



## **School Report Card: Frequently Asked Questions**

October 26, 2009

### **What is the School Report Card?**

The School Report Card (SRC) is a document published each year (since January 2009) by the Los Angeles Unified School District in collaboration with various community-based organizations and foundations, summarizing performance for each one of over 600 individual schools. Each SRC summarizes data about the individual school for a particular academic year in a format designed for the typical LAUSD parent. The SRC represents the district's initiative to create a culture of accountability and transparency about its schools' performance and growth in areas of student learning as well as the context in which learning takes place.

### **Where did you get the data for the School Report Card?**

The data were gathered from a variety of sources, including state test data from the California Department of Education (CDE). Internal data are provided by the LAUSD School Information Branch (SIB) and the Information Technology Division (ITD). Principals preview the data for their schools to ensure they are familiar with the data before it is released to the public.

### **Do all schools get a School Report Card?**

Currently School Report Cards are published for all comprehensive high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, multi-level or "span" schools (e.g., schools with a K-8 configuration), and standalone magnet centers.

### **Why is the School Report Card published in the middle of the school year?**

Some of the data on the School Report Card, such as graduation rates, cannot be calculated until the district finalizes its enrollment numbers for the current academic year, which is usually in early October. Many weeks of processing time are then needed to perform calculations, validate the data, print and distribute the School Report Cards. This usually brings the publication date to mid-December, which is right before the winter holiday break. Publication is purposely moved to after the break, which is a better time for schools and families to focus on the data.

### **Why do we need a School Report Card? Can't parents already get these data?**

The School Report Card is the only document that pulls all the most key data elements about school performance and puts them in a single place for parents to read. In addition, some data elements, such as the graduation rate, are not available elsewhere. Most importantly, the School Report Card is designed primarily for parent use, using a narrative layout that helps parents know what kinds of questions the data can help answer, setting it apart from most data reports available.

### **In which languages is the School Report Card available?**

The School Report Card is published in the nine languages most commonly spoken in our students' households, according to the annual R30 language census. These include Spanish, English, Korean, Eastern Armenian, Cantonese, Tagalog, Farsi, Vietnamese, and Russian. The families of students who



have any of these languages listed as their home languages automatically receive the document in the corresponding language. English is the default language for all others.

### **How can LAUSD afford to publish a School Report Card during hard budget times?**

When resources are short, students rely on parent and family support more than ever to succeed. The School Report Card facilitates school-parent partnerships at a fairly low cost: about \$0.30 per student. In addition, much of the work required to produce the school report card is donated or funded by organizations outside of the district that consider it to be a wise investment in their communities. Given the tough economic times we are in, the district has taken numerous steps to reduce the cost of producing and distributing the School Report Card. For example, School Report Cards are now distributed to elementary school parents by their schools to reduce postage costs.

### **How is the School Report Card useful for schools?**

Along with the MyData tool, the School Report Card facilitates planning among teachers, principals, and others at a school around data related to student learning and the learning environment. It assists teachers in recognizing specific needs of students and plan interventions to reduce the risk of failure.

### **What is MyData and what does it have to do with the School Report Card?**

MyData is a web-based tool that provides administrators and teachers with comprehensive student-level data. Using the School Report Card as a starting point, MyData allows staff members to drill deeper into the data, understanding what underlies growth and decline in the numbers on the School Report Card, and plan strategically to move the numbers in the right direction. Used together, the School Report Card and MyData facilitate conversations between teachers, administrators, and parents, driving accountability, collaboration and information sharing in LAUSD.

### **How can parents use the School Report Card?**

There are a number of key ways to use the School Report Card. The School report Card serves as a check list of sorts for parents interested in keeping track of where their children and their school should be progressing; for example, a parent of an English learner should know what the elements of reclassification are and how students are progressing toward English language proficiency. The School Report Card can also help parents advocate on their children's behalf; for example, if students are not proficient in math at this school, parents and community members can mobilize around these data to partner with a school around improving its math instruction. Third, the School Report Card can be used to reach out to parents who are not yet engaged in their children's education by bringing school performance and learning environment matters to their attention.

