-Student assessment performance

-State assessment progress

-Graduation rate

-Enrollment and success rates in advanced coursework

-On-track attendance

-English learner progress

-Assessment participation

-Student/staff ratio

-Student support staff

-Student transfers

-Transfers in and out

-Expulsion rate

-Attendance rate

-Dropout rate

-Postsecondary enrollment

-Postsecondary persistence

-Postsecondary completion

State launches new 'parent dashboard' showcasing performance of every Michigan public school

Updated Jan 10;
Posted Jan 10

Students use new seating as they work in the third grade class of teacher Stacy Arnold at Keicher Elementary School in Michigan Center

on Wednesday, May 25, 2016. Arnold was able to purchase new desks and chairs with a matching grant from the Jackson Community Foundation. (J. Scott Park | Mlive.com)

16

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By **Brian McVicar**, bmcvicar@mlive.com

The Michigan Department of Education launched its parent dashboard Tuesday, a tool that provides an array of performance data on every public school in the state.

The dashboard is part of the department's plan to comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, the nation's new federal education law, and aims to provide residents with easy to grasp information on everything from student performance on standardized tests and graduation rates to attendance and student access to advanced coursework.

Venessa Keesler, deputy superintendent at MDE, said the dashboard was developed with an "intense amount" of public feedback, including 4,200 responses received through various surveys and parent advisory and focus groups.

She said she hopes the dashboard leads to "richer conversations about schools," and can help parents learn how their children's school compares wither others nearby and throughout the state.

The dashboard has been under development throughout 2017. MDE's initial ESSA compliance plan included an option for a school report card that would include an A-F grade for each public school in the state based upon factors such as performance on state standardized tests, the school's graduation rate, and the academic progress of students with a limited grasp of English.

But at the request of the State Board of Education, the department backed away from such an approach. State board members argued that summarizing each school's performance in a single letter grade was overly simplistic and punitive to students and teachers at low-performing schools.

"This is a way more robust way of providing information to our citizens than an algorithm ever could be," state board co-president Casandra Ulbrich said in apparent reference to an A-F system, in which a mathematical formula is used to calculate a school's grade based upon several performance metrics.

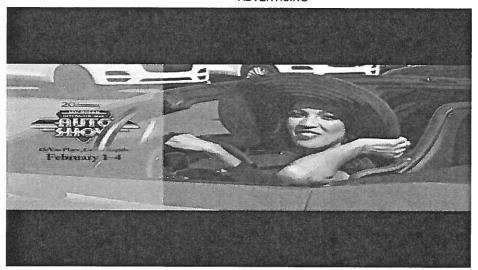***To access the dashboard, <u>click here</u>***

The dashboard does not provide an overarching grade or ranking for each school. Rather, it simply provides an array of data on a school's performance, and allows users to see how their school compares to schools with a similar student body and the statewide average.

Proponents of an A-F system argue a single letter grade provides an easier to grasp picture of school quality.

The state Legislature could still move forward to pursue an A-F school grading system. One lawmaker, state Rep. Tim Kelly, R-Saginaw Township, has previously said he intends to introduce legislation requiring such a system. But as of Tuesday, no such legislation has been introduced.

The dashboard was created in partnership between MDE and the state Center for Educational Performance and Information. Tuesday's release marks the first iteration of the

dashboard. New data sources, including each school's "points of pride," are expected to be included in a future version of the tool.

It replaces MDE's current school report card, which assigned each public school in the state one of five colors based on student performance.

State board member Lupe Ramos-Montigny praised the department's work developing the dashboard, but said some parents will struggle to understand the information contained in the tool.

She also questioned how parents who don't have a computer will access the information.

"I am very concerned about those other parents," she said. "I am the spokesperson for those other parents. How will they understand? How will they access this information even if they don't have a computer?"

Keesler said the department has worked, through various surveys and focus groups, to ensure the information provided within the dashboard is easy for all parents to grasp. But she acknowledged there's more work to be done surrounding translating the dashboard into another language and providing access to printed copies of the data.

"We're trying to say that the work we think we've done - hopefully more than educators can understand the wording. Not just educators," Keesler said. "I think previously you had to be an educator to understand some of the things we've put out."

Here's the data included in the dashboard: