62 | 1,648 | 13,214 | 79 | 64 |
| Total | 14 | 42 | 100 | 100 | 2,098 | 20,650 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 381 | 0 | 2 |
| C | 1 | 8 | 7 | 19 | 138 | 3,118 | 7 | 15 |
| D | 6 | 21 | 43 | 50 | 915 | 9,718 | 43 | 47 |
| F | 7 | 12 | 50 | 29 | 1,045 | 7,433 | 50 | 36 |
| Total | 14 | 42 | 100 | 100 | 2,098 | 20,650 | 100 | 100 |

Canton

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 428 | 0 | 5 |
| C | 1 | 2 | 20 | 8 | 180 | 704 | 27 | 8 |
| D | 1 | 5 | 20 | 22 | 133 | 1,899 | 20 | 22 |
| F | 3 | 13 | 60 | 65 | 363 | 5,583 | 54 | 65 |
| Total | 5 | 22 | 100 | 100 | 676 | 8,614 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 2 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 689 | 0 | 11 |
| B | 0 | 2 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 478 | 0 | 7 |
| C | 2 | 1 | 40 | 8 | 348 | 333 | 51 | 5 |
| D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 238 | 0 | 4 |
| F | 3 | 7 | 60 | 54 | 328 | 4,644 | 49 | 73 |
| Total | 5 | 13 | 100 | 100 | 676 | 6,382 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 193 | 0 | 3 |
| C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 285 | 0 | 4 |
| D | 1 | 6 | 20 | 46 | 180 | 2,063 | 27 | 32 |
| F | 4 | 5 | 80 | 38 | 496 | 3,841 | 73 | 60 |
| Total | 5 | 15 | 100 | 100 | 676 | 6,382 | 100 | 100 |

Cincinnati

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 7 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 6,063 | 0 | 13 |
| C | 3 | 15 | 17 | 27 | 1,180 | 8,745 | 17 | 27 |
| D | 5 | 20 | 28 | 36 | 1,797 | 9,836 | 28 | 36 |
| F | 10 | 14 | 56 | 25 | 3,306 | 9,599 | 56 | 25 |
| Total | 18 | 56 | 100 | 100 | 6,283 | 34,243 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1,787 | 0 | 5 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C | 2 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 378 | 2,238 | 6 | 7 |
| D | 1 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 607 | 364 | 10 | 1 |
| F | 15 | 47 | 83 | 85 | 5,298 | 29,673 | 84 | 87 |
| Total | 18 | 55 | 100 | 100 | 6,283 | 34,062 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 7 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 6,486 | 0 | 19 |
| C | 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 455 | 1,307 | 7 | 4 |
| D | 5 | 31 | 28 | 55 | 2,058 | 16,313 | 33 | 48 |
| F | 12 | 15 | 67 | 27 | 3,770 | 10,137 | 60 | 30 |
| Total | 18 | 56 | 100 | 100 | 6,283 | 34,243 | 100 | 100 |

Cleveland

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 304 | 303 | 2 | 1 |
| B | 6 | 4 | 13 | 4 | 1,248 | 1,435 | 10 | 4 |
| C | 13 | 20 | 27 | 19 | 3,188 | 6,277 | 25 | 16 |
| D | 19 | 45 | 40 | 43 | 6,498 | 18,709 | 52 | 49 |
| F | 9 | 34 | 19 | 33 | 1,274 | 11,383 | 10 | 30 |
| Total | 48 | 104 | 100 | 100 | 12,512 | 38,107 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 11 | 11 | 24 | 11 | 2,595 | 3,607 | 21 | 10 |
| B | 5 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 1,369 | 3,398 | 11 | 9 |
| C | 6 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 1,756 | 3,441 | 14 | 9 |
| D | 4 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 1,016 | 1,813 | 8 | 5 |
| F | 19 | 66 | 42 | 64 | 5,572 | 25,528 | 45 | 68 |
| Total | 45 | 103 | 100 | 100 | 12,308 | 37,787 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 419 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| B | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 304 | 623 | 2 | 2 |
| C | 3 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 967 | 1,612 | 8 | 5 |
| D | 26 | 30 | 57 | 29 | 7,139 | 8,245 | 58 | 25 |
| F | 15 | 66 | 33 | 63 | 3,479 | 22,761 | 28 | 68 |
| Total | 46 | 104 | 100 | 100 | 12,308 | 33,241 | 100 | 100 |

