

# HOW TO USE THE AIMS REPORT CARD

## THE GRADES

- Each grade is for the school, it is NOT simply an average of the grades achieved by the students.
- Final overall grade and rank do NOT tell the whole story. An effective interpretation of the results requires a full consideration of all available achievement and engagement measures and a comparison of contextual versus absolute performance.
- Most schools will have bright spots to build from, but also weak points on which to work.
- Report Cards are based on a three year rolling average. RC4 is based on the years 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04. Schools for which we are not able to secure a complete data set are not given a final overall grade. Where we do not have complete data for a school on a given measure, it gets no reported score on that measure. Therefore, schools may be marked and ranked on some criteria and not on others.

## ACHIEVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

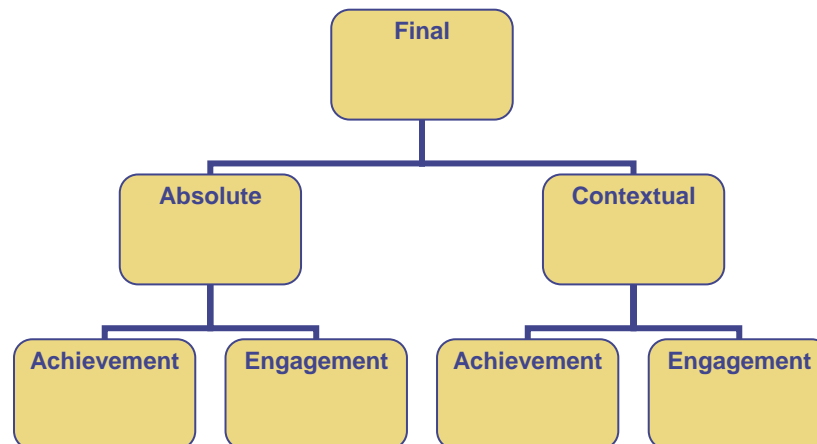
ACHIEVEMENT - This is an indicator of overall academic success calculated by averaging school marks in math, science, language arts, and humanities courses, provincial exams in the corresponding courses, and post-secondary achievement.

ENGAGEMENT - This is an indicator of the level of student engagement in academics calculated by averaging attendance rate, moving-on rates, post-secondary preparation in both math and language arts, and post-secondary participation.

## ABSOLUTE VERSUS CONTEXTUAL SCORES

ABSOLUTE SCORES – This is performance measured relative to the rest of the schools in the province. Schools that exceed the provincial average earn grades of 'B' or better and schools that fall below the average earn a 'C+' or worse.

CONTEXTUAL SCORES – This is performance measured relative to reasonable expectations for THIS school. Schools are expected to do at least as well as other schools have done in similar circumstances. Schools that exceed expectations earn grades of 'B' or better and schools that fall below expectations earn a 'C+' or worse.



## AVAILABLE MEASURES

### ENGAGEMENT:

- ⇒ *Attendance*: Where available, the attendance rate of high school students.
- ⇒ *Moving-on*: Based on the number of students who move from one grade to the next grade. The Grade 12 moving-on rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduating students by the number enrolled at the beginning of the year.
- ⇒ *Post-secondary preparation*: Where available, the proportion of students participating in college preparatory math and language arts courses.
- ⇒ *Post-secondary participation*: Where available, the proportion of students moving on, or intending to move on, to post-secondary education the year after graduation.

### ACHIEVEMENT:

- ⇒ *School marks*: Where available, the average teacher-assigned grades for general, academic and advanced level courses in math, science, language arts and humanities.
- ⇒ *Provincial exams*: Where available, the average grade on provincial exams including math, science, language arts and humanities.
- ⇒ *Post-secondary achievement*: Is based on the comparative academic success of Atlantic Canadian first year post-secondary students attending 18 Atlantic Canadian universities and community colleges.

### INPUTS:

These are factors outside of the school's control that could potentially influence school performance. We have secured data on four such measures.

- ⇒ *HS Enrolment* – the number of students enrolled in high school grades.
- ⇒ *PTR* – pupil to teacher ratio, the ratio of all students to full-time equivalent teaching staff.
- ⇒ *SES* – the socio-economic status uses a number of measures to capture the social and economic conditions of the school's catchment area.
- ⇒ *Feeder achievement* – an indicator of the performance of junior high or middle school students who go on to attend each high school.

