

The Rest of the Story: What the Texas A-F Letter Grades Do Not Tell You

Dr. Stone Responds to Lake Highlands' A-F Rating Coverage:

Yesterday, the Texas Education Agency released 2018 accountability ratings under its new A-F letter grade rating system. Richardson ISD posted a B with an overall score of 88, and our individual schools also received numeric grades in three domains: Student Achievement, School Progress and Closing the Gaps.

It is very easy to draw comparisons or make judgments about schools based solely on this one-time snapshot of a rating. There are many important details to the entire story that must be reported and without all the facts, readers can be left with more questions than answers. It should be reported how critical it is to compare campuses ***to those that are like them***. This is exactly why Domain 2, which compares a school's progress to similar schools, is so important to explain. When looking at Domain 2, which takes into account the proportion of economically disadvantaged students served, the Lake Highlands Learning Community campuses are all performing at or above campuses similar to them across the state.

Next, making judgments about schools based solely on the state's new, one-time snapshot without reporting the ***growth*** that has been made the past several years is only telling part of the story. While choosing to report only information to support a negative slant on performance, one might miss the positives that can be taken away, as well. Some positives to emphasize are:

- At FMJH, 82% of students demonstrated growth or maintained a passing performance in Reading, compared to 2017. (It wasn't long ago that scores at FMJH were lower and trending in a much different direction. This is a significant turnaround that should be celebrated.)
- At LHJH, all Domains and (sub) domain scores were above 80, with an overall score of 86.
- Moss Haven and Merriman Park both scored in the 90s in Student Achievement with overall scores above 85.
- At Northlake, 82% of students demonstrated growth or maintained a passing performance in Reading, compared to 2017.
- At Skyview, 79% of students demonstrated growth or maintained a passing performance in Math, compared to 2017.
- Lake Highlands High School earned an 86 for its preparation of students for College, Career or the Military and earned distinctions in English Language Arts and Science.

We have work to do in Lake Highlands, no doubt, just as we do in many areas of our district. We are using this information from the accountability system for its intended purpose of identifying areas of improvement that need additional focus, support, and resources. The greatest resources we have are our awesome teachers and administrators who are committed to serving every student who will enter our buildings next Monday morning. They are focused and ready to write an amazing 2018-2019 story of connecting with all students and helping them to learn, grow, and succeed. That's what Lake Highlands does best, and our educators work every day to meet the high expectations of the community.

- Dr. Jeannie Stone, August 16, 2018