Columbus

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 57 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 13 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 3,165 | 1,208 | 19 | 2 |
| C | 28 | 18 | 18 | 17 | 4,666 | 8,379 | 29 | 17 |
| D | 66 | 48 | 43 | 44 | 5,724 | 20,827 | 35 | 42 |
| F | 46 | 40 | 30 | 37 | 2,729 | 19,414 | 17 | 39 |
| Total | 154 | 109 | 100 | 100 | 16,341 | 49,828 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 16 | 10 | 32 | 9 | 6,321 | 4,646 | 40 | 10 |
| B | 7 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 2,133 | 911 | 13 | 2 |
| C | 3 | 13 | 6 | 12 | 653 | 6,582 | 4 | 13 |
| D | 3 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 787 | 4,129 | 5 | 8 |
| F | 21 | 72 | 42 | 68 | 6,078 | 32,558 | 38 | 67 |
| Total | 50 | 106 | 100 | 100 | 15,972 | 48,826 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 735 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| B | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 64 | 899 | 0 | 2 |
| C | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 917 | 2,532 | 6 | 5 |
| D | 30 | 47 | 60 | 44 | 11,194 | 20,494 | 70 | 41 |
| F | 15 | 53 | 30 | 49 | 3,062 | 25,725 | 19 | 52 |
| Total | 50 | 108 | 100 | 100 | 15,972 | 49,650 | 100 | 100 |

Dayton

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 230 | 0 | 2 |
| B | 2 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 481 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| C | 4 | 6 | 20 | 21 | 1,678 | 3,196 | 28 | 24 |
| D | 5 | 8 | 25 | 29 | 1,257 | 3,474 | 21 | 26 |
| F | 9 | 13 | 45 | 46 | 2,606 | 6,276 | 43 | 48 |
| Total | 20 | 28 | 100 | 100 | 6,022 | 13,176 | 100 | 10 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 3 | 6 | 18 | 23 | 1,690 | 3,067 | 30 | 24 |
| B | 1 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 217 | 1,230 | 4 | 10 |
| C | 3 | 5 | 18 | 19 | 775 | 2,373 | 14 | 19 |
| D | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 141 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| F | 9 | 12 | 53 | 46 | 2,862 | 5,998 | 50 | 47 |
| Total | 17 | 26 | 100 | 100 | 5,685 | 12,668 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 310 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| D | 7 | 8 | 41 | 31 | 3,289 | 4,098 | 58 | 32 |
| F | 9 | 18 | 53 | 69 | 2,086 | 8,570 | 37 | 68 |
| Total | 17 | 26 | 100 | 100 | 5,685 | 12,668 | 100 | 100 |

Toledo

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 1 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 198 | 1,565 | 3 | 7 |
| C | 5 | 10 | 19 | 20 | 1,427 | 3,759 | 21 | 17 |
| D | 14 | 16 | 54 | 32 | 3,709 | 7,332 | 54 | 33 |
| F | 6 | 20 | 23 | 40 | 1,527 | 9,546 | 22 | 43 |
| Total | 26 | 50 | 100 | 100 | 6,861 | 22,202 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 4 | 12 | 17 | 24 | 807 | 5,023 | 12 | 23 |
| B | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 305 | 319 | 4 | 1 |
| C | 5 | 9 | 21 | 18 | 1,095 | 3,039 | 16 | 14 |
| D | 4 | 6 | 17 | 12 | 1,202 | 2,178 | 18 | 10 |
| F | 10 | 22 | 42 | 44 | 3,400 | 11,643 | 50 | 52 |
| Total | 24 | 50 | 100 | 100 | 6,809 | 22,202 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 308 | 0 | 1 |
| C | 2 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 883 | 1,931 | 13 | 9 |
| D | 11 | 19 | 42 | 38 | 3,189 | 7,575 | 46 | 34 |
| F | 13 | 26 | 50 | 52 | 2,789 | 12,388 | 41 | 56 |
| Total | 26 | 50 | 100 | 100 | 6,861 | 22,202 | 100 | 100 |

