

Marva Johnson, *Chair*
Andy Tuck, *Vice Chair*
Members
Gary Chartrand
Ben Gibson
Tom Grady
Michael Olenick
Joe York

MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Pam Stewart

DATE: June 28, 2018

SUBJECT: Process for Appealing School Grades and School Improvement Ratings for 2018

State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09981, Florida Administrative Code, provides for a 30-day period for districts to review the school grade or school improvement rating assigned to each school. This memorandum provides information on the appeals process for the 2017-18 school grades and school improvement ratings. The 30-day appeals process begins today, June 28, 2018, and ends on July 31, 2018.

The calculations for school grades and school improvement ratings rely on the accuracy of data that districts submit to the Florida Department of Education. During the regular student survey periods, the student data submitted to the department are certified as correct by the district superintendent. After the certification, districts are given several months to amend any district-reported student survey data. Prior to the release of the school grades and school improvement ratings, districts also have had several opportunities to ensure that data used for accountability purposes are accurate. For the 2018 accountability process, these opportunities included the following:

- The department provided Accountability Match files for Survey 2 from October 23 to December 15. This gave district accountability staff the opportunity to review and correct Survey 2 data used for accountability purposes, such as student ID numbers, school of enrollment, free and reduced-price lunch status, students with disabilities (SWD) status, English language learner (ELL) status, race and ethnicity, gender and grade level.
- The department provided Accountability Match files for Survey 3 from February 19 to April 13. This gave district accountability staff the opportunity to review and correct Survey 3 data used for accountability purposes, such as student ID numbers, school of enrollment, free and reduced-price lunch status, students with disabilities (SWD) status, English language learner (ELL) status, race and ethnicity, gender and grade level.
- The department provided each district a copy of all district-reported data used for school grades. Districts had the opportunity from April 23 to May 25 to update student membership data, which may have changed between February 9 (the close of the Survey 3 reporting week) and the time of testing, and any grade level changes which occurred after Survey 3 and before testing.

- The department provided each district a copy of all 2016-17 graduates who were not matched to final Survey 5 data that would indicate the graduates were eligible to earn college or career credit. Districts had from April 26 to May 25 to provide additional Survey 5 matches for these students.
- The department provided each district a copy of all Survey 3 students who could not be matched to a prior-year assessment record for purposes of calculating learning gains. Districts had from April 24 to May 25 to locate assessment records for these students and report this data to the department separate from the assessment matching process.
- The department provided each district all assessment records that did not match to a student. Districts had from April 24 to June 22 to update and correct the data for the 2016-17 summer assessments and the 2017-18 fall and winter assessments, and one week during June to update and correct the data for the 2017-18 spring assessments.
- The department provided each district a school type report for school grade calculations. The department also provided districts with a listing of alternative and exceptional student education (ESE) center schools. Districts were given an opportunity to review and revise school type assignments and the alternative and ESE school listings.
- During the fall of 2017 from November 15 to December 15, the department provided districts the opportunity to continually update and correct data for the 2016-17 graduation rate cohort.

Because of the many opportunities for districts to review, update and correct all the data used for the school grades and school improvement ratings, the following district-reported data may not be appealed:

- Incorrect student identification numbers, district numbers or school numbers for any student or assessment record;
- Changes in student demographic information (race and ethnicity, gender, ELL status, exceptionality, lunch status or grade level);
- Student withdrawals from a school or district;
- Alternative school status;
- ESE center school status; or
- Any request for a change in a school grade or school improvement rating that requires a change in statute or rule.

The school grades model allows schools to be graded based on the components for which the school has sufficient data. This means that a school could receive a grade based on one or more components. If a school is graded on one or two components and you believe that the grade of a school does not represent the progress of the school's student body, you may appeal the grade of the school. In order to appeal, the district must provide documentation that identifies why the grade does not represent the progress of the school's student body.

Because an appeal cannot be granted unless it would result in a different grade or rating, appeals should include documentation that demonstrates that the appeal would change the school grade or the school improvement rating.

The process for submitting appeal requests is as follows:

Only requests for a recalculation that would (or could) result in a change to a school grade or school improvement rating should be submitted. If the district determines that a different school grade or school

improvement rating should be assigned because of the department's omission of student data, a data miscalculation, testing irregularities or special circumstances that might have affected the grade/rating assigned, an appeal request for a departmental review of the data can be submitted. An optional worksheet will be provided to the district primary accountability coordinators to aid districts with compiling appeals; districts are not required to complete this worksheet when submitting an appeal, but are strongly encouraged to do so in order to ensure that the appeal is appropriate and clearly articulated.

1. On or before July 31, 2018, district superintendents shall submit a written request for review, including all supporting documentation. Appeals need to be submitted via upload to the district's accountability ShareFile folder (Dist_XX).

Each request must be submitted by the district accountability coordinator and must be signed by the superintendent; individual schools may not submit appeals. All schools, including charter schools, must work through the district accountability coordinator. In cases where a superintendent is appealing the grade/rating of multiple schools, please submit an individual letter and separate documentation for each school.

2. The request for review must be signed by the district superintendent and in the form of a letter explaining the reasons for the appeal, specific information on the situation(s) being appealed and descriptions of the circumstance(s) that caused the need for the appeal. The supporting documentation must identify the individual student records in question (see attachment). **The department will not review an appeal alleging omission or miscalculation of data that does not include supporting documentation or data to identify the individual student records in question.**
3. The documentation should accompany the appeal letter and be labeled, highlighted or marked for the individual school being appealed. **Please note: email is not a secure medium for transmitting individually identifiable student data and must not be used for that purpose.**
4. A data file with all of the relevant appeal information must be uploaded to the ShareFile site (see attachment). If there are questions about how to transmit the required documentation, please contact the Bureau of Accountability Reporting at 850-245-0411 or email evalnrpt@fldoe.org.

Thank you for your cooperation and help to ensure that all school grades and school improvement ratings are accurate.

PS/mm

cc: District Accountability Coordinators

Attachment: 2018 Appeals for School Grades/School Improvement Ratings – Data Submission Instructions