



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO: Success Academy Primary School
FROM: Timothy Schultz, Hearing Officer, Indiana State Board of Education
RE: Appeal by Success Academy Primary School of its 2015-16 Letter Grade
DATE: April 5, 2017

Finding: Success Academy Primary School's appeal of its 2015-16 category placement of an "F" grade should be denied.

I. Facts

Success Academy Primary School ("Success Academy") received a letter grade of "F" for the 2015-16 school year. Success Academy appealed the "F" grade due to concerns regarding the rigor of the 2015-16 ISTEP assessment, accountability based on growth, and the potential value of the school's Northwest Evaluation Association ("NWEA") testing data.

II. Argument and Analysis

2015-16 ISTEP: Success Academy contends that the 2015-16 ISTEP assessment was significantly more difficult than the prior year assessment, and as a result the assessment was not a good measure of growth. However, this contention fails to account for the fact that items used in the 2014-2015 ISTEP assessment were reused for the 2015-16 ISTEP assessment. Thus, there is insufficient evidence to support this claim.

Accountability based on growth: As the 2015-16 school year was Success Academy's first year of operation, its grade was calculated on growth alone. However, Success Academy argued that the use of growth alone to calculate its category placement was not an accurate measure of the school's overall performance. In response, the State Board of Education's ("Board") Senior Director of Accountability and Assessment reviewed all of Success Academy's assessment data. Upon review, it was concluded that factoring in performance and growth for Success Academy would actually result in a lower accountability score. Thus, this argument does not support Success Academy's appeal to amend its 2015-16 grade.

NWEA testing data: Additionally, Success Academy contends that NWEA data is a more accurate measure of the school's overall performance and should be used in place of ISTEP+ data. NWEA has not been fully vetted to confirm it aligns with Federal or Indiana academic standards. Thus, NWEA is not a viable alternative option for measuring student growth for purposes of calculating Success Academy's 2015-16 grade.

For the foregoing reasons, I find that Success Academy's appeal for the 2015-16 school year should be denied.