

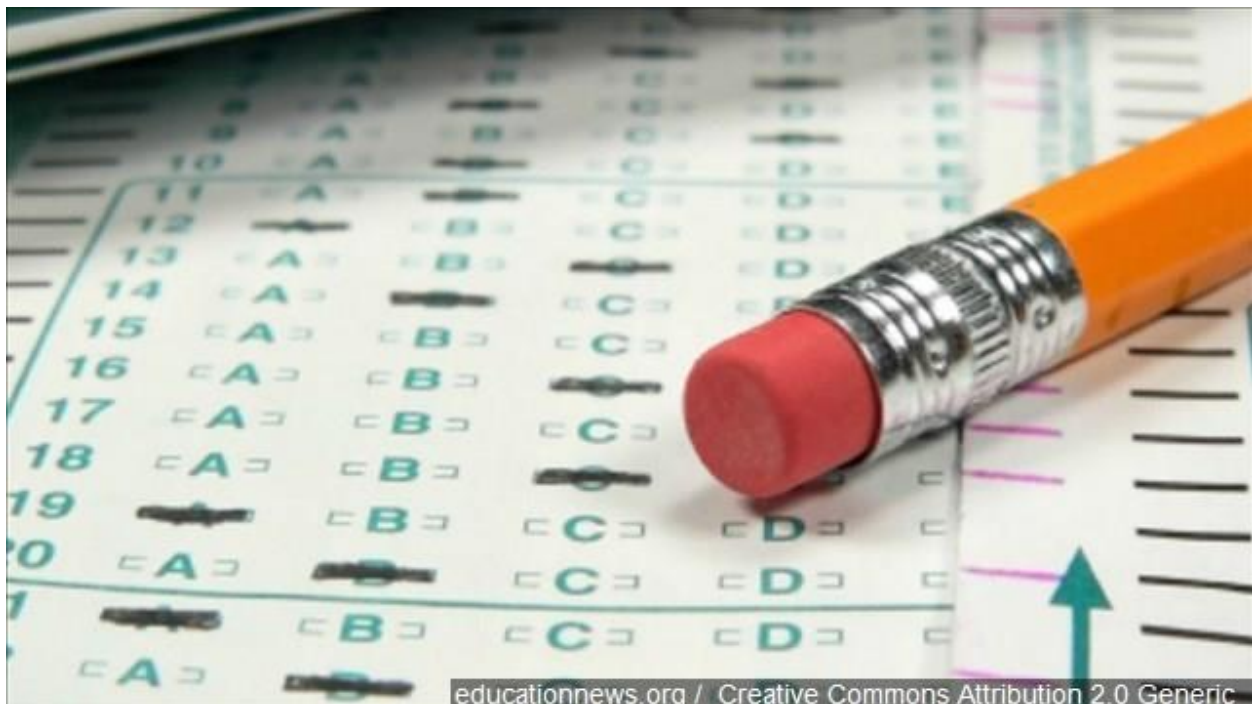
Our Report Card of Stateline Area School Districts Based on PARCC and SAT Data

Every Stateline area school district ranked according to our analysis

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WTVQ/WQRF - Test score data for every school district in Illinois was released publicly Friday by the Illinois State Board of Education, giving parents, students and school officials a data-driven look into each school's performance.

'Eyewitness News' analyzed data from each Stateline-area school district in order to give each district a 'grade'. While a grade is a subjective measurement, each was determined using objective data provided by the state of Illinois.

The methodology used to determine each grade can be found at the end of this article, but here are the results of our analysis.

'A' Rating: (Score 470 and above)

River Ridge: A big improvement in PARCC scores over the past three years combined with strong SAT scores, including 17% of students exceeding expectations, gets the school district an 'A' rating.

Hononegah*: While a high school district only, no Stateline area high school district did better on the SAT's than Hononegah. 16% of its students exceeded expectations on the test while another 42% met them, easily the best combination of any school district in the Stateline area. Hononegah's 'feeder' middle and elementary school districts also showed strong PARCC performance overall, ranking with other districts in the 'A' Rating category.

Pecatonica: Pecatonica ranked high because it had the highest combined PARCC rating in our analysis and was also one of the most improved over the past three years. In the SAT's, 48% of students met expectations while another 7% exceeded them.

Byron: In every analysis we have done using state data, Byron Public Schools have always scored high. Byron's overall PARCC test scores were not only among the highest in our analysis, but like Pecatonica's, also among the most improved. In the SAT's, 12% of students exceeded expectations while another 38% met them, ranking among the best performers.

'B' Rating: (Score 410-470)

Lena-Winslow: This district was one of the biggest gainers when it came to PARCC score improvement over the past three years, raising the district from an average to good performer. SAT scores were in the high mid-range when compared to other Stateline school districts.

Galena: Boosting Galena's score was an improvement in their PARCC scores and 12% of high school students exceeding expectations on the SAT's, while another 35% met them.

Stockton: In 2015, 21% of students in this district met or exceeded expectations on PARCC. In 2017, that number rose to 37%. The district still has room for improvement, but that's the best growth in PARCC scores we saw of any school in the Stateline area using our scoring method. 39% of Stockton High School students met or exceeded expectations on the SAT as well.