### **Great. I am a parent, and I want to get involved. What should I do next?**

The back page on a school report card is a good starting point. It lists the principal at the school, the person at the school and the local district responsible for supporting parents and how to contact them. It also prominently features the website and toll-free telephone number for the Parent Community Services Branch, which is linked to all efforts in the district designed to support parent involvement in schools. This phone number, (866) 669-7272, is a great resource, especially if you have had trouble getting in touch with someone who can help you meet your needs.





## ¿Cómo puede LAUSD publicar un reporte de progreso escolar durante tiempo de una economía difícil?

Cuando los recursos son escasos, los estudiantes dependen del apoyo de los padres y familias más que nunca para salir adelante. El reporte de progreso facilita alianzas entre las escuelas y los padres a bajo costo relativamente – aproximadamente \$0.30 por estudiante. Es más, bastante del trabajo que se requiere para producir el reporte de progreso escolar es donado o pagado por organizaciones fuera del distrito que lo consideran una inversión inteligente en sus comunidades. Considerando el tiempo difícil por el cual estamos pasando, el distrito ha tomado varios pasos para reducir el costo de producir y distribuir el reporte de progreso escolar. Por ejemplo, los reportes de progreso escolar ahora se distribuyen a los padres en las escuelas primarias a través de las escuelas para reducir costos de porte de correo.

## ¿Cómo es útil para las escuelas el reporte de progreso escolar?

Junto con el instrumento de MyData, el reporte de progreso escolar facilita la planificación relacionada a los datos para el aprendizaje de los estudiantes entre los maestros, directores, y otros en la escuela. Ayuda a los maestros a reconocer las necesidades específicas de los estudiantes y planear intervenciones para reducir el riesgo de fallar.

## ¿Qué es MyData y qué tiene que ver con el reporte de progreso escolar?

MyData is a web-based tool that provides administrators and teachers with comprehensive student-level data. Using the School Report Card as a starting point, MyData allows staff members to drill deeper into the data, understanding what underlies growth and decline in the numbers on the School Report Card, and plan strategically to move the numbers in the right direction. Used together, the School Report Card and MyData facilitate conversations between teachers, administrators, and parents, driving accountability, collaboration and information sharing in LAUSD.

## ¿Cómo pueden usar el reporte de progreso escolar los padres?

Existen varias maneras de usarse el reporte de progreso escolar. El reporte de progreso escolar sirve como especie de lista para los padres a quienes les interesa monitorear el progreso de sus hijos y de su escuela. Por ejemplo, el padre de un aprendiz de inglés debería saber qué son los componentes para reclasificación y cómo van los estudiantes progresando hacia la competencia en inglés. El reporte de progreso escolar también puede abogar por sus hijos. Por ejemplo, si los estudiantes no son competentes en matemática en esta escuela, los padres y miembros de la comunidad se pueden organizar y pueden aliarse a la escuela para mejorar la instrucción de matemática. También se puede usar el reporte de progreso para contactar a los padres que aún no están involucrados en la educación de sus hijos, llamando su atención a los asuntos del rendimiento de la escuela y el ambiente del aprendizaje.

## Mu bien. Soy padre y me quiero involucrar. ¿Qué hago ahora?

La última página del reporte de progreso escolar es un buen lugar para empezar. Ahí encontrará el nombre del director de la escuela, de las personas en la escuela y en el distrito escolar responsables por apoyar a los padres y cómo contactarlos. También presenta en letras negras el número de teléfono gratuito para la oficina de padres llamada *Parent Community Services Branch*. Esta oficina está ligada a todos los esfuerzos en el distrito diseñados para apoyar la participación de los padres en las escuelas. Este número de teléfono, (866) 669-7272, es un gran recurso, especialmente si ha tenido dificultad en contactar a alguien que le puede ayudar a satisfacer sus necesidades.