What Accountability and Assessments Look Like

When students apply to college or a job they are expected to have performed well on tests, to have a decent grade point average (GPA), to have participated in extracurriculars, and to be able to write persuasively and concisely. Just as our students are held accountable for more than standardized test scores, we believe the same should go for our schools. Schools should be measuring their success by how well students perform on multiple measures. Other indicators of school effectiveness—which should be identified in cooperation with education stakeholders—could include, but are not limited to, chronic absenteeism rates; the number and percentage of students participating in rigorous coursework (including honors, AP, IB, dual enrollment, early college); the number and percentage of students with access to courses infused with 21st century skills (communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity); and the number and percentage of students participating in foreign languages, creative and fine arts.

Thankfully, families have a say when it comes to measuring school success. With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents were granted the opportunity to push their state and district to look at more than just standardized test scores.

Help us hold schools accountable by taking the action steps listed in this brochure and reading up on the policies and practices that make up a great public school (GPS) at nea.org/GPSIndicators.

For tools and resources that can help you achieve a GPS, fill out the Opportunity Checklist at myschoolmyvoice.nea.org where you will be asked questions about your school and emailed resources related to your needs.
Great Public Schools Indicators Framework

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

Accountability and Assessments

Do you know how well your school is doing in preparing your student for college and a career? Do you know if your student is enrolled in the classes that will give him/her the best shot at getting into a top college or job? Did you know that some of the strongest predictors for future success do not include how well your student does on standardized tests?

Schools need to be held accountable for what matters. What matters is how often your student is showing up to school, the rigor of the courses they are enrolled in, their grade point average, and if they have access to the courses that grow creativity and skills in team building like fine arts and physical education. The federal education law (ESSA) empowers you to demand that schools count what matters.

A Great Education

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

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

- High expectations and a well-rounded curriculum;
- Teaching and learning conditions that lift all students, no matter their zip code;
- Educators of the highest quality;
- Meaningful assessments;
- Engaged families and community; and,
- Sufficient funding for advanced courses, modern materials and facilities, and educator professional development.

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

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<th>Essential Pieces</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate Student Assessments</td>
<td>Ask your principal how student growth is measured, and ask if student portfolios, performance-based assessments, or end-of-the-year presentations are used.</td>
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<td>Positive Achievement Outcomes</td>
<td>Tell your principal you would like to join the team responsible for designing the district report card because you would like schools to be held accountable for the number and percentage of students enrolled and succeeding in advanced courses (Honors, AP, IB, dual enrollment) and college gateway courses (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Trigonometry, Calculus, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics).</td>
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<td>School Effectiveness</td>
<td>Tell your principal you would like to join the school’s improvement team or strategic planning team because you want to ensure students and your school excel on multiple measures of success like chronic absenteeism and student enrollment and performance in advanced courses.</td>
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<td>Adequate School Capacity</td>
<td>Tell your principal that you are concerned about the over representation of students of color in special education and their under representation in gifted education and that you would like for all teachers and instructional support staff to be adequately trained in teacher-led assessments and ongoing cultural competency.</td>
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