Orangeville: This district's improvement in PARCC scores from 2015 to 2017 was impressive, going from 30% of students meeting or exceeding expectations then to 40% today. 42% of students met expectations on the SAT as well.

Polo: Big improvements in PARCC scores moved it to middle-of-the pack among area school districts in our analysis. 41% of students met expectations on the SAT and

another 11% exceeded them, both near the top and earning the district a 'B' grade overall.

Winnebago: Growth in PARCC scores lifted this district into the 'B' category. Simply put, this district improved marginally in every metric possible, and SAT performance was good as well. While both PARCC and SAT scores could still improve more, this district is moving in a positive direction when it comes to test scores.

'C' Rating: (Score 350-410)

Scales Mound: While a solid PARCC performer, the percentage of students who are not meeting expectations nearly doubled in three years. 36% of students met qualifications on the SAT's, but 0% exceeded them.

Genoa-Kingston: While PARCC scores are improving, this district was below average in SAT scores.

Pearl City: This district saw some decline in its PARCC scores in our analysis while SAT scores were average.

Dakota: Has also seen slight declines in PARCC scores and an average SAT performance based on our analysis.

Durand: Last year, this district saw 45% of students meeting or exceeding expectations on PARCC. This year, that number is 37%. SAT scores are about average with 37% meeting or exceeding expectations.

Forrestville Valley: Just 28% of high school students in this district met or exceeded expectations on the SAT, bringing down the district's overall score.

Meridian: A jump in students not meeting PARCC expectations and a drop in those meeting or exceeding them hurt this district's score in our analysis. That said, Meridian has 12% of high school students exceeding expectations on the SAT, which was a very high percentage compared to other Stateline school districts.

East Dubuque: Only 24% of students meet or exceed expectations on PARCC.

Rochelle*: Rochelle is another district made up of only a high school, and so we could only analyze their SAT data, where the school was on par with other districts receiving a 'C' rating. Previous PARCC data for Rochelle High School and those of middle school and elementary school districts which 'feed' Rochelle High School are also consistent with a 'C' rating in our analysis.

Harlem: Only 27% of students met or exceeded expectations on PARCC tests, but that's actually an improvement from two years ago. 67% failed to meet expectations on the SAT.

'D' Rating: (Score 290-350)

Oregon: 22% of students meet or exceed expectations on PARCC, while 29% meet or exceed them on the SAT, both below average.

Ashton-Franklin: 24% of students meet or exceed expectations on PARCC, down slightly from the previous two years, while the percentage of those not meeting expectations jumped from 11% to 16% over the same time period.

North Boone: PARCC and SAT scores are comparatively low overall, and just 30% of students meet or exceed standards on the SAT.

Belvidere: While PARCC scores have remained stable if somewhat low for this district ... just 24% of students meet or exceed expectations ... poor SAT scores are what really stood out. 71% of high school students in this district are not meeting expectations on SAT tests.

Dixon: Those not meeting expectations on PARCC jumped from 33% in 2015 to 51% in 2017, a metric where most other districts saw improvement. SAT scores were below average as well.

South Beloit: This district had the worst performance on the SAT of any Stateline area school the state reported, with just 14% meeting or exceeding expectations.

Hiawatha: 18% of students meet or exceed expectations on PARCC, while 26% met or exceeded expectations on the SAT, both low scores.

'F' Rating: (Score 290 and below)

Freeport: Only 16% of students met or exceeded expectations on this year's PARCC test, while 78% did not meet expectations on the SAT. It was the worst combination of any district we analyzed in the Stateline area. Freeport does have larger education challenges than most other area school districts, but if anything, PARCC scores are declining, not improving.

Rockford: What really stood out about the scores for Rockford Public Schools wasn't so much the low PARCC scores as was the troubling downward trend of them. Not only was Rockford the lowest scoring PARCC district based on our analysis, but its score also dropped the most of any district we analyzed. Consider that in 2015, 23% of RPS205 students were meeting or exceeding PARCC expectations. In 2017, that number fell to 17%. Those not meeting expectations at all on PARCC rose from 23% in 2015 to 31% in 2017. That means 1-in-3 students in Rockford Public Schools couldn't even get to the level of 'partially' meeting expectations, and on the SAT, 74% of high school students did not meet expectations. While test scores do not tell the whole story when it comes to education, the significant drop of test scores in recent years at RPS 205 should serve as a 'red flag' to district officials.

Our methodology:

PARCC and SAT results were divided into 'grades' for each of the five categories in PARCC, and four categories in the SAT. They were then weighted, with the highest rated category receiving '4' points for every percentage point received and the lowest receiving '0' points. In the case of the SAT, the highest three categories were awarded '4, 3, and 2' points respectively while the lowest was awarded '0' points.

Extra points were awarded for improvement (or deducted for declines) in PARCC scores between 2015 and 2017. For example, if a district saw 2% growth in students exceeding standards in PARCC, it would be awarded 8 additional points (2% points x 4) added to the total score. A decline of 2% would equal a decline of 8 points.

Weighted PARCC scores and SAT scores were then combined to determine a final score.

Because the state has moved from using PARCC tests to SAT tests for measuring high school student performance, two districts which are made up of only high schools, Hononegah and Rochelle, had to be analyzed by SAT's alone. However, the PARCC scores of the elementary and middle school districts which 'feed' them was considered in awarding each a grade.