Youngstown

| | N charter schools | N district schools | % charter schools | % district schools | N charter students | N district students | % charter students | % district students |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Overall rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 241 | 0 | 5 |
| C | 2 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 526 | 0 | 28 | 0 |
| D | 4 | 4 | 57 | 29 | 1,114 | 1,502 | 60 | 29 |
| F | 1 | 9 | 14 | 64 | 217 | 3,445 | 12 | 66 |
| Total | 7 | 14 | 100 | 100 | 1,857 | 5,188 | 100 | 100 |
| Value-added rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 1 | 1 | 14 | 8 | 396 | 241 | 21 | 5 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C | 1 | 1 | 14 | 8 | 145 | 350 | 8 | 7 |
| D | 1 | 1 | 14 | 8 | 130 | 310 | 7 | 6 |
| F | 4 | 10 | 57 | 77 | 1,186 | 4,287 | 64 | 83 |
| Total | 7 | 13 | 100 | 100 | 1,857 | 5,188 | 100 | 100 |
| Performance-index rating | | | | | | | | |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| D | 4 | 3 | 57 | 23 | 1,273 | 938 | 69 | 18 |
| F | 3 | 10 | 43 | 77 | 584 | 4,250 | 31 | 82 |
| Total | 7 | 13 | 100 | 100 | 1,857 | 5,188 | 100 | 100 |

Table A4: Listing of high-quality schools in the Big Eight

The tables below display Big Eight schools that meet our definition of a high-quality urban school, either receiving an overall rating of C or above or earning a value-added rating of A for the two most recent years. The first table includes schools meeting the overall rating condition, with schools listed by city and ordered first by their overall rating, second by their value-added rating, and last by their performance-index rating. There are a handful of schools that receive low value-added and performance-index ratings (D's and F's on both) that receive overall C's on the basis of high ratings on the gap closing and/or improving at-risk K-3 readers. Rather than creating additional rules that would exclude such schools, we consider them to be marginal cases. The second table lists schools not meeting the overall C-or-above rating condition that earned an A value-added rating for the past two years. There are 164 Big Eight schools that receive C or above overall ratings, and another thirteen schools are added to the high-quality list by merit of A's on value-added.

Big Eight schools receiving an overall C or above rating in 2017-18

| School name | Enrollment | Charter or district school | Overall rating | Value-added rating | Performance index rating |
|---|------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Akron | | | | | |
| Akron Early College High School | 381 | District | A | A | B |
| Akron STEM High School | 328 | District | B | A | C |
| Glover Community Learning Center | 294 | District | C | A | D |
| Hill Community Learning Center | 338 | District | C | A | D |
| Rimer Community Learning Center | 310 | District | C | A | D |
| University Academy | 201 | Charter | C | A | F |
| Findley Community Learning Center | 617 | District | C | A | F |
| Sam Salem Community Learning Center | 343 | District | C | B | D |
| Betty Jane Community Learning Center | 451 | District | C | C | C |
| National Inventors Hall of Fame School, Center for STEM | 382 | District | C | C | C |
| Firestone High School | 1,243 | District | C | C | D |
| Judith A Resnik Community Learning Center | 383 | District | C | D | C |
| King Elementary School | 441 | District | C | F | C |
| Miller-South Visual Performing Arts | 472 | District | C | F | C |
| Ritzman Community Learning Center | 362 | District | C | F | C |
| Mason Community Learning Center | 259 | District | C | F | D |
| Canton | | | | | |
| Portage Collab Montessori Middle School | 193 | District | B | B | B |
| Cedar Elementary School | 419 | District | C | A | D |
| Canton Arts Academy @ Summit | 285 | District | C | B | C |
| Canton College Preparatory School | 180 | Charter | C | C | D |
| Cincinnati | | | | | |
| Sands Montessori Elementary School | 679 | District | B | A | B |
| Evanston Academy Elementary School | 319 | District | B | A | C |
| Dater Montessori Elementary School | 792 | District | B | C | B |
| Hyde Park School | 518 | District | B | F | B |

| School name | Enrollment | Charter or district school | Overall rating | Value-added rating | Performance index rating |
|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Kilgour Elementary School | 631 | District | B | F | B |
| Spencer Academy | 219 | District | B | F | B |
| Walnut Hills High School | 2,905 | District | B | F | B |
| Roberts Academy: A Paideia Learning Community | 789 | District | C | A | D |
| King Academy Community School | 118 | Charter | C | C | D |
| Pleasant Hill Elementary School | 585 | District | C | C | D |
| Rockdale Academy Elementary School | 341 | District | C | C | D |
| Hamilton Cnty Math & Science | 607 | Charter | C | D | D |
| George Hays-Jennie Porter Elementary | 364 | District | C | D | D |
| Fairview-Clifton German Language School | 742 | District | C | F | B |
| T.C.P. World Academy | 455 | Charter | C | F | C |
| Covedale Elementary School | 591 | District | C | F | C |
| Mt. Washington Elementary School | 397 | District | C | F | C |
| Cheviot Elementary School | 549 | District | C | F | D |
| Clark Montessori High School | 698 | District | C | F | D |
| Hartwell Elementary School | 563 | District | C | F | D |
| Mt. Airy Elementary School | 635 | District | C | F | D |
| Sayler Park Elementary School | 334 | District | C | F | D |
| School For Creat & Perf Arts High School | 1,356 | District | C | F | D |
| Westwood Elementary School | 515 | District | C | F | D |
| William H Taft Elementary School | 286 | District | C | F | D |
| Cleveland | | | | | |
| Constellation Schools: Westpark Community Elementary | 304 | Charter | A | A | B |
| Cleveland Early College High | 303 | District | A | A | B |
| Cleveland School of Science & Medicine | 401 | District | B | A | B |
| Cleveland School of Architecture & Design | 327 | District | B | A | C |
| Citizens Leadership Academy East | 60 | Charter | B | A | D |
| Village Preparatory School Willard | 180 | Charter | B | A | D |
| Hope Academy Northwest Campus | 235 | Charter | B | A | D |
| Denison | 323 | District | B | A | D |
| Paul L Dunbar Elementary School | 384 | District | B | A | D |
| Near West Intergenerational School | 224 | Charter | B | B | C |
| Menlo Park Academy | 419 | Charter | B | F | A |
| Clark School | 590 | District | C | A | C |
| Citizens Leadership Academy | 262 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Cleveland Entrepreneurship Preparatory School | 323 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Horizon Science Academy-Denison Middle School | 264 | Charter | C | A | D |

| School name | Enrollment | Charter or district school | Overall rating | Value-added rating | Performance index rating |
|---|------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Lincoln Park Academy | 204 | Charter | C | A | D |
| West Park Academy | 210 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Clara E Westropp School | 345 | District | C | A | D |
| Rhodes College and Career Academy | 128 | District | C | A | D |
| Hope Academy Northcoast | 270 | Charter | C | A | F |
| New Technology HS@East Tech | 149 | District | C | A | F |
| Broadway Academy | 111 | Charter | C | B | D |
| Davis Aerospace & Maritime High School | 48 | District | C | B | D |
| Euclid Park Elementary School | 333 | District | C | B | D |
| Louis Agassiz School | 319 | District | C | B | D |
| Memorial School | 414 | District | C | B | F |
| Village Preparatory School | 406 | Charter | C | C | C |
| Louisa May Alcott Elementary School | 244 | District | C | C | C |
| Citizens Academy Southeast | 345 | Charter | C | C | D |
| Intergenerational School, The | 248 | Charter | C | C | D |
| Wings Academy 1 | 142 | Charter | C | C | D |
| Artemus Ward | 513 | District | C | C | D |
| Cleveland High School for the Digital Arts | 310 | District | C | C | D |
| Ginn Academy | 379 | District | C | C | F |
| Mound Elementary School | 402 | District | C | C | F |
| Douglas MacArthur | 346 | District | C | D | C |
| Cleveland College Preparatory School | 279 | Charter | C | D | D |
| Horizon Science Academy Denison Elementary School | 124 | Charter | C | D | D |
| Whitney Young School | 185 | District | C | F | C |
| Cleveland School Of The Arts High School | 469 | District | C | F | D |
| Daniel E Morgan School | 248 | District | C | F | D |
| Riverside School | 492 | District | C | F | D |
| Valley View Elementary School | 191 | District | C | F | D |
| Kenneth W Clement | 172 | District | C | F | F |
| Columbus | | | | | |
| South Columbus Preparatory Academy | 64 | Charter | B | A | B |
| Arts & College Preparatory Academy | 397 | Charter | B | A | C |
| United Preparatory Academy | 266 | Charter | B | A | C |
| Winterset Elementary School | 292 | District | B | A | C |
| Columbus Collegiate Academy | 225 | Charter | B | A | D |
| Columbus Humanities, Arts and Technology Academy | 541 | Charter | B | A | D |
| Focus Learning Academy of Northern Columbus | 450 | Charter | B | A | D |
| Midnimo Cross Cultural Community School | 113 | Charter | B | A | D |

| School name | Enrollment | Charter or district school | Overall rating | Value-added rating | Performance index rating |
|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Westside Academy | 189 | Charter | B | A | D |
| South Scioto Academy | 185 | Charter | B | B | D |
| Clinton Elementary School | 500 | District | B | C | B |
| Gables Elementary School | 416 | District | B | C | C |
| Columbus Preparatory Academy | 735 | Charter | B | F | A |
| Columbus Alternative High School | 803 | District | C | A | C |
| Columbus Collegiate Academy - West | 229 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Great Western Academy | 726 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Horizon Science Academy Columbus | 486 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Horizon Science Academy Columbus Middle School | 493 | Charter | C | A | D |
| KIPP Columbus | 1,193 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Centennial High School | 767 | District | C | A | D |
| Columbus City Preparatory School for Girls | 310 | District | C | A | D |
| Lincoln Park Elementary School | 365 | District | C | A | D |
| Ridgeview Middle School | 566 | District | C | A | D |
| Mifflin Alternative Middle School | 485 | District | C | A | F |
| Ohio Avenue Elementary School | 319 | District | C | A | F |
| Cesar Chavez College Preparatory School | 322 | Charter | C | B | D |
| Columbus Preparatory and Fitness Academy | 394 | Charter | C | B | D |
| Noble Academy-Columbus | 354 | Charter | C | B | D |
| Educational Academy for Boys & Girls | 96 | Charter | C | B | D |
| Southwood Elementary School | 343 | District | C | B | D |
| Sullivant Avenue Community School | 373 | Charter | C | C | D |
| Burroughs Elementary School | 434 | District | C | C | D |
| Columbus Spanish Immersion K-6 School | 402 | District | C | C | D |
| Dominion Middle School | 622 | District | C | C | D |
| Cranbrook Elementary School | 272 | District | C | D | C |
| North Linden Elementary School | 426 | District | C | D | D |
| Northgate Intermediate | 323 | District | C | D | D |
| Indian Springs Elementary School | 399 | District | C | F | B |
| Ecole Kenwood French Immersion | 361 | District | C | F | C |
| Berwick Alternative K-8 School | 746 | District | C | F | D |
| Avalon Elementary School | 436 | District | C | NR | D |
| Dayton | | | | | |
| Dayton Early College Academy, Inc | 310 | Charter | B | A | C |
| DECA PREP | 856 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Klepinger Community School | 524 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Horace Mann PreK-6 School | 437 | District | C | A | D |
| River's Edge Montessori PreK-6 School | 552 | District | C | A | D |
| Ruskin PreK-6 School | 562 | District | C | A | D |

| School name | Enrollment | Charter or district school | Overall rating | Value-added rating | Performance index rating |
|---|------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Stivers School For The Arts | 873 | District | C | A | D |
| Horizon Science Academy Dayton Downtown | 217 | Charter | C | B | D |
| Dayton SMART Elementary School | 81 | Charter | C | C | D |
| Belle Haven PreK-6 School | 412 | District | C | C | F |
| Meadowdale PreK-6 School | 360 | District | C | C | F |
| Toledo | | | | | |
| Toledo Technology Academy High School | 308 | District | B | A | B |
| Toledo Preparatory and Fitness Academy | 198 | Charter | B | A | C |
| Elmhurst Elementary School | 513 | District | B | A | C |
| Grove Patterson Academy Elementary School | 383 | District | B | A | C |
| Toledo Early College High School | 361 | District | B | A | C |
| Beverly Elementary School | 674 | District | C | A | C |
| Horizon Science Academy-Springfield | 331 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Rise & Shine Academy | 89 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Toledo SMART Elementary School | 189 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Chase STEM Academy | 339 | District | C | A | D |
| Glendale-Feilbach Elementary School | 418 | District | C | A | D |
| Harvard Elementary School | 392 | District | C | A | D |
| Old West End Academy Elementary School | 264 | District | C | A | D |
| Ottawa River Elementary School | 478 | District | C | A | D |
| Old Orchard Elementary School | 319 | District | C | B | D |
| Walbridge Elementary School | 252 | District | C | C | D |
| Glenwood Elementary School | 354 | District | C | C | F |
| Jones Leadership Academy | 269 | District | C | C | F |
| Toledo School For The Arts | 685 | Charter | C | F | C |
| Imagine Hill Avenue | 133 | Charter | C | F | D |
| Youngstown | | | | | |
| Youngstown Early College | 241 | District | B | A | D |
| Stambaugh Charter Academy | 396 | Charter | C | A | D |
| Youngstown Academy of Excellence | 130 | Charter | C | D | D |

Note: This table excludes four schools that received a C or above overall rating but received neither performance-index nor value-added ratings.

Big Eight schools receiving A value-added ratings in both 2016–17 and 2017–18

| School name | City | Enrollment | Charter or district school | Overall rating (FY 18) | Value-added rating (FY 18) | Value-added rating (FY 17) | Performance index rating (FY 18) |
|---|-----------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| North High School | Akron | 864 | District | D | A | A | F |
| Belden Elementary School | Canton | 270 | District | D | A | A | F |
| East Academy | Cleveland | 283 | Charter | D | A | A | F |
| Glenville High School | Cleveland | 386 | District | D | A | A | F |
| The School of One | Cleveland | 271 | District | D | A | A | F |
| Charles School at Ohio Dominican University | Columbus | 349 | Charter | D | A | A | D |
| Graham Elementary and Middle School | Columbus | 425 | Charter | D | A | A | D |
| Binns Elementary School | Columbus | 392 | District | D | A | A | D |
| Salem Elementary School | Columbus | 347 | District | D | A | A | D |
| Dayton Boys Preparatory Academy | Dayton | 204 | District | D | A | A | F |
| Eastmont Park PreK-6 School | Dayton | 439 | District | D | A | A | D |
| Oakdale Elementary School | Toledo | 407 | District | D | A | A | D |
| Whittier Elementary School | Toledo | 486 | District | D | A | A | D |

Note: This table does not include schools receiving C or above overall ratings in 2017–18 that also meet this condition.

Endnotes

- 1 See ODE note in its document "[Understanding Your Student's Test Scores Spring 2018](#)": "The accelerated level of performance suggests that a student is on track for college and career readiness."
- 2 See, for example, Lynn A. Karoly, *The Economic Impact of Achievement Gaps in Pennsylvania's Public Schools* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), and McKinsey & Company, *The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools* (McKinsey & Company, 2009).
- 3 Among them included a legislative definition of a high-quality charter school for facility grants; see Ohio Legislative Service Commission, "[Bill Analysis of Amended Substitute House Bill 64 of the 131st General Assembly](#)," p. 246. Additionally, we at Fordham also employed a simple rubric to yield an overall school rating; see Aaron Churchill, *Facing Facts: Ohio's School Report Cards in a Time of Rising Expectations* (Columbus, OH: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2016), p. 9.
- 4 Federal policy requires one high school assessment in math and English. Ohio could test in either algebra or geometry and still meet minimum math requirement. Similarly, it could choose either English I or English II to meet the federal minimum in that subject.
- 5 There are number of grade-span combinations that affect the formula, and ODE publishes the weights under all possible scenarios; see ODE, "[2017–18 Overall Grade Technical Document](#)" (August 2018).
- 6 Aaron Churchill, *Back to the Basics: A plan to simplify and balance Ohio's school report cards* (Columbus, OH: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2017).
- 7 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.
- 8 Some of the outliers, especially those with 95 percent ED, may not actually enroll all ED students due to a federal meals program known as the Community Eligibility Provision. Participation in this program leads to universal ED reporting, even though some of their students are not from low-income families. ODE reports schools with more than 95 percent of students identified as ED as >95 percent. For more on this program, see ODE, "[Community Eligibility Provision](#)" (accessed September 2018).
- 9 Aaron Churchill, *Back to the Basics* (p. 29).
- 10 For a more detailed explanation of the growth standard, see SAS, *Technical Documentation of EVAAS Analyses* (Cary, NC: SAS Institute, 2018), p. 8–9.
- 11 For accessible reviews of value-added methods, see Tom Kane, *Do Value-Added Estimates Identify Causal Effects of Teachers and Schools?* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2014); Mark Ehlert et al., "[Choosing the Right Growth Measure](#)," *Education Next* 14, no. 2 (2014); and the Carnegie Knowledge Network's [website](#), which has articles on various issues related to value-added measurements.
- 12 The index score is the value-added gain or loss divided by the standard error.
- 13 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.
- 14 The evidentiary language is adapted from the descriptions on schools' report cards.