### ONLINE SEARCHABLE DATABASE

Within weeks of the release of the fourth annual report card an expanded data set will be made available online to allow for an inter-active cross school comparison on any available measure or a combination of measures.

Please watch our website at [www.aims.ca](http://www.aims.ca) or subscribe to our newsletter at [AIMS - Subscribe to Newsletter](#) for an update when this information becomes available.

**INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS****INPUTS:**

*Enrolment* – 195/38 means:

- 195 – three year average enrolment in high school grades
- 38 - 38<sup>th</sup> largest high school in the province

*PTR* – 15.22/13 means:

- 15.22 – 15.22 pupils for every full time equivalent teacher at the school
- 13 – 13<sup>th</sup> lowest PTR in the province

*SES* – 36/20 means:

- 36 – 36<sup>th</sup> percentile, your school community has a relative socio-economic status that is higher than 35% of the province's other schools
- 20 – 20<sup>th</sup> most affluent school community in the province

**NOTE** - *SES is a single number derived from a 13 point scale. The higher your number, the better your relative SES is to the rest of the province and the higher your rank.*

Seven factors weighted “positive”:

- ⇒ Proportion of the labour force in high status occupations
- ⇒ Proportion of the population with university degrees
- ⇒ Average income
- ⇒ Average home value
- ⇒ Average rent
- ⇒ Employment rate
- ⇒ Youth employment rate

Six factors weighted “negative”:

- ⇒ Proportion of the population having less than a high school diploma
- ⇒ Proportion of 15-24 year olds not participating in education
- ⇒ Unemployment rate
- ⇒ Youth unemployment rate
- ⇒ Proportion of one parent families
- ⇒ Proportion of low income families

*Feeder Achievement* – 81/9 means:

- 81 – 81<sup>st</sup> percentile, students entering your school score better than those going into 80% of the other high schools in the province.
- 9 – ninth best feeder achievement in the province

**OUTCOMES:**

The Report Card gives you the ability to track performance at various stages in the education process and with multiple measures. So, if your school's grades in "moving on" vary widely it allows you to focus your investigation at the point where enrolment losses have been identified. Similarly, comparing teacher assigned grades, provincial exams and performance in post-secondary studies gives you a powerful tool to assess consistency, preparedness and educational effectiveness.

Questions you could ask when looking at this data include: Does tough teacher marking lead to better results in post secondary school? If we have strong retention in grade 10, does that carry through to graduation? Does strong attendance translate into improved performance or higher graduation rates? We are sure other questions will occur to you. In searching for the answers to those questions, it is important to interpret the results on each individual measure appropriately. The following five scenarios will help you do that.

*Scenario 1:***Abs - A+/1****Cxt'l - A/5**

In absolute terms, your school scores well above the provincial average and you rank first overall in this measure. This excellent performance also represents a maximization of the potential created by your school's operating context. Keep up the good work.

*Scenario 2:***Abs - A+/2****Cxt'l - C+/29**

In absolute terms your school performs well above the provincial average and ranks second overall on this measure. Based on the context in which your school operates, however, there is considerable room for improvement and a real opportunity to excel that is being missed.

*Scenario 3:***Abs - C+/24****Cxt'l - B/22**

In absolute terms your school performs just below the provincial average, however, considering the context in which your school operates this performance is actually BETTER than would reasonably be expected. Schools with similar inputs should look to you for best practices.

*Scenario 4:***Abs - C/41****Cxt'l - A/3**

In absolute terms your school performs far below the provincial average, however, this performance is offset by your operating circumstances as you perform considerably better than would reasonably be expected of a school with your inputs. Identifying and building on the tools that have allowed you to make the best of a bad situation should allow you to achieve continued growth in coming years.

*Scenario 5:***Abs - F/43****Cxt'l - D/44**

In absolute terms your school performs far below the provincial average and this performance is not offset by your operating circumstances as you perform considerably below expectations as well. This measure should be an area of focus for discussion and action going forward. Finding schools that have similar inputs and that do better on this measure could be of significant help to you.