

The Lowndes County School District (LCSD) had four schools earn a grade of A Tuesday when the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) released accountability grades for the 2023-24 school year.

Caledonia High School, New Hope High, Caledonia Elementary School and Caledonia Middle School helped the LCSD receive an overall grade of A. The LCSD had 708 points, which was an increase from 699 in 2022-23, and was one of 54 school districts in the state to receive a grade of A.

New Hope Elementary, New Hope Middle and West Lowndes Elementary received grades of B, while West Lowndes High received a grade of C.

“State accountability results reflect the work we do in our schools over the course of the year,” LCSD Superintendent Dr. Sam Allison said.

“Each year, we use these results to celebrate our students’ achievements and identify areas for improvement. We are grateful for the dedication of our teachers and administrators in ensuring that students are taught in a way that fosters growth and success. We also appreciate the hard work of our students and the support their parents provide throughout the learning process.

“Although these results are largely based on a few tests administered each spring, they represent the culmination of the hard work done by many over the entire school year.”

This is the third year in a row the LCSD has earned a grade of A. There were no new A-F letter grades for districts and schools for the 2020-21 school year because assessments were not administered in 2019-20 and growth could not be calculated due to COVID-19. The LCSD also earned a grade of A in 2019.

Statewide, 85.7% of Mississippi schools and 93.9% of its districts earned a grade of C or higher.

The largest share of Mississippi districts are now rated A, B or C. In 2016, MDE set a goal that all schools and districts be rated C or higher. At that time, the percentage of schools and districts meeting this goal were both 62%.

Statewide student assessment data make up a large part of accountability grades. In [2023-24, the overall percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced reached an all-time high](#) in mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA) and science.

“I am incredibly proud of our students, teachers and school leaders for their academic achievements in the 2023-24 school year,” said Dr. Lance Evans, state superintendent of education. “This year’s school and district grades are a testament to the quality and success of Mississippi public schools. I am confident we will continue to build upon this success to make sure every Mississippi public school graduate is prepared for a successful future.”

Mississippi is recognized as a national leader in education because students have made faster progress than nearly every other state in the past decade. Several factors contributed to the steady rise in student achievement, including the implementation of higher academic standards and statewide support to teachers to help students reach higher standards. Other factors include the effective implementation of laws and policies that developed or strengthened early childhood education, literacy instruction, school and district accountability, and advanced learning opportunities for high school students.

Since 2013, Mississippi’s national Quality Counts ranking for Kindergarten through grade 12 achievement improved from 50th to 35th, and the state’s overall education grade improved from F to C- (the nation’s grade is C). In 2024, the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT® Data Book ranked Mississippi 30th in the nation for education, the state’s highest ranking.

Mississippi's accountability grades help teachers, school leaders, parents and communities know how well their local schools and districts are serving their students. The components of the state's accountability system are based on state and federal law and State Board policy. They include:

- Student proficiency and growth rates in ELA and Mathematics in grades 3-8
- Growth of the lowest performing 25% of students in ELA and Mathematics
- Science proficiency in grades 5 and 8
- English Learner progress toward becoming proficient in the English language
- Performance on the ACT and high school Algebra I, English II, Biology and U.S. History assessments
- Student participation and performance in advanced coursework such as Advanced Placement, career and technical education programs and dual credit/dual enrollment courses
- Four-year graduation rate