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Idaho's new school report card sports new features, school achievements

(BOISE) – The State Department of Education's revamped K-12 report card, first unveiled in December, is now updated with 2019 assessment results, other data and new features.

The updated report card is available online at idahoschools.org. New accountability data, including state, district and school results from the 2019 Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Idaho Reading Indicator, also are on the SDE's [Accountability page](#).

"We've received great feedback from families and schools about our online report card, and the new enhancements make it even more informative and user-friendly," Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. "What's even more exciting is that our efforts to help schools address problem areas and celebrate successes are already bearing fruit, as shown in our 2019 results."

"Last year, 247 Idaho schools showed achievement gaps in one or more student subgroups [for example, students with disabilities or English language learners]. This year, that number has dropped to 188 schools," Superintendent Ybarra said. "That is wonderful testimony to the efforts of Idaho's local educators, and of the State Department of Education teams giving those educators support where they need it most."

Nearly 500 schools (467) met their interim goals in one or more measures, and 178 schools were named top performers, placing in the 90th percentile in performance areas including English Language Arts and math achievement, performance growth and graduation rate.

The focus of Idaho's new accountability plan, approved by the U.S. Department of Education in 2018, is to support schools and students to achieve by celebrating success, measuring growth and partnering with local school leadership teams to identify specific supports and plans for improvement. Many Idaho schools that received targeted assistance to fill achievement gaps also were celebrated as goal-makers, Assessment and Accountability Director Karlynn Laraway noted.

One notable bright spot in the latest accountability findings, Laraway said, is that three of the Idaho schools identified in 2018 for having continually low graduation rates have shown such improvement that they have dropped off the Comprehensive Support and Improvement School Grad list after their first year of that designation. Those schools are Lake Pend Oreille High School, Mountainview Alternative High School in the Lakeland School District, and Rimrock Junior-Senior High School in the Bruneau-Grand View Joint School District.

The freshly updated report card includes finalized results for the 2019 Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI). Preliminary statewide results were released earlier this summer.

The new online IRI assessment is given in fall and spring to all Idaho public school students in kindergarten through third grade, measuring five foundational reading skills – Alphabetic Knowledge, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Fluency – to ensure students are learning to read so they can read to learn. Results at all four grade levels showed tremendous improvement between the beginning of the school year and the spring, with proficiency jumping from 45 percent to 64.1 percent in kindergarten, from 42.9 percent to 67.5 percent for first-graders, from 60.4 percent to 75.9 percent for second-graders and from 61.2 percent to 73.7 percent for third-graders.

This past school year was the first for the new IRI, so “I look forward to next year, when we can see how this year’s kindergarteners progress as first-graders, and so on,” Laraway said.

The ISAT assessment, administered each spring to all public school students in grades 3-8 and 10, gauges their proficiency in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA). The 2019 results show steady, if small, improvements over the past few years. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA increased at four grade levels – 4, 5, 6 and 7 – and remained the same as 2018’s rates in the remaining three.

Also featured on the updated report card and accountability files are results of new engagement surveys for parents and staff given this spring in districts across the state, as well as a student survey, which debuted last year for grades 3-8 and this year included high school students.

New features on the report card this year include a revamped landing page, additional information to provide more context to the data, and improved search features that, among other things, allow users to differentiate between schools with the same name, go directly to a school district report card, and identify schools within a specific legislative district.

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Note to reporters, editors: Statewide, school and district level data are available on the SDE’s [Accountability page](#).