- 15 Schools meet this indicator when their chronic absenteeism rate is below a threshold set in Ohio's ESSA plan or if they show year-to-year decreases in this rate. Students are flagged as chronically absent when they miss more than 10 percent of the school year, whether excused or unexcused. For more information, see ODE, "[Chronic Absenteeism Improvement Indicator](#)" (accessed September 2018).
- 16 For more on this indicator, see ODE, "[End-of-Course Improvement Indicator](#)" (accessed September 2018).
- 17 In the remaining cases, twenty-one districts received equivalent indicators-met and performance-index ratings, and in seventeen cases, districts received lower indicators-met ratings (in all those instances, districts received an A on indicators met and B on performance index).
- 18 For these annual goals, see ODE, [Appendix A: Long Term Goals](#).
- 19 The proposal receiving the most attention in the past year was put forward in House Bill 591 of the 132nd General Assembly. Briefly, this bill would move Ohio to a data-dashboard system in which no ratings are provided to the public, only data. For more, see Patrick O'Donnell, "[Kasich support of A-F grades stalls attempts to kill or delay them for schools, districts](#)," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 24, 2018.
- 20 Aaron Churchill, *Back to the Basics* (2017).
- 21 Eighth-grade proficiency is also commonly used to capture middle school achievement, as it's the grade in which NAEP administers exams. However, we choose seventh grade for this report because eighth-grade math results are not necessarily reflective of the state's student population (or of districts, as in the Big Eight analysis), due to eighth graders' participation in high school math EOCs instead of the eighth-grade math exam. Although 2017–18 data on the number of tested students were unavailable at the time of this publication, in 2016–17 approximately 75 percent of eighth-grade students took the grade-level exam, while the remainder took the math EOC; in Cincinnati, less than 10 percent of eighth graders took the grade-level math exam.
- 22 For more on the district typologies, see ODE, "[Typology of Ohio School Districts](#)" (accessed September 2018).
- 23 The most recent rigorous evaluation of Ohio charters was undertaken by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), [Charter School Performance in Ohio](#) (Stanford, CA: CREDO, 2014).
- 24 For 2016–17 data on this, see Fordham Institute's webpage [Ohio by the Numbers](#), which shows that students attending high-poverty urban districts have higher state proficiency rates than those attending very high-poverty urban districts (that is, the Big Eight).
- 25 See Aaron Churchill, "[How did Ohio's charters stack up on report cards?](#)" *Ohio Gadfly Daily* (blog), September 19, 2017.
- 26 Bill Bush, Doug Caruso, and Mary Beth Lane, "[Columbus City and 16 charter schools get F's on report cards; three area districts get A's](#)," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 13, 2018.
- 27 An analysis of national exam data indicate that Ohio is one of only a few states where the black-white achievement gap has grown between 2003 and 2017. See Michael Hansen et al., "[Have we made progress on achievement gaps? Looking at evidence from the new NAEP results](#)," *Brown Center Chalkboard* (blog), Brookings Institution, April 17, 2018.



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